

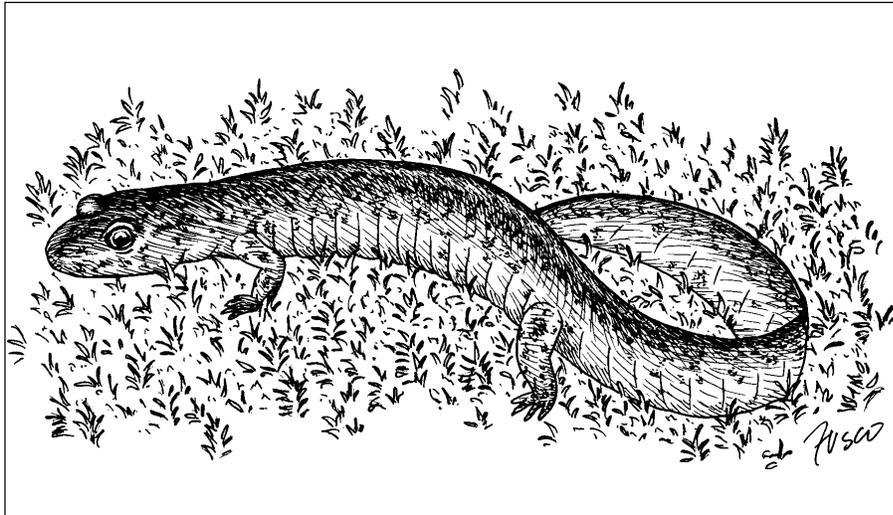
WILDLIFE IN CONNECTICUT

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES SERIES

NORTHERN SPRING SALAMANDER

Gyrinophilus porphyriticus

THREATENED



Habitat: Cool and well-shaded mountain springs at high elevations, and wet depressions beneath logs, stones, or leaves in surrounding forests.

Weight: Unknown.

Length: Adults, 5.5-7.5 inches; females are usually smaller than males.

Life Expectancy: Unknown, but greater than five years.

Food: Insects, crustaceans, centipedes, millipedes, earthworms, snails, spiders, and occasionally small frogs and salamanders.

Status: State threatened.

Identification: The spring salamander is one of the larger salamanders, with a stout body and a broad nose that ends abruptly. Its back and tail are light brownish-orange or salmon-red with small dark spots or flecks. A light line, bordered below by a dark line, begins at the eye and extends to the nostril. The belly is flesh-colored and the throat may be flecked with black. The tail has a prominent, knife-like keel on the top, which enables this salamander to swim in swift-moving water.

Range: The spring salamander is found from southwest Maine and southern Quebec to northern Alabama.

Reproduction: Unlike many of Connecticut's other large salamanders, which breed in the spring, the spring salamander breeds from mid-October through the winter months. During courtship, the male and female push

each other and roll around in the water. The male deposits sperm, which is picked up and stored by the female until the eggs are laid from April through the summer. Between 9 and 144 eggs (average 40-60) are laid in running water under logs and stones, usually in groups or sometimes attached singly. The female guards the eggs, which hatch in late summer or early fall. The larval salamanders may remain near the nest site for several months after hatching and appear ghostly white with a purplish cast for up to 3 years. Females do not breed until they are about 5 years old.

Reason for Decline: Intensive development pressure throughout this salamander's range has caused disruption of many natural cold water springs. The loss of woodlands surrounding these springs has allowed water

temperatures to rise, making the springs unsuitable for these salamanders. Pollution, degradation, and siltation of streams have also contributed to the decline in the spring salamander population.

History in Connecticut: Small populations of spring salamanders are scattered throughout the state. Long-established breeding populations are documented as declining and are considered likely to disappear unless special action is taken.

Interesting Facts: Spring salamanders are primarily nocturnal. They forage for food around rocks and vegetation in or along stream beds, and have been known to eat their own larvae.

The salamander spends the winter months in wet soil close to a source of water, where it remains somewhat active in burrows.

The purple color of young spring salamanders led to its former name, the purple salamander.

Protective Legislation: State - Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 26-311.

What You Can Do: Protection of cold forest streams and springs is essential to maintaining spring salamander habitats. Projects that help restore shade trees and shrubs along stream banks will help water temperatures remain suitable for this salamander.

Spring salamanders may not be collected from the wild. They do not make good pets and keeping them in captivity is illegal. Preventing illegal collection of these salamanders will help protect native populations.

CONNECTICUT RANGE

