herpy

ANGUIDS

Slow Worm

Anguis fragilis

Anguis fragilis is a legless, glossy lizard of 40-50 cm that lives hidden under stones, wood and dense vegetation in western and central Europe. It looks like a snake, but has eyelids and can shed its tail. It feeds on slugs and earthworms, gives birth to live young and can live to a great age. It needs a cool, humid enclosure or outdoor set-up with a deep substrate, many hiding places and a proper brumation.

Family: Anguidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**40-50 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**20-100 g**
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**18-24 °C**
Basking spot	**25-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**10-15 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Winter rest	**4-8 °C** 16-20 weeks
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**In pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**36-48 months**
Litter size	**6-12 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**80-100 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
Care of *Anguis fragilis* is only sparsely documented, but the species is hardy and breeds readily when conditions are right. The figures here are based on the species' way of life and climate.

TEMPERATURE
The species does not tolerate strong heat. The daytime temperature should be 18-24 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
Humidity should be 60-80 %. The substrate should be slightly damp at depth, but never wet, and the top layer may dry out a little between mistings. Mist lightly every day or every other day, and keep the moss damp.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is most active in the morning and at dusk and mostly basks indirectly. UVB is therefore not necessary, but a weak UVB tube (Ferguson zone 1) over one end gives the animal the option, as long as there are many hides.

FEEDING
Anguis fragilis feeds on slow-moving prey and prefers small grey field slugs above all else. It also takes other slugs, earthworms, leatherjackets, maggots, spiders and small snails.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
Anguis fragilis is calm and spends most of its time in the substrate or under cover, often with only the head sticking up.

NATIVE RANGE
Norway, Sweden, Denmark, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Czechia, Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia.