

SNAKE FUNGAL DISEASE

Cumbria Amphibian and Reptile Group



INTRODUCTION

Snake fungal disease (SFD) is caused by the fungal pathogen *Ophidiomyces ophiodiicola*. It can infect **grass snakes**, however due to being understudied it is unknown if **adders** and **smooth snakes** are susceptible to infection.

SFD was originally recorded in North American **wild snakes** and in **captive snakes**. Though SFD has now been detected in Europe, including the UK.

The disease was discovered in the UK in 2015. Though there is evidence that the disease is **well established** within the UK.

Some snakes can resolve their infection by shedding. Though, the disease can cause **physiological** and **behavioural** changes that **reduce survival**.

Source: ARC Trust



Photo credit: Zoological Society of London

SYMPTOMS

- Thickened or ulcerated skin
- Crusty scales
- Abnormal moulting
- Swelling under skin
- Swelling of face and head
- Anorexia

CONSERVATION IMPLICATIONS

- Implications for UK snakes not known
- More research is needed
- Fungus can persist in soil and can be spread from direct contact with skin
- Possibly transmitted from captive to wild snakes from illegal releases or infected substrate not being sterilised

Report sightings

Report to Garden Wildlife Health

www.gardenwildlifehealth.org