

External Help



Alex Andina e Elsa Hofmann-Perini, photographed here with two hedgehogs. They manage the Hedgehogs Care Center in Maggia.

The Hedgehogs Care Center in Maggia (HCCM) has developed in a completely unexpected way. In 2002 87 hedgehogs passed through the center and in 2003 as many as 169, a lot more than expected. This posed several management problems, but the biggest problem was the number of hedgehogs usually present during the cold season. During the winter of 2002-2003 there were 46, during that of 2003 2004 71, to reach as many as 153 hedgehogs during the winter of 2006 2007.

Hedgehogs can have up to two litters a year. The first brood is born in May-June, the second in August-September. Unfortunately, almost all the hedgehogs of the second brood, even if healthy, often do not survive the winter for the simple reason that they may not have enough time to reach the minimum weight of 550 g to be able to hibernate. They are those little hedgehogs, which are seen wandering around during the fall until January in a desperate search for food, which is no longer available in the wild.

Most of the hedgehogs that the HCCM receives during the fall belong to this category. They are deparasitized in the first place, then cared for if necessary, and then they must reach a weight between 700 and 800 g. After that they can be placed outside in a pen, where they can hibernate to be released the following spring. These hedgehogs cannot be released in the winter, because the chances of finding a suitable shelter are slim to none. Therefore, they must necessarily be housed until spring.

Without the help of all these volunteers, the HCCM would never have made it. We must also be able to count on all these and additional volunteers in the future.



On the left an example of an enclosure with house wall on one side and in the rest with concrete slabs with a length of 1 m and a width of 30 cm. The latter go down 20 cm underground. Above these, construction boards with a width of 50 cm have been placed. On the right an example of a dormitory for hedgehogs. These houses can be obtained at the HCCM itself or made on one's own in accordance with drawings provided by us free of charge.

A hedgehog enclosure should be at least 60 cm high and its wall must be able to go underground for at least 20 cm. Be careful, these animals, despite that they are not great diggers, manage in any way to make holes 10 cm deep. Hedgehogs prefer flat places. A fence should therefore not be too steep. Do not use metal nets as they could climb up and often get entangled and seriously injured. The larger the area of the fence, the better. A minimum for a hedgehog is 3 m².

Do you want to help too? Let us know!

We need you!



For any questions, especially regarding the setting up of a possible fence, or further information, feel free to call this center at the following address:

Friends of the Hedgehog Association, in Campii 13, CH-6673 Maggia.

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