

Name:

Date:

Activity 1 – Conservation

## Native or Not?

You'll find all these animals living in Britain today, but are they native to these shores or did they originate from other countries before making the UK their home? Circle your answer – native or not? Discuss the reasons behind your decision before finding out the answers on the next page!



Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)

Native

Not



Common pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Native

Not



Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

Native

Not



Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

Native

Not



Little owl (*Athene noctura*)

Native

Not



Short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*)

Native

Not

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## ANSWERS

**Red squirrel – NATIVE!** These tufty-eared critters have been roaming the British shores their whole lives! Unfortunately, in recent years their numbers have declined due to disease, habitat loss and competition from other animals, but they can still be spotted wild in some areas of the UK.

**Common pheasant – NOT!** Despite being a very common sight in Britain, these pheasants are native to Asia. It is thought they were brought to Britain to be used as game birds by the Romans as long ago as the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Grey squirrel – NOT!** Originally from North America, grey squirrels were introduced to Britain about 130 years ago. Since then, their population has boomed, and they can now be found all over the country.

**Hedgehog – NATIVE!** This iconic species is native to Britain. They were originally called 'urchins' (sea urchins were named after them, and this is also where the term 'street urchins' comes from) but 'hedgehog' has become more widely used in recent years in reference to their foraging habits – and it does sound rather cute!

**Little Owl – NOT!** A relative new-comer to the British isles, little owls were introduced in 1879 by rich landowners who thought they would be a nice addition to the countryside! They are native to warmer parts of Europe, Asia and North Africa but have adapted well to the British climate.

**Short-snouted seahorse – NATIVE!** Although not a common sight, these adorable little fish are native to seagrass meadows in the south west coasts of the UK. They are a protected species, and organisations are working to increase their populations which seems to be going well so far – in fact, they were recently spotted swimming around in the River Thames!

**Go to the next page to find out how you can help with the conservation of one of our native species!**

## How to Help Hedgehogs!

Unfortunately the number of hedgehogs in the UK has declined in recent years, but you can help! Below are some ways to help with the conservation of our spiny friends, to encourage them and care for them in your very own garden or closest outdoor space.

### Make your own Hogitat!

You will need:

- Leaves and twigs
- A cardboard box
- Sharp scissors or knife
- A brick or heavy rock

1. Cut a hedgehog-sized hole in your cardboard box with scissors/knife (ask an adult to help!)
2. Make a pile of leaves/twigs and place box over the top
3. Ideally, place the box near a wall or fence, with the door facing the wall/fence. Ensure the 'corridor' between the door and wall/fence is wide enough for a hedgehog but too narrow for a fox or cat!
4. Place the brick on top to stop foxes/cats etc from knocking the box over!
5. Cover the box with leaves
6. That's it! Keep your eyes peeled for hedgehogs setting up home!



### FEED ME!

Leave cat or dog food out for hedgehogs to eat! They like all kinds of meat but **NO FISH PLEASE!**

*And don't forget a bowl of water too please!*



### Hedgehog Highway

Keep a hedgehog-sized hole in your fence so that the hogs can move from garden to garden to find food!



### Helpful Hogs!

Hedgehogs eat slugs and other bugs. Don't use pesticides or slug pellets as it can hurt them. Instead, encourage the hogs into your garden and they'll take of the bugs for you!

**Thank you!**

