

OUR WILD NEIGHBORS!

Spotted Salamander

Scientific name: *Ambystoma maculatum*

Range: You can find spotted salamanders in most of the eastern United States and in southeastern Canada.

Size: Spotted salamanders can be 4 – 9 inches long. They are one of the largest salamanders found in Rhode Island!

Habitat: Spotted salamanders live in the forest. They spend most of the year in underground burrows. Because they spend so much time underground, spotted salamanders are also known as “**mole salamanders**” by biologists. Spotted salamanders use vernal pools for breeding habitat.

Predators: Adult spotted salamanders can be eaten by raccoons, turtles, snakes, skunks, and opossums. The eggs and baby salamanders (called **larvae**) can be eaten by snakes, birds, insects, turtles, and even other salamanders. To escape being eaten, adult salamanders produce a nasty-tasting slime from their skin. Yuck!

Food: Spotted salamanders eat insects, snails, spiders, slugs, and earthworms.

Breeding: Spotted salamanders **migrate** from their burrows to vernal pools during the breeding season. Usually, big rainstorms and warmer nights signal to the salamanders that it's time to move. On a rainy night in March or April, you can sometimes see lots of spotted salamanders crawling on the forest floor on their way to the pools. They often cross roads too, so it's important to be careful when driving on rainy spring nights. Female spotted salamanders can lay up to 200 eggs! The eggs look like a big blob of jelly. They can be either clear or cloudy in color.

DID YOU KNOW?

Spotted salamanders are one of 10 amphibians listed as **Species of Greatest Conservation Need** in our **Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan**. One big way you can help our tiny, slimy friends is by picking up trash and using less chemicals in your house and yard. Pollution is a big problem for amphibians! Another thing you can do to help amphibians is by sharing what you know about them with others. The more people who know about these creatures, the better!

