

Part 3: Climate change in the UK



In the UK, we are lucky enough to have incredibly rich biodiversity (yes, even dolphins!). We have over 600 different species of bird alone! How many of these species can you name?



Climate change is having an impact on UK species because of human activity.

Let's use **hedgehogs** as an example.



Hedgehogs hibernate in winter. This means they sleep to save energy. They do this from November to March – that's four months! They do this because food is harder for them to find in winter.

However, our winters are starting to get warmer. Warmer weather is like an alarm clock to a hibernating hedgehog! Because of this, the hedgehogs are waking up from their hibernation early. Unfortunately for them it is still winter, meaning there is not enough food for them. They then waste all their energy trying to find food! Imagine waking up from a four-hour nap only to find there's no food in the house and all the shops are shut for another two months – that's how hedgehogs feel!

In the 1950s, it was estimated that there were around 36 million hedgehogs in the UK. Now, we estimate that there are only around 1 million left. This decline is partly because of human activity causing climate change.

Lots of people are working really hard to try and help creatures such as the hedgehog. An example of this are the many hedgehog sanctuaries around the country. The biggest one is called Tiggywinkles. Here is their website: <https://www.sttiggywinkles.org.uk/>

There is lots of information here about how to help a variety of different creatures, including what to do if you find that a hedgehog has woken up from its hibernation too early.