

## MIDWIFE TOAD

The Latin name for the Midwife toad is *Alytes obstetricans*.

It is a member of the primitive frog family. This species occurs only in Europe, from Belgium into Spain, and has been introduced into England. It is found from sea level up to 2,000m.

Midwife toads are the most terrestrial members of the toad family. In contrast to most frogs, midwife toads breed on land, not water, and the males carry and care for the eggs.

During the breeding season from April to August, the male attracts a female by calling from his refuge under a rock or from a burrow in the ground. When a female appears, the male clasps her with his front legs and strokes her with his hind legs, inducing her to lay 20 to 60 eggs in a string. The male then fertilizes the eggs as pushing his hindlegs through the egg mass until the strings become entangled around his thighs extrudes them.

He emerges from his hiding place at night to moisten them by entering the water or allowing dew to condense on them. In about a month the male enters the water, where the tadpoles hatch and complete their development.