



WILD FACTS

UK WILDLIFE



Hi Alex,

Do you have a favourite wild animal? I've a soft spot for hyenas... But this month we're meeting two very different species. First, I'd like to ask you a question - what's the difference between a tiger and a hedgehog? You might be surprised - they share a lot in common! Scroll down to find out more and see how YOU can help hedgehogs this half term. Hope you enjoy your new look Wild Crew!

From

Laura
Laura Gosset
Wild Crew



Tigers

With razor-sharp teeth and lightning reactions, tigers are awesome hunters and the largest member of the cat family. One hundred years ago there were 100,000, but today just 4,000 survive in the wild in Asia. Tigers are officially 'Endangered' and the main threat is people!

In the wild, poachers kill tigers for their beautiful fur, and use bits of their body for medicines. In addition, their forest homes are cut down for wood and used for farming, which can lead to problems. This interaction, or 'human-wildlife conflict', can have a negative impact on people AND wild animals.



Gopal's story

Gopal is a seven-year-old tiger who lives at Born Free's sanctuary in South India. Gopal is strong and fierce, and got into trouble with people when he tried to catch cattle. He was taken into captivity by the government and sadly can never be returned to the wild.

But Born Free is giving him the best possible care and he enjoys life in his large forest 'kraal' or enclosure. Gopal loves a good soak in his pool, especially during the hottest part of the day. When it's cooler he explores the thick undergrowth, or patrols his kraal, making sure everyone knows it's his territory!



Hedgehogs

It's incredible, but an adult hedgehog has over 6,000 sharp spines. They curl into prickly balls if attacked by a predator such as an owl or badger. Like tigers, hedgehogs are awesome hunters. At night they look for insects, slugs, worms and snails. Gardeners love hedgehogs because they eat so many slugs!

But sadly, today the UK has fewer than one million hedgehogs, down from 36 million in the 1950s. Just like tigers, their main threat is people! Thousands are killed on the road by cars or poisoned by chemicals. Loss of habitat is a big problem as new roads, houses and fences are built.

Joey's story



In May 2017, Born Free's own wild animal rescuer Tanya Knight took in a tiny hedgehog called Joey. He was found alone under a garden shed after it was dismantled and there was no sign of his mum. Luckily, a wildlife angel was at hand!

Nicknamed the 'world's smallest hedgehog', Joey quickly grew thanks to loving, round-the-clock care and regular bottle-feeds of special milk. Just three months later, he was ready to return to the wild in Sussex.

You can help this half term!

With your parents, care-givers or teachers there are lots of ways to be hedgehog-friendly in your home or school:

- Leave an area of your garden 'wild'
- Place a [hedgehog house](#), somewhere quiet and shady
- Got a pond? Make sure it has an escape route! At least one side should slope gently, you could use stones or a chicken wire ramp
- Check the area before using a strimmer
- Don't use slug pellets which contain metaldehyde – this is deadly for hedgehogs and other wildlife
- Try not to use netting on plants, or keep it at least a foot above ground, as hedgehogs can get tangled
- Cut a small hole in your garden fence and encourage neighbours to do the same to allow hedgehogs to roam freely
- Provide a shallow dish of water and meaty cat or dog food (dry or canned)

Don't forget

Hedgehogs are nocturnal, so if you see one in the day it probably needs help. Contact your local wildlife hospital, vets or the [British Hedgehog Preservation Society](#) on 01584 890801.

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