

Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*



The slow worm is found throughout Jersey, with the majority of records being received from the South West of the Island; possibly due to under recording elsewhere. Slow worms look snake like, but are in fact a legless lizard; they can shed their tails and can also blink like other lizards do.



Size – Much smaller than grass snakes, adults can reach up to 30-45cm, with newly born slow worms measuring just 7-10cm.

Features – Slow worms have a polished appearance. Adult females are often light or dark brown and have dark brown sides. They usually also have a thin dark line

running along the centre of their backs. Males have a much larger head than females, with no obvious neck. They are also more uniformly coloured than females, and can be found in different shades of brown, bronze or silver. Mature males sometimes have blue spots along their sides. Juveniles in both sexes are golden in colour, with black sides, a black underside and a single black line running the length of the back from the top of the head.



Habitat – Slow worms often live in gardens and allotments, where they make use of compost heaps, feeding on small slugs and slow moving invertebrates. In wilder areas of Jersey they can be found in heathland, dunes, wet and dry meadows and occasionally woodland. It is rare to see them basking out in the open as they are well camouflaged, and spend much of their time concealed within burrows, compost heaps or underneath logs, vegetation and loose soil. They can occasionally be seen out and about. Hibernation takes place between October/November-March.



Reproduction – Breeding typically takes places in May. Slow worms are ovi-viviparous, meaning, females incubate their young internally, in an egg membrane that breaks shortly after birth. Newborn slow worms are born in the late summer.

The slow worm is protected by the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000.