

THE ARBORETUM AT PENN STATE



# SPOTTED SALAMANDER

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**NAME:** *Ambystoma maculatum*

#### CONSERVATION STATUS:



**SIZE:** 7 inches

**WEIGHT:** .45 ounces

**GROUP TERM:** none (solitary)

**NUMBER OF YOUNG:** 200

**HABITAT:** damp, deciduous forests

**LIFESPAN:** 20 years

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# SPOTTED SALAMANDER

## DESCRIPTION

The spotted salamander is a secretive amphibian, emerging at night only to feed and mate. As a fossorial species, it spends most of its life underground, hiding beneath leaf litter and hibernating in burrows during the winter. When spring arrives, hundreds or even thousands of spotted salamanders emerge for mass migration, arriving at seasonal vernal pools to breed. The eggs hatch up to eight weeks after the adults have departed.

## DIET

The spotted salamander consumes almost anything it can catch and swallow, including slugs, insects, worms, snails, spiders, and millipedes.

## THREATS

Over 90% of spotted salamander young perish due to predation, disease, and drying ponds. Adult salamanders are exceptionally sensitive to ecological changes, especially the prevalence of acidic rain, and are vulnerable to capture for the pet trade.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The spotted salamander's yellow spots warn predators of its toxicity. Although not lethally toxic, the milky substance secreted by the salamander's glands tastes bitter when ingested by predators.
- Because salamander eggs are laid underwater, larvae breathe with external gills, which eventually disappear.
- Like many other salamanders, the spotted salamander can regenerate its limbs or tail if severed by a predator.

"Spotted Salamander." Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, n.d. Web. 22 June 2017.

"Animals: Spotted Salamander." National Geographic, n.d. Web. 22 June 2017.

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