

GRASS SNAKE

(*Natrix natrix*)



Identification:

- Adults up to 150 cm in length.
- Grey-green in colour with a cream, yellow or light green belly.
- Distinctive yellow and black collar behind the head. Dark markings along the side and belly.
- Circular pupil.



Distribution:

- Native to the UK.
- Common in England and Wales but absent from Scotland and Ireland.
- Numbers thought to be declining.

Ecology:

- Non-venomous.
- Very good swimmers and may hunt in the water: often live around fresh water such as lakes, ponds or reservoirs. Also found in gardens, especially those with ponds or compost heaps.
- Feed on amphibians, small mammals, fish and birds.
- Search for prey using sight and sense of smell.



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Froglife is a UK wildlife charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles - working with people, enhancing lives together for a healthier planet. Find out more about our education projects and activities at www.froglife.org

Lifecycle:

- Adult snakes emerge from hibernation in spring to mate.
- Females lay between 2 and 105 eggs (30 is usual) in June or July.
- Eggs are laid in compost heaps, leaf/log piles, dung heaps, and in holes/crevices.
- Juvenile snakes hatch in late summer. Hatchlings are 14-22 cm in length.
- Hibernate between November and March.

Predators and other threats:

- Grass Snakes are eaten by badgers, foxes, domestic cats, and birds.
- Play dead if disturbed or produce a foul-smelling excretion from anal glands.



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