

## Common (Viviparous) Lizard

### *Lacerta vivipara*



Viviparous Lizard – is Ireland’s only native reptile – it is well adapted to Irish weather conditions. Unlike other lizard species they give birth to live young! Females still produce their eggs, but they are keeping them inside for about 3 months. During this period, the female basks as much as possible to encourage her eggs to develop. The young then break free from their eggs whilst still inside their mother and emerge as free-living reptiles!

The common lizard has also one of the widest ranges of any vertebrate - it is found from Ireland through Europe and across Asia, reaching the Pacific coast. It occurs as far south as the Mediterranean, and is the most northerly of all reptiles, inhabiting Scandinavia and Arctic Russia!

Not all common lizards give birth to live young – southern populations with warmer climate (France, Spain) lay eggs the same way other lizards do.

Their diet consists of various invertebrates (insects, earthworms, spiders...) They hunt their prey by pouncing upon it and shaking it in their mouths, before swallowing it whole. In Ireland lizards hibernate from October till March, often in groups. That’s also not true about all *Lacerta vivipara* populations – southern populations can be active throughout the year!

Keep an eye out for lizards during your summer walks, especially if the weather is sunny. Look for good basking spots such as rocks, logs or walls, and don’t forget to send us your photographs!