



# NATIONAL HELP FOR HEDGEHOGS

**WILDLIFE** charities have joined with farming, housing and researchers to launch Britain's first ever national plan to help hedgehogs.

Numbers of the cute, spiky animals have dropped by up to 75% in rural areas since 2000, mostly due to habitat loss and reduced insect food sources.

The National Hedgehog Conservation Strategy aims to stop this decline.

Nida Al-Fulaij from the People's Trust for Endangered Species says: "We hope industries like farming and housing will scale up hedgehog-friendly practices."

Fay Vass, from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, which also worked on the plan, said: "This strategy is a real moment for hedgehog conservation."

The plan says people can also help by making holes in fences so hedgehogs can move between gardens to find food.



## AI dodo chats to humans!

The dodo skeleton



**VISITORS** at a Cambridge museum can now have a little chinwag with extinct animals such as the dodo, thanks to AI (artificial intelligence).

Cambridge's Museum of Zoology is offering chats with 13 creatures, including a dodo skeleton, a stuffed red panda and a preserved cockroach.

People can ask questions by scanning QR codes, and the animals will answer as if they were still alive.

The aim is to help people care about nature. The museum hopes it will make learning about animals more enjoyable, especially for young visitors.

You can talk to the animals until 15 November. See [www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/visit-us](http://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/visit-us) for details. If you go, write in and let us know what you think!

## Eco-friendly school competition

**SCHOOLS** across the UK can now enter a contest to win money for their nature projects.

The competition, run by Let's Go Zero and OVO Foundation, has prizes worth £13,000.

Schools can win £1,000 or £200 to create outdoor spaces, plant gardens, or build homes for insects.

The contest aims to help pupils learn about the environment and

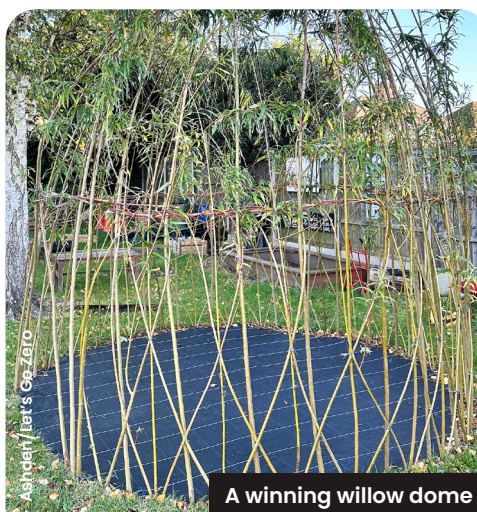
take action on climate change.

To enter, schools need to explain how they want to connect students with nature.

The deadline to send in entries is 25 November, and the winners will be announced in February 2025.

Previous winners have built willow domes and vegetable gardens.

Ask your teacher to find out more and sign up at [letsgozero.org/join](http://letsgozero.org/join).



A winning willow dome

**ANEESHWAR'S ANIMAL OF THE WEEK**



**WORLD RECORD HOLDER!**

**ANEESHWAR** Kunchala is a nine-year-old wildlife campaigner and officially the world's youngest newspaper columnist! He shot to fame as a finalist on *Britain's Got Talent*. Now, he's presenting the documentary *Save Our Wildlife* from Sky Kids and Sky Zero. You can watch it at [first.news/climatecrisis](http://first.news/climatecrisis).

Aneeshwar's Animal of the Week is the...

## FRUIT BAT



### HABITAT:

South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia, East Africa and some Pacific islands. They eat fruit, flowers, nectar and the odd insect.

### FUN FACTS:

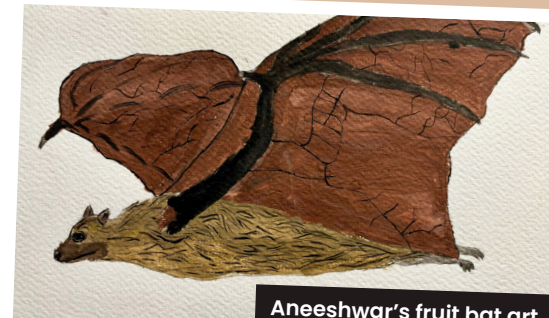
- Some fruit bats are also called flying foxes because of their long, dog-like faces.
- The giant golden-crowned flying fox is thought to have the longest wingspan of any bat species – up to 1.7m (5ft 7in).

### SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:

Unlike other bats, which use echolocation (sound) to navigate and catch food, fruit bats use their big eyes to find food in low light.

### CONSERVATION STATUS:

There are nearly 200 species of fruit bat, and their conservation status varies, says the International Union for Conservation of Nature.



Aneeshwar's fruit bat art

We're asking you to send in photos of your own drawings or paintings of wildlife to add to an online gallery. Ask a parent, guardian or teacher to send in your photos by emailing them to [yournews@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:yournews@firstnews.co.uk).