

Grass Snake

Regno: fauna

Reptiles

 [natrixnatrix.jpg](#) [1]

Grass Snake - *Natrix natrix*

Well-defined and rather large head, widening posteriorly in adults. Colour varies greatly, but in this part of Italy specimens have a greenish-grey background with four longitudinal stripes of dark bars; there are two dark bars at the sides of the neck, which in the young and sub-adults are preceded by pale markings.

The adults of the species reach on average 70 cm (males) and 120 cm (females) in length, but can be much longer. A semi-aquatic species which can be found in all fresh water environments. Exceptionally it has also been sighted in the sea.

The females in particular, after a certain age, leave the water to live in the woods, rocky ravines and arid places.

The Grass Snake begins its activity in March-April; from October-November it begins its period of winter lethargy which it spends in deep hiding places, in tree trunks and in the ground.

Diurnal, it moves quickly over the ground and is also an excellent swimmer, capable of going without air for over 30 minutes in the water. It hunts in the morning and late afternoon, catching terrestrial and aquatic prey.

The young feed on molluscs, insects, frog and newt tadpoles etc., the adults on newts, frogs, salamanders, fish, toads, small rodents, fledglings and lizards. It breeds in summer, laying from 10 to 50 eggs hidden under leaves, in holes in the ground etc. The females often lay all their eggs together.

The hatchlings emerge in mid-September. It is the most common snake in Europe and the one that can most easily be found in human settlements.

It is totally harmless to man, but if disturbed it can feign death, if caught it will give off a foul smelling secretion.

Protected species under the Regional Law of Tuscany no. 56/2000.

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Links:

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