

Amphibians and reptiles (i.e. herptiles)

13 amphibians and 6 reptiles occur in Sweden.

Only 9 of the amphibians occur in western Sweden.

These 9 amphibians along with the 6 reptiles are listed below.

The animals are ordered by taxonomy with slides noting each new order.

Unura: Frogs/Stjärtlösa groddjur



Bombina bombina

Fire-bellied toad/Klockgroda



Identification

- Like all other Anura, larvae lacks external gills.
- Toad-like.
- Readily identifiable by bright red/ orange/ yellow markings.

Potential misidentifications

- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- Breed in small fish-free ponds.
- Small population in Western Sweden is introduced.

Total length

Up to 5 cm



Hyla arborea

Common tree frog/Lövgroda



Identification

- Frog-like.
- Bright green color with black line through eye.

Potential misidentifications

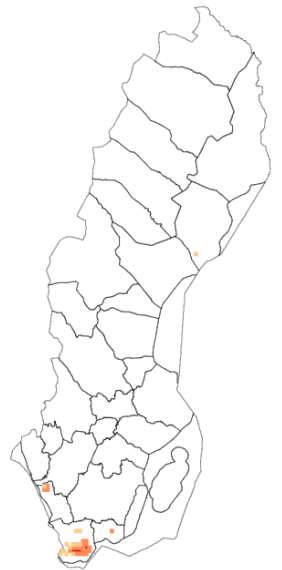
- No similar species in Sweden.

Habitat

- Breeds in sunny fish-free ponds.
- Adults arboreal/ semi arboreal.
- Small population in Western Sweden is introduced.

Total length

Up to 5 cm



Bufo bufo

Common toad/Vanlig padda



Identification

- Toad-like.
- Large paratoid (poison producing) gland (see arrow).
- Dull color.
- Pupil red or orange.

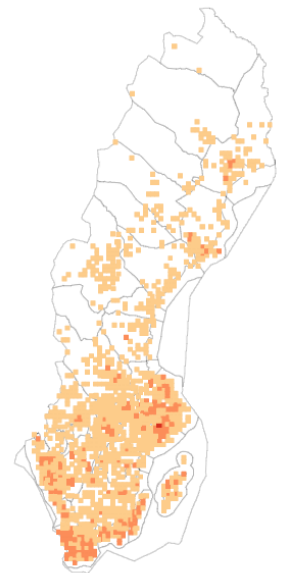
Potential misidentifications

- Natterjack toad (Herptiles nr. 4) is similar but more colorful and has green pupils.

Habitat

- Occurs in very variable habitats.
- Frequently overwinters in houses.

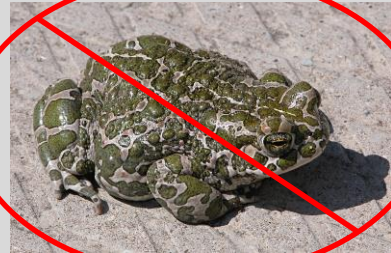
Total length Up to 18 cm



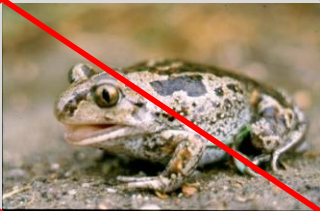
Epidalea calamita Natterjack toad/Strandpadda



Bufo bufo



Bufotes viridis



Pelobates fuscus

Identification

- Toad-like.
- Large paratoid (poison producing) gland.
- Pupils green.
- Generally very colorful for a toad.
- Nearly always with yellow vertical line on body.
- Tends to run while other toads move in small jumps.

Potential misidentifications

- Common toad (Herptiles nr 3, see this).
- *Bufotes viridis* (not in Western Sweden) look similar but lacks yellow line and is more colorful.
- *Pelobates fuscus* (not in Western Sweden) is somewhat similar but lacks paratoid glands.

Habitat

- Prefers open areas near coast.

Total length

Up to 10 cm



Pelophylax esculentus

Edible frog/Ätlig groda



Rana sp

Identification

- Frog-like.
- Generally recognizable by large size and green color.
- Some individuals may be brownish.
- Genus reliably identifiable by break in dorsolateral fold (red arrow).

Potential misidentifications

- Very similar to *Pelophylax lessonae* (not in Western Sweden).
- The two can be told apart by length of back-leg.
- When stretched heel of bag-leg can reach snout in Edible frog but only eyes in *Pelophylax lessonae*.

Habitat

- Generalist.
- Can breed in water-bodies of nearly all sizes.

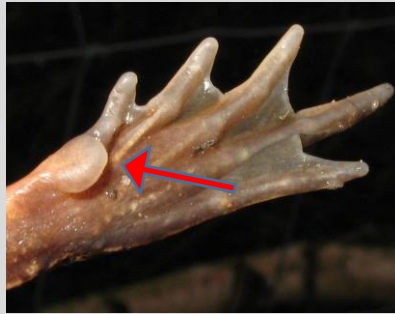
Total length

Up to 10 cm

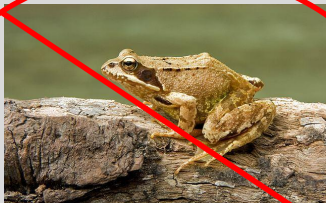


Rana arvalis

Moor frog/Åkergröda



Male in mating season



Rana temporaria



Rana temporaria

Identification

- Brown frog without break in dorsolateral fold.
- Male blue in mating season.
- Face pointy in profile (compare with common frog).
- Large and hard metatarsal tubule on back foot (compare with common frog, see arrow).
- Heel of back-leg when stretched reaches eyes.

Potential misidentifications

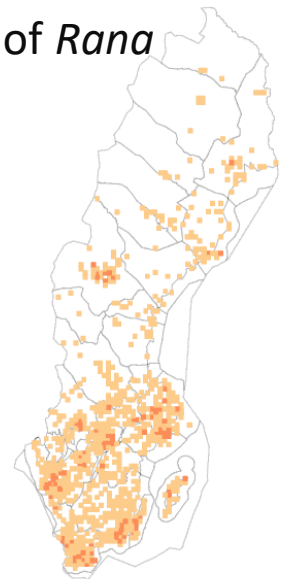
- Similar to common frog (Herptile nr. 7), see above.
- Also similar to *Rana dalmatina* (not in Western Sweden). The heel of the stretched legs of *Rana dalmatina* reaches beyond snout.

Habitat

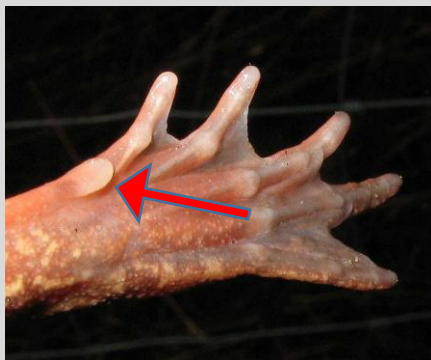
- Prefer open landscapes.

Total length

Up to 8 cm



Rana temporaria Common frog/Vanlig groda

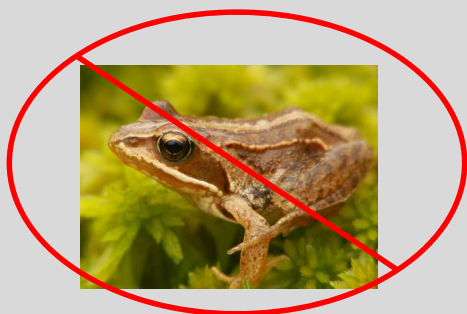


Identification

- Brown frog without break in dorsolateral fold.
- Face blunt in profile (compare with moor frog).
- Small and soft metatarsal tubule on back foot (compare with moor frog, see arrow).
- Heel of back-leg when stretched reaches eyes.

Potential misidentifications

- *Rana arvalis* (Herptile nr. 6), see above.
- *Rana dalmatina* (Not in Western Sweden). The heel of the stretched legs of *Rana dalmatina* reaches beyond snout.



Rana temporaria



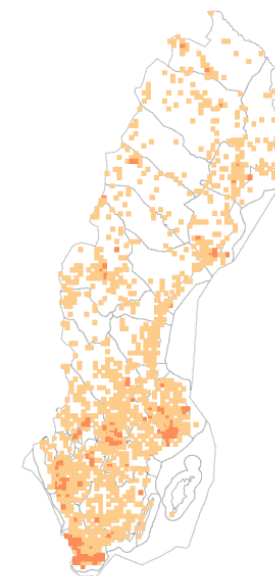
Rana temporaria

Habitat

- Generalist.

Total length

Up to 11 cm

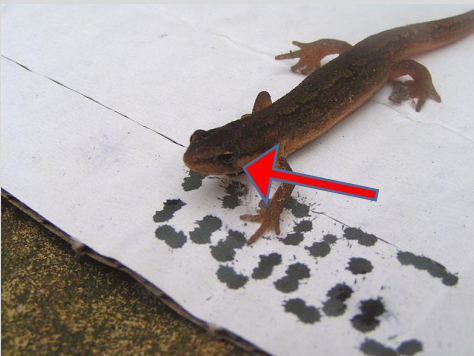


Urodela: Salamanders/Stjärtgroddjur



Lissotriton vulgaris

Smooth newt/Mindre vattensalamander



Male with mating crest



Identification

- Adult somewhat lizard like but lack scales.
- Larvae recognizable as a salamander by external gills.
- Adults has a distinct black through eye on side of head (red arrow).
- Crest of mating male small.
- Underside with orange band and white sides.

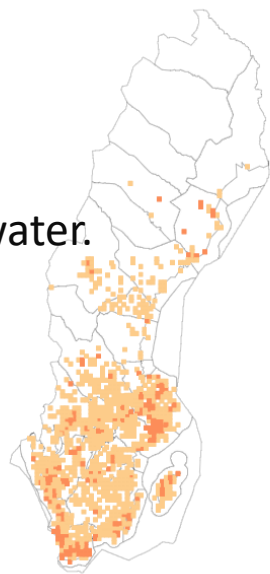
Potential misidentifications

- Similar to crested newt (Herptile nr. 9). Easiest told apart by underside colours.

Habitat

- Generalist, but prefer open areas.
- Adults terrestrial but normally close to water.
- Generally most common salamander.
- Nocturnal.

Total length Up to 11 cm



Triturus cristatus

Crested newt/Större vattensalamander

LC



Identification

- Adult somewhat lizard like but lack scales.
- Larvae recognizable as a salamander by external gills.
- No black line on side of head.
- Crest of mating males large.
- Underside orange with black markings.

Potential misidentifications

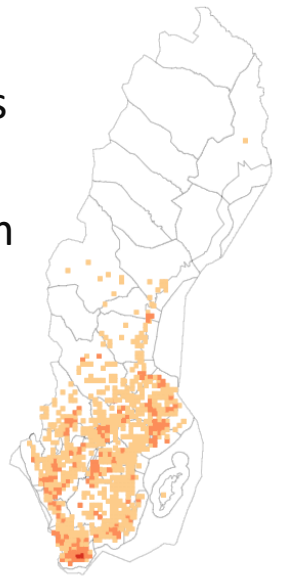
- Similar to smooth newt (Herpétile nr. 8). Easiest told apart by underside colours.

Habitat

- Generally breeds in relatively deep pools without fish.
- Adults terrestrial and often seen far from water.
- Nocturnal.

Total length

Up to 18 cm



Squamata: Squamata/Fjällbärande kräldjur



Lacerta agilis

Sand lizard/Sandödla



Male in spring



Identification

- Males in spring readily identifiable by green color otherwise brownish.
- Larger than viviparous lizard.
- Two rows of dark spots with white centers called “oceli” on back of animal.
- Substantially longer claws on back legs than on front legs.

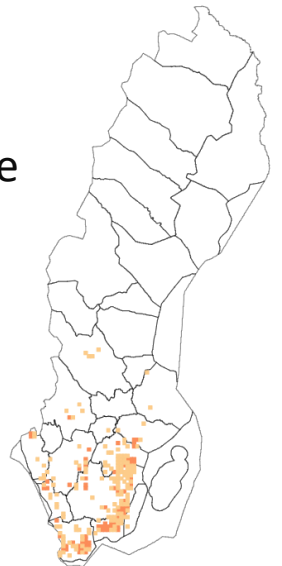
Potential misidentifications

- Similar to viviparous lizard (Herpiles nr. 11), see this.

Habitat

- Prefers dry often coastal areas with some vegetation.
- Nocturnal.

Total length	Up to 25 cm
Length without tail	Up to 11 cm



Zootoca vivipara Viviparous lizard/Skogsödla



Identification

- Generally darker brown than sand lizard.
- Smaller and thinner than Sand lizard.
- Lacking "oceli".
- Similar claws on front and back legs.

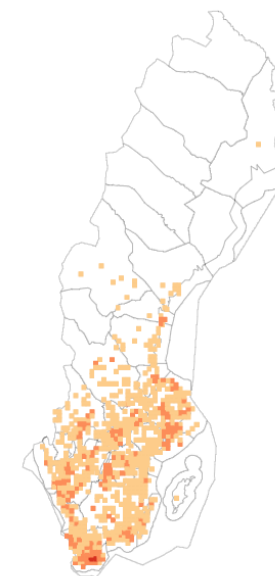
Potential misidentifications

- Similar to sand lizard (Herptiles nr. 10), see this.

Habitat

- Generalist but normally wetter habits than sand lizard.
- Gives birth to live young.

Total length	Up to 20 cm
Length without tail	Up to 6.5 cm



Anguis fragilis

Slow worm/Kopparödla



Identification

- Only legless lizard in Sweden.
- Shorter and plumper than snakes.
- Unlike snakes has to open mouth to put out tongue.
- Regularly loses tail.

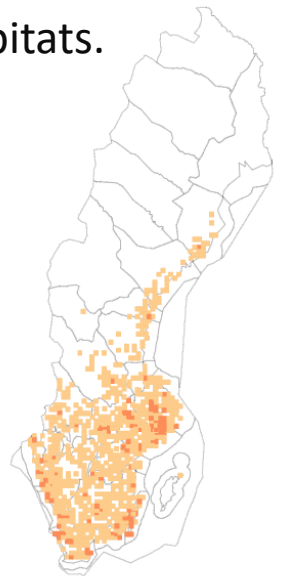
Potential misidentifications

- Potentially mistaken for snake (Herptiles nr. 13-15).

Habitat

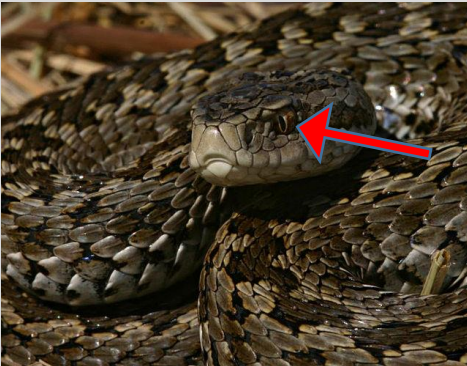
- Semi-fossorial (fossorial means burrowing).
- Found in diverse but generally moist habitats.

Total length	Up to 50 cm
Length without tail	Up to 22 cm



Vipera berus

Adder/Huggorm



Identification

- Brown snake, generally easily identifiable by “zig-zag” pattern on back (see top picture).
- Particular on very dark specimens this may be hard to see.
- Only snake with a vertical pupil.

Potential misidentifications

- Potentially other snakes (Herptiles nr. 14-15) but pupil shape is a certain character to identify this species.

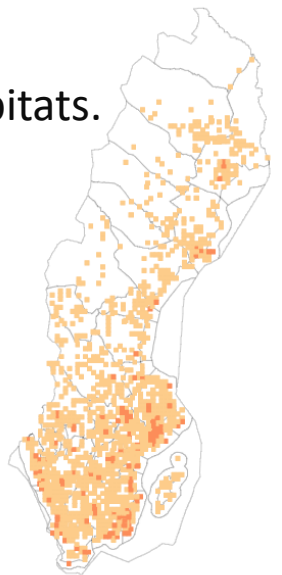
Habitat

- Found in diverse but generally moist habitats.
- Only venomous snake in Sweden.

Total length

Up to 90 cm

Usually <65 cm



Natrix natrix

Grass snake/Vanlig snok



Identification

- Nearly all are grey/ dark-brown or black with two yellow spots on neck. Spots may fade in older individuals.
- Few individuals lack these and can initially be mistaken as black adders.
- Round pupil.

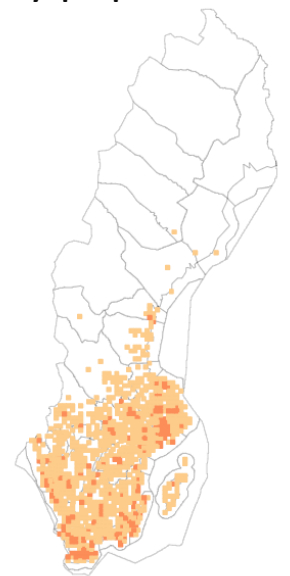
Potential misidentifications

- The rare individuals lacking yellow spots can be mistaken for adders but are identifiable by pupil shape.

Habitat

- Seen in very variable habitats.
- Often seen swimming or at least near water.

Total length Up to 150 cm



Coronella austriaca

Smooth snake/Hasselsnok



Identification

- Grey to brown with two rows of dark spots.
- Black line on side of head from nose to end of head.
- Round pupil.

Potential misidentifications

- Can initially look like adders (Herpiles nr. 13) but has round pupils

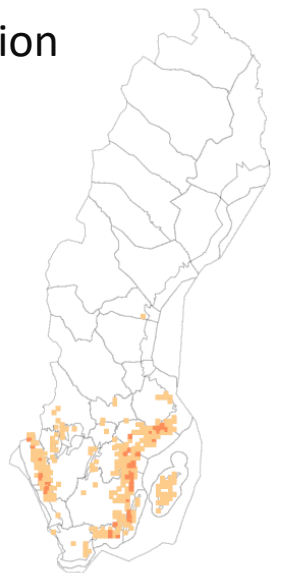
Habitat

- Sunny sandy or rocky areas.
- Rarely seen and normally in low population densities.

Total length

Up to 90 cm

Usually <70 cm



Sources

Species selected and text written by Søren Faurby.

Body sizes are taken from Field guide to the Amphibians & Reptiles of Britain and Europe (British Wildlife Field Guides, Speubroeck et al).

Distributional maps for all taxa taken from artfakta.se

Pictures of feet of *Rana temporaria* and *R. arvalis* by Poul Evald Hansen

Remaining pictures from wikipedia commons.