

## **University of Berne study finds that metaldehyde was not the cause of death in any of the investigated hedgehogs**

During a comprehensive wildlife biological examination of 80 dead hedgehogs, the veterinarian Marie-Pierre P. Degiorgis was unable to establish metaldehyde-containing slug pellets as the cause of death in a single case.

In all the investigated animals death was brought on by parasites and bacterial infections. In 80% of cases the animals were infected with lungworms, which are considered to be the primary cause of weakening in the animals. Most of the animals with lungworm infection also exhibited bacterial infections, which may have occurred as a result of the weakened immunity of these animals, placing an additional burden on the already weakened hedgehogs.

In 20% of cases salmonella infection was very probably the primary infection, often resulting in infections with other pathogens at a later stage.

These investigations also confirm the conclusions reached by the wildlife biologist Dr Hubert Gemmeke at the German Federal Biological Research Centre in Münster in his investigations with captured hedgehogs that were presented with slugs that had been killed beforehand with metaldehyde slug pellets. He concluded that "The trials have shown that hedgehogs are not endangered by slugs poisoned with metaldehyde."

Keen gardeners who wish to keep the ever-present, voracious slugs away from their plants are best served in every respect by metaldehyde-containing slug pellets. Such pellets are highly effective against all slug species and under all weather conditions suited to slugs. And, as confirmed yet again, they do not harm hedgehogs and therefore do not pose any risk when used correctly.