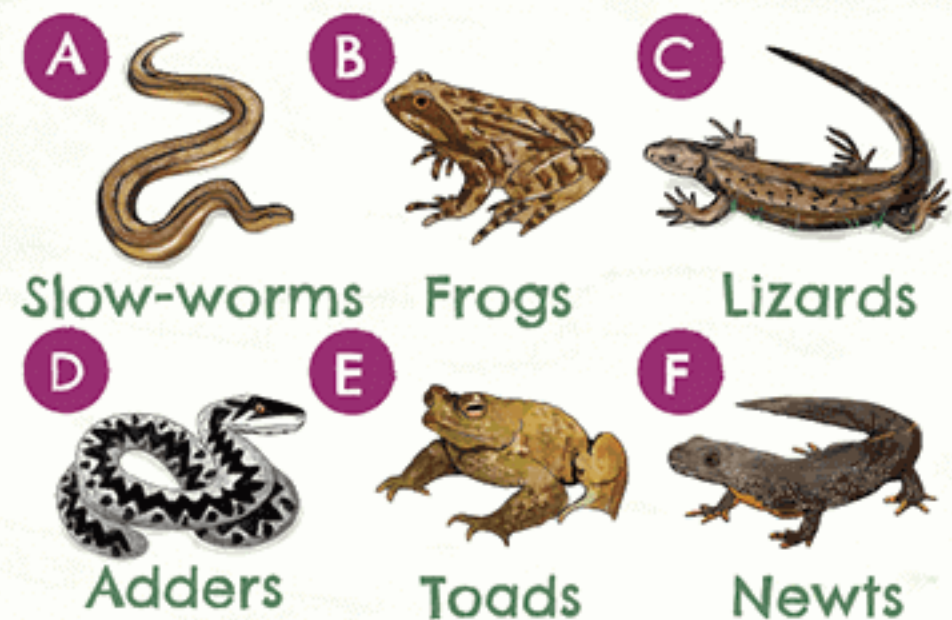


Reptile collective nouns

There are lots of different terms for different groups of wildlife. Can you match up the terms to the correct creature below?



1. Army
2. Armada
3. Knot
4. Lounge
5. Sun
6. Glow

Answers: A6, B1, C4, D5, E3, F2.

A word to show off to your teachers...

Ectothermic

Ectothermic is a word made up from bits of old Greek words. Ektos means outside and thermos means heat.

Reptiles are ectothermic. They are cold-blooded, which means they need the sun to warm them up. Only then can they move around and find food and friends.

Would you like to be ectothermic?

Yes! No.

☐ ☐

Did you know?
Reptiles can't warm up, or cool down, by themselves.

When you go looking for reptiles, always take an adult with you. Like us, wear long trousers and boots. Be slow and quiet!

Other creatures under the mats

When we lift the reptile mats we don't always find reptiles. Sometimes we see amphibians too. Quite often black ants make their home underneath!

Common frog

They are usually olive green or brown, which helps keep them camouflaged. If they are disturbed, their long legs help frogs to jump away quickly.



I have lovely, long, stripy legs for leaping!

Common toad

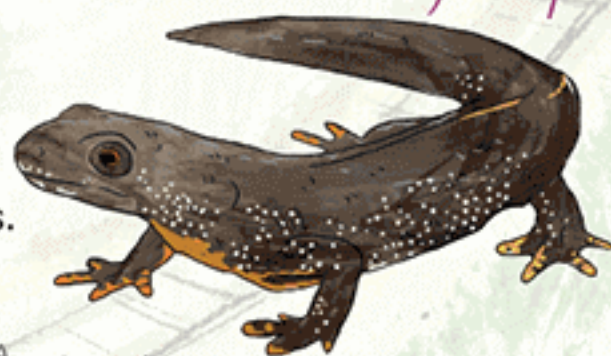
Toads sometimes take cover under the mats. They have shorter legs than frogs, so cannot leap. They mooch slowly away if disturbed. We try not to disturb them too much.



I have lumpy skin and stunning, copper-coloured eyes!

Great crested newt

Great crested newts are the biggest newts in the UK! They are most active at night and sometimes rest under the mats. They are very beautiful.



Look at my bright, spotty belly and painted toenails!



Follow Kit and friends in the NYMR Activity Book and learn more about the railway, engines and our wildlife.



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Reptiles on the railway



Did you know?
Reptiles are cold-blooded animals, such as lizards and snakes.



Hi, I'm Kit... I'm learning about the wildlife on the lineside. I have been really excited to learn about the reptiles that live here. I have been out with the Lineside Conservation Volunteers to look for reptiles. Knowing where they are means that we can look after them and their habitats. Come along and join me!

Reptile mats

You might see black mats with little blue flags on the lineside. They are reptile survey mats. They warm up quickly in the sun, attracting snakes and lizards. We watch the mats to see if any reptiles are using them and lift them to find out if any reptiles are hiding underneath. Without the mats it is really hard to find lizards and slow-worms.

Reptile mat



Slow-worm

Although slow-worms might look like snakes, they are actually a type of legless lizard. They can be hard to see because they love to hide under things and in burrows.

They are totally harmless and quite shy. They will move away slowly if disturbed.

They are about 4 cm long and have gold or silver backs with a black stripe down the middle and a black dot on their head.

They like to live where there are lots of different types of plants for cover. They love compost bins in gardens, because they are warm and dark. They eat minibeasts like slugs and snails, ants and spiders.

Slow-worms can live to 20 or 30 years old!

Did you know?

In August or September, a female slow-worm can give birth to as many as 12 tiny baby slow-worms.

Guide me home

Can you help guide the slow-worm through the maze to the compost heap?



Common lizard

We have to be smart and fast to see common lizards. Occasionally we are lucky and one runs by us, but normally they can feel the vibrations of our footsteps and shoot off fast. Being able to move fast is really important because lots of animals like to eat them.

Some people say that individual lizards have favourite foods and foods they think are yucky — just like me!

If you do get a look at one, you can see that they have beautiful patterns. Some are dark in colour or even bright green!

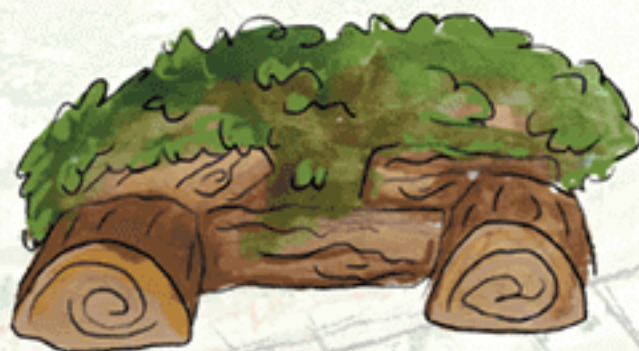
Did you know?

They are found in many places on the lineside looking for dinner, which can be anything from spiders and grasshoppers to worms and centipedes.

Reptile refuge

You might also see these, which you can build versions of in your garden. It's a compost heap made with old pallets. On the bottom are logs to keep the compost airy and to allow reptiles to crawl in. On the top are meadow cuttings which compost and are super cosy for reptiles. In late summer they are full of young lizards.

Reptile refuge



Adder

Adders are the only venomous snake in the UK. Venomous means that when they bite their prey, they inject a toxin called venom to kill it. The prey, normally a mouse or vole, crawls away and dies.

The adder only has to follow it to catch its dinner!

Adders can be hard to find because of their camouflaged markings. They have beautiful diamond-shaped patterns on their back which blend into the bracken and plants on the lineside. I see them mostly on warm days in the spring or autumn when they need to move into the open to bask in the sunshine.

Did you know?

Males are black and silver and females are brown.



Adders won't bite you unless they are scared. It is rare, but it can happen and the bite can be sore and make you poorly. It's always best to see a doctor if you think you have been bitten by an adder.

There are two other native snakes in the UK, they are smooth snakes and grass snakes, but sadly we don't have them on the lineside. Well, not that we can find!

Did you know?

Venomous species like adders release their toxins with a bite or sting. Poisonous species like a ladybird only release their toxins if you bite or eat them!

