



# Reptiles in the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra





## The Iberian Wall Lizard

(*Podarcis hispanica*)

**Size:** 70 mm in head and body length. **Diet:** flies, mosquitos, centipedes, spiders, ants, grasshoppers and beetles. In cities, they may also consume bits of waste food and other detritus. They are preyed upon by various species such as: other lizards, snakes, birds of prey, herons, storks,

shrikes, mongoose and genets. Their main means of defence are escape and the ability to shed their tails as a diversionary tactic. They are active most of the year round and only require temperatures of above 13°C. **Reproduction:** breeding starts in February and continues through to April. The

females may breed 2-3 times per year with each resulting in 1-5 eggs. These hatch between June and September following around two months of incubation. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, they are common in the immediate vicinity of the buildings.



## The Algerian Sand Lizard

(*Psammodromus algirus*)

**Size:** 90 mm in head and body length (300 mm in total length).

**Diet:** beetles, spiders, ants, grasshoppers and pseudoscorpion. Sporadically, they may also consume the young of other lizard species as well as its own and along with vegetation. Their predators include snakes, other lizards, shrikes, storks, birds of prey, foxes and genets. Their defence mechanisms include both their capacity to climb and to shed their tails.

**Reproduction:** From April to July. The females lay between 2-3 times between May and July with each consisting of 2-12 eggs that hatch between August and October following 1-3 months of incubation. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, this species is common throughout.



## Schreiber's Green Lizard

(*Lacerta schreiberi*)

**Size:** 125 mm in head and body length (with the tail extending double the body length).

**Diet:** flies, mosquitos, grasshoppers and beetles while also eating forest fruits. They are preyed upon by birds of prey, storks, ginets and otters. Their defence mechanisms span fleeing, camouflage and the ability to shed its tail. This species remains active from February to October when it goes into hibernation.

**Reproduction:** From April to July. The eggs are laid in exposed sites without any vegetation between May and July. The number of eggs ranges between 6 and 17 depending on the size of the female with the eggs hatching after 2-3 months. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, the species is found along the Safarujó watercourse.



## Common Wall Gecko

(*Tarentola mauritanica*)

**Size:** 150 mm in length (85 mm in head-body length).

**Diet:** insects. Their predators include snakes, other lizards, birds of prey, cats, hedgehogs and rats. In defence, they may both shed their tails (autotomy) and issue sounds of alarm whenever threatened. This species displays both crepuscular and nocturnal habits. In general, it remains active all year round apart from in colder regions where it hibernates.

**Reproduction:** From spring to summer. During reproduction, the males become territorial and demarcate their borders through emitting sounds. The females lay more than once per year and generally between April and June. 1-2 eggs get laid and deposited underneath stones or in holes and then incubated throughout 4-12 days in warm locations and up to 9 months when colder. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, they are commonly found on the walls of illuminated buildings.



## Ocellated Lizard

(*Lacerta lepida*)

**Size:** 150-260 mm in head and body length (with its tail reaching double this length). **Diet:** beetles, butterflies, grasshoppers, bees, spiders and centipedes and complemented by both vegetation and fruit. They may also hunt other lizards and small mammals. This species is an excellent climber that not only enables it to access birds nests, their eggs and their young, but also to escape

their predators that include birds of prey, storks, herons, snakes and other carnivorous mammals. Their main means of defence is their speed and, whenever threatened, they raise their head and open their mouths wide and may attempt to bite. They are active between March and October when they then enter into hibernation. **Reproduction:** spring. During the season, the males become ter-

ritorial and on occasion resulting in violent battles. Breeding takes place between March and May with the eggs laid between May and June (5-22 eggs). In order to ensure sufficient humidity, the eggs are buried beneath stones, tree trunks or other rotting vegetation. Incubation takes between 2-3 months. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, this species is common throughout.



## Iberian Worm Lizard

(*Blanus cinereus*)

**Size:** 260-280 mm in length.

**Diet:** ants, insect larvae and other subterranean arthropods. They are preyed upon by lizards, snakes, shrikes, birds of prey and frogs. In the presence of predators, they roll their body up in on itself and twist violently. They may also shed their tails and, on occasion, bite. They remain active from February to November and are both diurnal and nocturnal and opt for subterranean habitats.

**Reproduction:** Prior to spring. The eggs are laid in the months of June and July and formed by one single but large egg. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, they are common throughout its extent.



## Western Three-toed Skink

(*Chalcides striatus*)

**Size:** 210 mm in head and body length (435 mm in total length).

**Diet:** slugs, crickets, flies, beetles and spiders. Their predators range from snakes and other lizards to birds of prey, herons, hedgehogs, foxes, gannets, skunks, badgers, mongoose and wild boar. The speed of retreat and the ability to shed its tail represent the main defence mechanisms of this species. It has diurnal habits and is active between February and October. **Reproduction:** From spring to summer. The offspring are born between July and August with this ovoviviparous species laying 1-15 eggs. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, they are common throughout but especially in the pasture lands.



## adder Snake

(*Rhinechis Scalaris*)

**Size:** 150 cm in length.

**Diet:** rodents, lizards, young rabbits and adult and young birds. They adopt the constrictor method of hunting in various situations. In turn, they are the prey for birds of prey and for mongoose. This is an aggressive species whenever disturbed and may produce sounds, secrete cloacal liquids and attempt to bite. As it is not venomous, this snake represents no danger to humans – as is common to the Aglyph species. Typically diurnal, this becomes more crepuscular in the peak of summer. This is an agile snake type and moves easily up trees and buildings.

**Reproduction:** late spring through to mid-summer. The females lay between 4-24 eggs under stones, abandoned burrows or even in self-excavated holes. During incubation, the females care for the eggs in the period before they hatch some 1-3 months later. This species may be found throughout the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra.



## Spanish Pond Turtle

(*Mauremys leprosa*)

**Size:** 189-212 mm. **Diet:** vegetation and invertebrates whilst also ingesting fish and amphibians. Its predators include herons, storks and birds of prey in addition to wild boar, otter and foxes.

**Diurnal** in nature, the turtle hibernates in cold regions. **Reproduction:** in late spring. The eggs are laid in June and July with the female digging a hole beyond the waterline and burying the eggs

numbering between 1-12. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, this species is common to the Safarujo watercourse and the Taipas and Álamos tanks.



## Grass Snake

(*Natrix natrix*)

**Size:** 100-120 cm in total length.

**Diet:** invertebrates, amphibians and fish. Their predators include the Montpellier snake, birds of prey, otters, weasels and genets. Their defence mechanisms include both releasing an unpleasant smell and playing dead by taking up a position exposing its ventral section, open mouthed and not moving. As an Aglyph type snake, it is not dangerous to humans. This species has diurnal habits and active from March to October. The snake is both territorial and aquatic and a very agile, swift and good swimmer. **Reproduction:** spring and autumn. The females lay between 6-70 eggs between June and July below fallen trunks and in naturally occurring holes. Sometimes this site is communal and shared with literally hundreds of eggs in a single site. Hatching takes place 1-2 months later. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, this is found across the extent of its grounds.



## Southern Smooth Snake

(*Coronella girondica*)

**Size:** 70 cm in length.

**Diet:** lizards, geckos, western three-toed skinks and small snakes. In turn, this snake is hunted by birds of prey, other snakes, wild boar and small carnivores. This is a peaceful species and rarely and only inoffensively bites. Its primary means of defence is issuing an unpleasant smell from its cloacal vents. This species is both crepuscular and nocturnal and active from March to October. **Reproduction:** Breeding takes place between May and June with the eggs laid in July and numbering between 5-10 depending on the size of the female. The eggs incubate for 1-2 months. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, this species has been identified in the Chanquinho pine forest and Milhariça zones.



## Montpellier Snake

(*Malpolon monspessulanus*)

**Size:** 2 m in length (the largest snake in Portugal).

**Diet:** other snakes, rodents, different lizard types and young rabbits. Its predators range from birds of prey to mongoose and wild boar. While its main means of defence is fleeing, whenever threatened, it may prove aggressive, raise its head, breathe and bite. This snake type produces a strong neurotoxic venom but despite this poses no danger to man as of the opisthglyph type (venomous fangs located in the rear section of the mouth). Typically diurnal but adopting more crepuscular habits in the peak of summer. This is a very agile snake species and both climbs and swims with great ease. **Reproduction:** spring. Breeding takes place between May and June and one month later the females lay between 4-20 eggs beneath stones, decaying vegetation or in the burrows of rodents or rabbits with incubation lasting around two months. This species is found across the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra with the largest examples spotted in the Lombas area.



## Viperine Snake

(*Natrix maura*)

**Size:** 65-70 cm in length. **Diet:** feeds essentially while in the water and targeting amphibians, small fish and invertebrates. It is the prey for Montpellier snakes, herons, birds of prey and otters. When threatened, it may pretend to be dead, release an unpleasant smelling substance, raise its head to make it more triangular (making itself

appear viper like) and issue a whistling noise. Diurnal in habit, this species remains active between March and October and both on land and in water even while, when compared with the grass snake, it is more at home in the water and less agile on land. **Reproduction:** Spring. The females may have multiple breeding partners and gener-

ally deposit their eggs (4-32) between June and July and laid among tree roots and other decomposing vegetation with hatching occurring after 1-3 months. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, this species is found along the Safarujo watercourse.



## Lataste's Viper

(*Vipera latastei*)

**Size:** 70 cm in length.

**Diet:** small mammals, lizards and especially their young mammals, birds, amphibians and insects. Their predators include birds of prey, wild boar, mongoose, genets, hedgehogs and other snakes. In their own defence, they attempt to escape whilst otherwise breathing loudly and attempting to bite. They produce a venom with proteolytic properties and dangerous even to humans as a solenoglyph species (with its venomous fangs located in the frontal section of its mouth). This is a diurnal species even while turning either crepuscular or even nocturnal in the summer heat. **Reproduction:** spring. The females of this ovoviviparous species produce 5-8 offspring in late summer. In the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra, the snake has been identified in the Celebredo and Sunível areas (with the largest number spotted by the pond there). This species is classified as Vulnerable by the Red Book of the Vertebrates of Portugal.



## Horseshoe Whip Snake

(*Coluber hippocrepis*)

**Size:** 80-150 cm in length.

**Diet:** rodents, geckos, different lizard species and birds. They are preyed upon by birds of prey and by mongoose. When in danger, they curl up and dilate their heads, make noises and may bite. However, this species bears no danger to man given it belongs to the Aglyph group (without venomous fangs). With diurnal habits, this snake hibernates between November and March but is otherwise agile and a good climber.

**Reproduction:** during spring and the beginning of summer. Females deposit 4-11 eggs at a time, generally occurring in July, and beneath rotting tree trunks or abandoned burrows with incubation ongoing for 6-8 weeks. This species is common throughout the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra.

# Reptiles

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PATRIMÓNIO  
NATURAL  
COM HISTÓRIA.

