

Robot lawn mowers are a danger to hedgehogs

9th April 2026



Animals face many dangers in their daily lives. These include climate change, habitat loss, and pollution. Mayors in Germany have highlighted a new danger – robot lawn mowers. These are the small machines that

automatically go up and down people's gardens to cut the grass. German mayors say the devices are killing hedgehogs and other small animals, especially at night. The cities of Munich and Cologne have started a night-time ban on the use of the lawn mowers. However, officials want a nationwide ban. Hedgehogs are particularly at risk. They curl up into a ball when they sense danger. This makes it more difficult for a robot mower's sensors to detect a curled-up hedgehog.

Hedgehogs are protected under German law. People who injure, trap, or kill them could get a fine of up to €65,000 (\$75,000). The animals have been on the "near threatened" list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature since 2024. This is because their numbers dropped by over 30 per cent in the previous decade. Mayor Claudia Kalisch has asked lawn mower makers to do more to protect hedgehogs. She said: "We are calling on manufacturers to find solutions to ensure that small animals are no longer endangered by robot lawn mowers." She added: "This is a key step towards protecting animals and enriching the quality of life in the city through biodiversity."

Sources: [dw.com](https://www.dw.com) / [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / nerdbot.com

Writing

There should be huge fines for people who harm any animal. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

animals / dangers / daily life / climate change / pollution / hedgehogs / ban / at night / get a fine / conservation / nature / the previous decade / lawn mowers / biodiversity

True / False

- 1) The article says animals face very few dangers every day. T / F
- 2) German mayors are worried that hedgehogs will damage lawn mowers. T / F
- 3) German mayors say robot lawn mowers harm hedgehogs at night. T / F
- 4) Hedgehogs curl up in a ball when they feel they are in danger. T / F
- 5) People in Germany can get fined \$75,000 for injuring animals. T / F
- 6) The numbers of hedgehogs halved over the past decade. T / F
- 7) A mayor asked lawn mower makers to make their products safer. T / F
- 8) Lawn mowers help to increase the biodiversity in cities. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. machines | a. penalty |
| 2. cut | b. countrywide |
| 3. nationwide | c. notice |
| 4. particularly | d. answers |
| 5. detect | e. kept safe |
| 6. protected | f. devices |
| 7. fine | g. put at risk |
| 8. decade | h. especially |
| 9. solutions | i. 10 years |
| 10. endangered | j. trim |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you know about hedgehogs?
- c) Should robot lawn mowers be banned at night?
- d) What do you think of the \$75,000 fine for harming animals?
- e) Do you prefer a garden with short or long grass?
- f) What animals do you see every day?
- g) How sad are you at the loss of biodiversity?
- h) What questions would you like to ask an expert on hedgehogs?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Animals face many dangers in | a. a ball |
| 2. climate change, habitat loss, | b. find solutions |
| 3. small machines that automatically go | c. their daily lives |
| 4. cut the | d. longer endangered |
| 5. They curl up into | e. grass |
| 6. Hedgehogs are protected | f. and pollution |
| 7. their numbers dropped | g. of life |
| 8. We are calling on manufacturers to | h. by over 30 per cent |
| 9. ensure that small animals are no | i. up and down |
| 10. the quality | j. under German law |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of hedgehogs?
- What everyday dangers do animals face?
- What dangers do you face every day?
- How does climate change affect animals?
- What do you think of lawn mowers?
- Why do people like to cut the grass in their gardens?
- How might very short grass in a garden affect animals?
- What advice do you have for hedgehogs?

Spelling

- teilcam change
- habitat loss, and ltoilpuon
- These are the small amhnsacie
- the secdvie are killing hedgehogs
- Hedgehogs are allyciupartr at risk
- edttce a curled-up hedgehog
- Hedgehogs are ertodctpe under German law
- on the near ehadttrene list
- in the vipeurso decade
- calling on manufacturers to find usootslni
- enriching the ialtquy of life
- in the city through sriditoebiyv

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. j	3. b	4. h	5. c
6. e	7. a	8. i	9. d	10. g

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	When does the article say animals face many dangers?
2.	What danger does the article mention besides habitat loss and pollution?
3.	What do the robot lawn mowers cut?
4.	How many German cities have a night-time ban on robot lawn mowers?
5.	What do hedgehogs do when they feel they are in danger?
6.	What in Germany protects hedgehogs?
7.	Since when have hedgehogs been on a near threatened list?
8.	By how much have hedgehog numbers dropped in the past decade?
9.	What did a German mayor ask manufacturers to find?
10.	What does the German mayor hope to enrich in her city?

Speaking – Tech

Rank these with your partner. Put the best tech at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Robot lawn mowers
- Drone deliveries
- Massage chairs
- Translation aids
- Vacuum cleaners
- Robotic window cleaners
- Driverless cars
- AI companions

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	T	8	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.