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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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Title: Book Review: A Provisional Atlas of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Essex

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A Provisional Atlas of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Essex.  
Essex Biological Records Centres Publication No. 2.  
Size A4. 38pp. Published by Passmore Edwards Museum (Romford Road,  
Stratford, London E15 4LZ) at £1.00 plus 30p postage.

Maps of all native species found in Essex, plotted on 1km. and 10km. squares for three date bands, pre-1960, 1960-1979, and 1980-1983, plus composite maps for Edible Frog, Marsh Frog, Unidentified Newts, Spotted Salamander, Terrapins, Green Lizard, Tesselated Snake, Texan Garter Snake. Supportive text for each species, includes some interesting snippets of information in addition to notes on status, distribution and references. Amongst the introductory paragraphs are interesting sections on Fossil Records, Conservation and a well-researched bibliography.

Some minor criticisms. The base maps are a little on the heavy side and one has to try hard to distinguish some isolated dots from the general background. My personal preference is to miss out the 1 kilometre grid at publication stage, leaving a county outline with watercourses etc., superimposed by a 10 kilometre square grid. This gives a 'cleaner' map. Nevertheless, it is good to see a county publication using 1km. squares as the basic unit.

The only part of the county which is adequately covered is the south-west corner, around Epping Forest; so that even a widespread species such as Common Frog has a rather biased distribution map. However, the authors are aware of this problem, and one of the main aims of this publication must be to stimulate further recording throughout Essex.

The standard of presentation is very high; apart from the above comment the publication is well printed on glossy paper, very readable and well worth £1 to anyone interested in reptiles and amphibians or the natural history of Essex.

D.W.

