

The Reptiles of Jersey

Slow worm *Anguis fragilis*



Size: 35–40 cm (adults), 7–10 cm (new-borns). Often have missing tail and so may be shorter. Males have a broader head than females.

Colour: Usually brown, copper or grey with metallic appearance. Can be red or black. Mature males can have blue spots. Black spots on top of the head. Young also have a dark line along the back and dark flanks which is lost with age in males but usually retained in females.

Skin: Shed skin is rolled up, like a sock. Scales are uniform.

Distribution and habitats: Widespread in Jersey, occurring in semi-natural and urban habitats including gardens. Often found underneath ground-level objects or in compost heaps.

Green lizard *Lacerta bilineata*

Size: up to 40 cm (adults), 7–8 cm (new-borns)

Colour: Adult males are bright green with black speckling, a broader head than females and a blue throat (particularly in spring). Females are smaller and often have cream or white stripes along the back and sides along with brown/black patches. New-borns are brown-grey on top and lime green underneath.

Skin: Skin is shed in pieces. Patterns can sometimes be seen in the shed skin. Back scales are fine, whereas belly scales are larger.

Distribution and habitats: Mainly distributed in western and eastern dune grassland and heathland habitats.

Adult male



Photos: Rob Ward



Wall lizard

Podarcis muralis



Adult

Size: Up to 18 cm (adults), 6 cm (new-borns). Males have a broader head than females. Pointed snout.

Colour: Often brown with brown, black, green, cream or yellow mottling. Cream stripes may be evident on either side of the back.

Skin: Fine scales. Skin is shed in pieces. Patterns can sometimes be seen in the shed skin. Back scales are fine, whereas belly scales are larger.

Distribution and habitats: Mainly restricted to coastal and offshore fortifications, castles and stone walls that are exposed to sun.



Grass snake

Natrix helvetica

Size: Females up to 100 cm, males up to 80 cm (adults), 16–18 cm (new-borns). Females have a broader head.

Colour: Olive-green to brown with black bars and spots along the body. Distinctive cream/yellow collar on the back of the neck adjacent to black crescents which can be absent or reduced in some individuals. The belly is chequered cream and black.

Skin: Keeled scales. Skin is shed in one piece, but may be found broken in to several pieces. Patterns can sometimes be seen in the shed skin. Back scales are keeled, whereas belly scales are wide and unkeeled.

Distribution and habitats: Rare in Jersey and seemingly restricted to the west of the island. The only native snakes species and not found on the other Channel Islands. Non-venomous.



Adult female



Reptilewatch...JE



Shed skin



Photos: Rob Ward