

## Toolbox Talk - Environment

### Ecology – Hedgehogs & other ground dwelling animals



<http://www.willowshedgehogrescue.co.uk/>



© Moracilla

#### What?

- Many species of animal and bird sleep, hibernate, breed and feed on the ground;
- To avoid predators they will make use of dense, often thorny, vegetation alongside the railway;
- This same vegetation is the cause of many Close Calls and actual slip/trip/fall incidents each year;
- Response to these incidents is to cut back the vegetation with strimmers and brushcutters.

#### Why?

- Hundreds of hedgehogs and other wildlife are admitted to rescue centres with strimmer injuries each year;
- Hedgehog numbers have declined by almost 50% since 2000.

#### DO

- ✓ Follow requirements of NR/L3/MTC/RCS0216/SP21 “*Use of Brush Cutter / Strimmer / Hedge Trimmer*” and carry out a site survey before work to avoid unseen objects
- ✓ Use EcoReporter app to report sightings of hedgehogs and other species
- ✓ Allow a 13cm<sup>2</sup> hole at the bottom of fences to allow hedgehogs to pass freely

#### DON'T

- ✗ Plan routine maintenance activities when nesting birds or hibernating mammals may be present
- ✗ The integrity of the fence should not be affected creating passageways
- ✗ Don't leave injured animals – seek advice from;
  - RSPCA 0300 1234 999
  - SSPCA 03000 999 999

For further information please contact a member of the Environment Team

