



Wall Lizards in Jersey

Jersey is home to only three resident species of lizard. The slow worm, commonly mistaken for a grass snake, the green lizard (a large lizard found mostly in the south and west of the island) and the wall lizard. All three lizards are protected under the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000, which means the reptiles, their 'dens', and access to their dens are protected.

As the name suggests, the wall lizard is most often seen on vertical surfaces including dry stone walls, rockeries, cliffs and rock piles, but are especially associated with human habitations like fortifications and castles .

Lizards cause no harm to people pets or other wildlife. If you have the privilege of sharing your property with wall lizards, you will find some advice in this leaflet to ensure that you enjoy the company of this unique and delightful animals for many years.

Wall Lizards facts (*Podarcis muralis*)



- They have a variety of spots and stripes that vary between individuals.
- Males are more boldly spotted on the back but often with pale or white markings along the sides. Both male and female can often be coloured quite a green tint.
- Adult individuals reach on average 20cm long, up to two-thirds of which might be tail.
- Good time to see them: on a sunny, warm day.
- They cause no harm to people, pets or other wildlife.
- They have different summer and winter nests/dens.

The Wall lizard shows considerable variation in pattern and colour across Europe, like in Jersey :



Life Cycle: 7-8 eggs (a clutch) are usually laid in low growing vegetation exposed to sunshine in June to July. Incubation takes 9 – 11 weeks and the young emerge in September.

Food: They feed on insects (e.g. bugs, woodlice, earwigs, grasshoppers, butterflies, caterpillars, etc.) and spiders.

Behaviour: They are diurnal (active during the day). Their territory expands up to a 25-50 metre radius.

They blend in with the surroundings



Cats:

If you have cats the lizards will desperately need cover when moving across the garden. Cats are the wall lizard's main predator in Jersey. **To the right - A lizard that had probably lost his tail when trying to escape from a predator. The tail can re-grow.**



How to Encourage Wall Lizards:

- To allow the lizard to bask, vegetation should not be allowed to completely cover the walls. The lizard needs to bask under the sun on hot surfaces to increase its body temperature in order to digest and be active so ongoing weeding and pruning of the wall is required.
- However there must be enough cover to provide physical cover from predators and enough vegetation to attract prey items.
- Areas adjacent to the walls should have lots of vegetation cover e.g. flower beds planted with nectar and pollen plants to attract insects.
- If essential maintenance or re-pointing to the wall has to be done, clearing should be carried out sympathetically and care should be taken because clutches of eggs may be present within the soil amongst roots and in between stones.
- Moving large stones and logs should be avoided during non-active periods from November to February so as not to disturb lizards during hibernation.
- Vegetation (dead or alive) should be removed with care. All kinds of work should preferably be carried out before 10:00 am and not on sunny days when the lizards are active.
- Pesticides should be avoided at all times. Hand tools such as sickles, grass hooks, spades, hoes and forks should be used in preference to machinery.

Wall lizards will utilise piles of stone, logs, loose stonework, crevices and any other nooks or crannies they can find.



Stack loose stones



Create log piles



Making or repairing a lizard friendly wall:

Wall lizards are currently threatened because of the re-pointing of old walls

- New walls should have plenty of holes and crevices that the lizards can use as permanent and temporary refuges.
- Don't make entrance holes too large as mice, shrews and rats may follow the lizards and eat them.
- We suggest an oval entrance hole about 2cm wide by 1cm high with a tunnel of slightly larger internal dimensions running horizontally at right angles to the hole for 20 to 30cm.
- We suggest vegetation cover of the walls should be between 0-30% e.g. very little cover.



Good wall



Bad wall

*For more information, contact the States of Jersey, Environment Department,
Tel: 441624 Fax: 441601 <http://www.gov.je/PlanningEnvironment/Environment/>*