

# Western Green Lizard

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Lacerta bilineata*

**AKA:** *Lacerta viridis*, Madfall Gwyrdd y Gorllewin (Welsh)

**Native to:** France, Spain, northern Italy and the Channel Islands

**Habitat:** Scrub with open patches, overgrown quarries, large gardens

This distinctive lizard is much larger than the native species and other non-native lizards found in the UK and can reach 30-40 cm in length. It is generally green with a white or pale yellow underside. Females occasionally have spots or stripes along the back, while males have blue throats during the breeding season (April-May). This species feeds on smaller lizards, but mainly invertebrates.

There have been numerous introductions in the UK since the late 1800s in North Wales, Devon, Kent and Surrey. A breeding population currently exists in Bournemouth, Dorset.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features

Distinctive green colour with white or pale yellow underside. Adults are much larger than native lizards and can reach 30-40 cm in length. Breeding males develop blue throats. Females sometimes have spots or stripes along the back.

Male



Both adults and young are wary and are best observed using binoculars





# Identification throughout the year

Females lay clutches of 5-20 eggs in burrows during June-July. Juveniles hatch in September and start off brown with pale stripes along back, before developing green colouration in second year.



Breeding male with blue throat

# Distribution

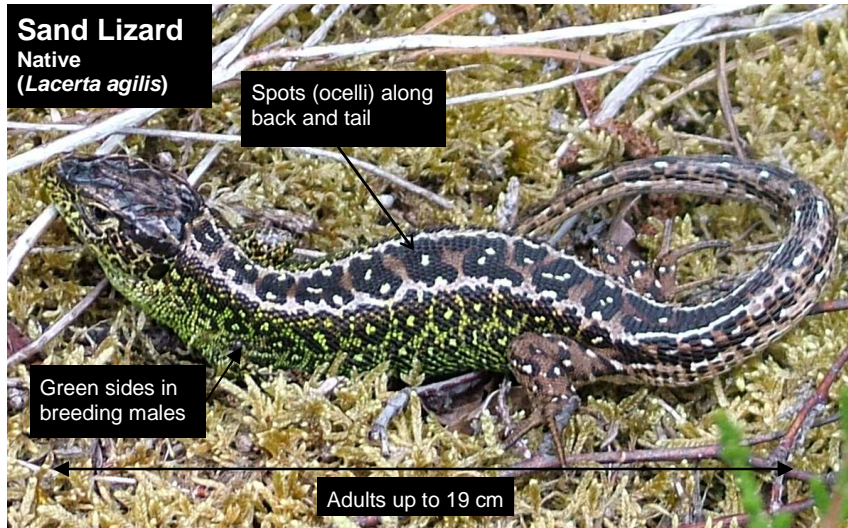
The only known breeding location of the western green lizard is Bournemouth, Dorset.



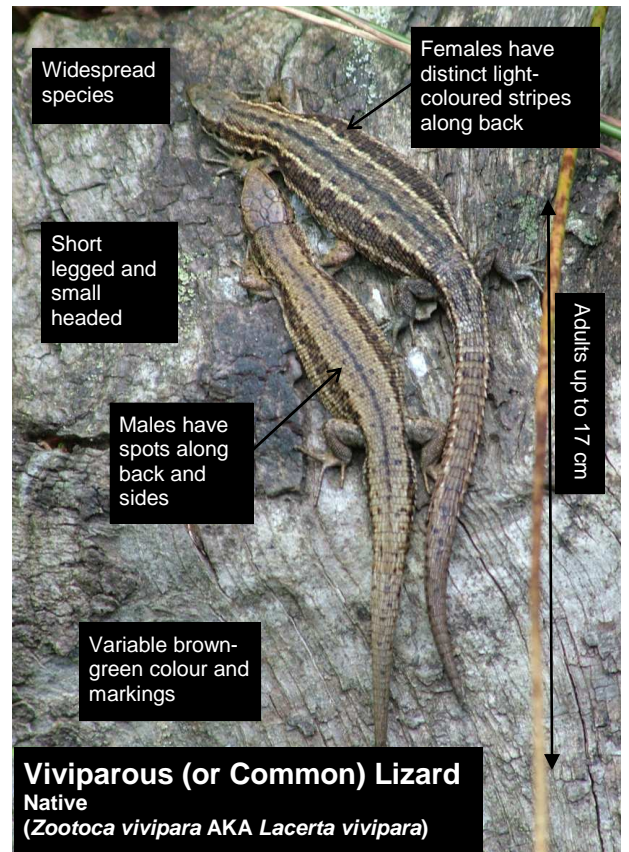
Source: Various

# Similar Species

The sand lizard's range is restricted to lowland heathland and dunes in parts of Surrey, Hampshire, Dorset and Merseyside.

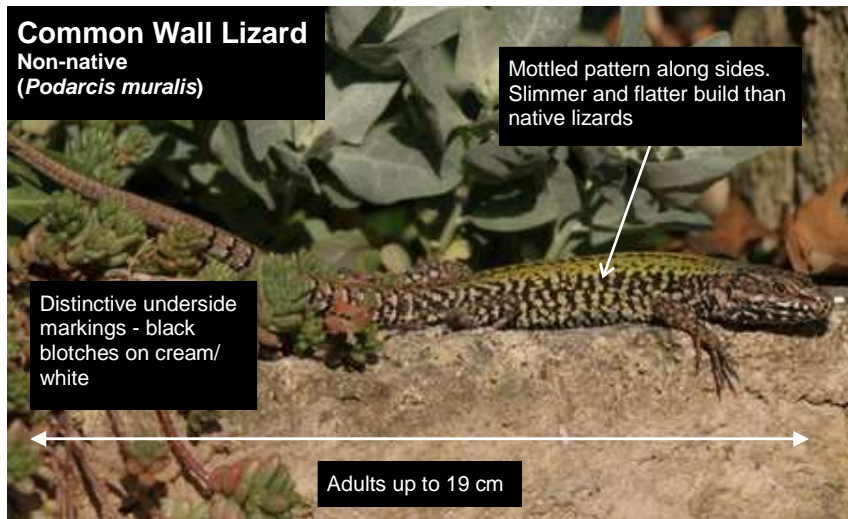


**Sand Lizard**  
Native  
(*Lacerta agilis*)



**Viviparous (or Common) Lizard**  
Native  
(*Zootoca vivipara* AKA *Lacerta vivipara*)

Common wall lizards can be either brown or green in colour with spots or blotches. Found in similar habitat to western green lizard.



**Common Wall Lizard**  
Non-native  
(*Podarcis muralis*)

## References and further reading:

Arnold, N E and Ovenden, D W (2002) "*Collins Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Britain and Europe*". HarperCollins

Beebee, T and Griffiths, R (2000) "*Amphibians and reptiles: A Natural History of the British Herpetofauna*". HarperCollins

Lever, C (1979) "*The naturalised animals of the British Isles*". Paladin

[www.alienencounters.org.uk](http://www.alienencounters.org.uk)