

# School-to-Nature



## Blue Spotted Salamander

You may never see a Blue-Spotted Salamander while hiking Conservancy lands, but they are present. This species of Salamander is 3-5 inches in length, has a stout body and wide mouth. The male is slightly smaller than the female. It is dark in color, with light blue flecking as you see in the left-hand photo. It eats insects, spiders, centipedes, slugs, earthworms, mosquitoes, and snails. In turn, is the prey of birds, raccoons, dogs, fish and bigger aquatic mammals such as otters. It has a life span of 12 years in the wild, but can live as long as 32 years in captivity.



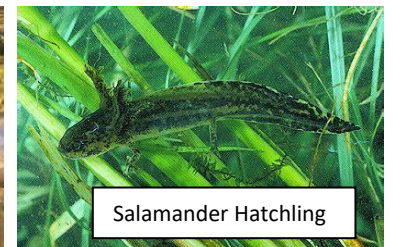
These salamanders emerge from hibernation as soon as the ground warms after winter. They immediately migrate to a “vernal pool,” which is a small temporary pond or deep puddle left by melted snow, spring rains, or groundwater, like the one in the photo at the top. Laying up to 500 eggs on leaves or twigs at the bottom of these tiny ponds keeps the tiny hatchling salamanders safe from predatory fish that would live in larger ponds. Salamanders actually return to the little pond from which they were born every year, to mate and to lay eggs. They spend most of their lives in abandoned small animal burrows, under rocks, or under fallen tree trunks where it is moist.

Blue Spotted Salamanders should be left alone, and not handled, if they are seen or found while exploring the woods. If a salamander is found where it should not be, such as on a road or near human habitation, it should be returned to moist woods, preferably where there is shelter under leaf debris or branches.

Note: A salamander that feels threatened will swing its tail back and forth and may release a stinky liquid. A salamander can regrow its tail if a predator takes it.



Salamander Eggs



Salamander Hatchling

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