

Hedgehog

Erinaceus europaeus

What does it look like?

Hedgehogs are grey-brown in colour with their backs and sides entirely covered with spines. Most common in lowland and coastal areas; prefers dry areas.

Why is it a problem?

Hedgehogs are abundant throughout New Zealand, and pose a significant threat to many of our native species. They are most active at night, eating the eggs and chicks of ground nesting birds, invertebrates, and small reptiles. They also carry diseases that affect people, birds, pets and agricultural animals. The impact hedgehogs have on New Zealand environment is only recently beginning to be understood in any detail.



Control Methods

Control

Hedgehogs are easily trapped. Trap them using the DOC150, DOC200 or DOC250 tunnel traps or a Goodnature A24 (Hedgehogs have a very high tolerance for brodifacoum poison, and many other naturally occurring poisons).

Place the tunnel trap where the animals must either enter the tunnel or turn back. Good places for traps are along fences, a stream edge, in bush among tree roots, beside fallen logs, or in dry culverts. Keep the area clear of leaves and weeds.

The best times to lay traps for hedgehogs are:

- In spring at the beginning of the bird breeding season
- In autumn when adult females can be targeted

A well-placed trap can catch hedgehogs without bait but baiting traps is more effective. Use fishy cat food or freshly killed rabbit or chicken as bait. A longer-lasting option is using one or two eggs. These can be left whole or broken, or if using two then make a small hole in one egg and leave the second egg whole.

If cats are present, avoid meat bait or add a small block of wood inside the entrance so a cat can't reach the trap with its paw.

Prevention

Don't encourage hedgehogs into your backyard by creating burrows for them or leaving milk and food out.

Related Links

GW Regional Pest Management Plan <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/pest-management/>
Department of Conservation <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/animal-pests/hedgehogs/>
Predator Free NZ YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7uWDBdlfTbwHXdJSeB43zA>

Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

No person shall possess, and/or release any hedgehog within a Key Native Ecosystems in the Greater Wellington region.

Management Programme

Site-led