

## HogWatch Scotland – Mammal Footprint Tunnel

A Mammal Footprint Tunnel can provide a non-invasive and effective presence/absence survey method for small mammals, particularly hedgehogs. The animal walks over ink pads to reach bait left inside the tunnel, leaving footprints on the tracking paper, which can then be identified.

You can purchase full kits plus all equipment needed at: <https://www.nhbs.com/mammal-footprint-tunnel>

Alternatively you can create your own, our partnership wildlife project Naturehood has a simple guide: <https://naturehood.uk/images/documents/naturehood-diy-hedgehog-footprint-tracking-tunnel.pdf>

### Equipment:

- Corrugated plastic or thick cardboard for tunnel & tracking plate (standard size 1230 x 1000mm -48 x 39 inch)
- A4 paper
- Paper clips
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- Bait (cat/dog food, hedgehog food, chopped unsalted peanuts)
- Shallow bait dish (optional)
- Charcoal power
- Vegetable ink
- Mixing pot
- Paintbrush
- Tent pegs

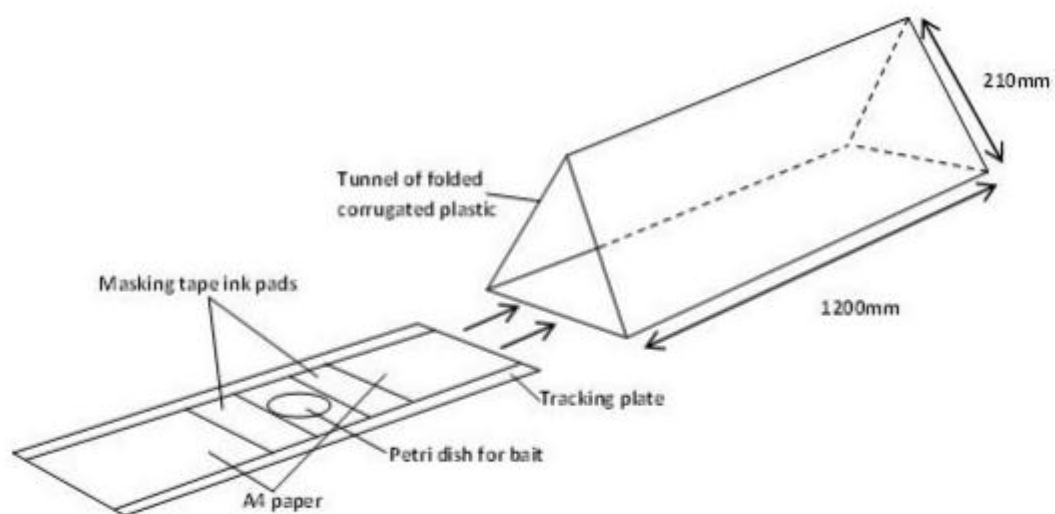


Figure 1. Hedgehog tracking tunnel diagram (adapted by Emily Thomas from Yarnell et al. 2014)

## How to Take Part

Hedgehogs can be surveyed for at any time during their active period, between April and October in the UK. Studies have shown that hedgehogs use linear features to navigate, so it's important that you position the tunnels along something like a fence, wall or hedge line. Tunnels should be flush with the ground and open at both ends.

**Step 1:** Remove your tracking plate and paper clip in place two sheets of A4 paper at either end.

**Step 2:** Mix up the ink solution in a mixing dish. One tsp charcoal powder to 3 tsp vegetable oil and stir well.

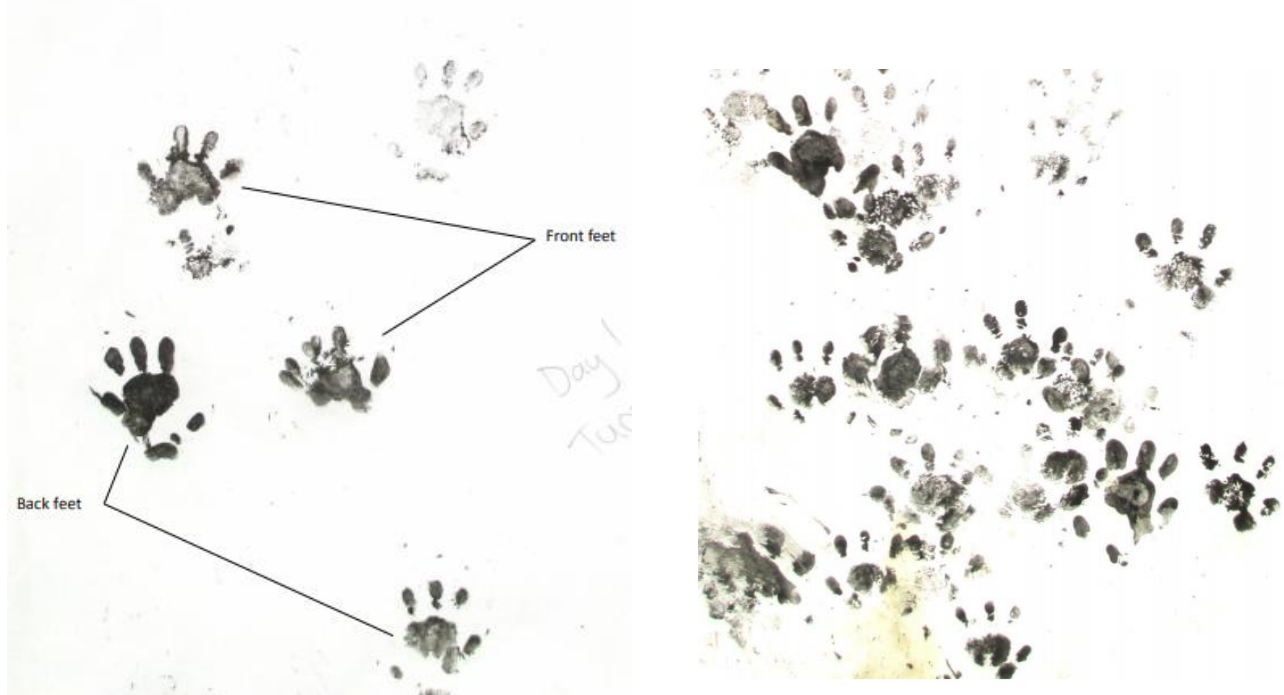
**Step 3:** Cut four strips of standard masking tape and create ink pads (2 strips per ink pad – around 80mm total width) which are equidistant from the centre of the tunnel (leaving a gap of around 60mm in the centre)

**Step 4:** Paint on the charcoal ink powder with a paintbrush covering the ink strips completely, place a handful of bait in the centre of the tracking place (or inside the bait dish)

**Step 5:** Move the tunnel into place and slide in the tracking plate with paper, ink strips and bait in place. Peg down each end of the tunnel to secure.

## Footprints

Hedgehog footprints look like small human handprints, showing a visible 'thumb'. The front foot is much broader than the hind foot. This guide is fantastic for identifying a range of animal prints - <https://ptes.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Guidance-for-detecting-hedgehogs-using-tracking-tunnels.pdf>



## Your Results

You can take photos of your print results and email [kirsty.crawford@tcv.org.uk](mailto:kirsty.crawford@tcv.org.uk) (we can also help identify). If you know you have hedgehogs visiting your garden you can upload to the Big Hedgehog Map - <https://bighedgehogmap.org/holes-for-hedgehogs-home/map-hedgehog-sighting>

Share photos with our conservation project HogWatch Scotland on social media:

- Twitter - @TCVCitSci
- Instagram - @tcvscotland
- Facebook – TCV Scotland

