Two-lined Salamander—Yellowish-tan in color, the two-lined salamander is easily recognized by the two, dark rac- ing stripes along their sides and the orange shading under the tail. They occur along fast-flowing streams in a wide range of habitats, from remote, undisturbed forests to city parks. They have even been found in some cold water lakes at depths of more than 30 feet. Thin-bodied, small legs and long tails, these salamanders are sleek and speedy, capable of bursts of speed as they flip and run along the ground, diving into nearly streams to escape danger. Length: 2½ to 4½ inches.

Mountain Dusky Salamander— Though similar in color to the northern dusky salamander, the mountain dusky has a round tail. The larval stage metamorphoses into small juveniles that often have a red-orange stripe along the back and look similar to a small redback salamander. Adult mountain dusky are found along stream edges to well within the surrounding forest—most commonly along seeps or creeks. Although fairly tolerant of habitat disturbances by humans, the highest densities of dusky salamanders are found in larger forests with clean streams. Length: 2½ to 4 inches.

Red-spotted Newt—One of New York’s most familiar salamanders, the red-spotted newt is perhaps best recognized in its terrestrial juvenile red eft stage. However, this newt is primarily aquatic, with the olive green adults—having a yellow belly and two rows of bright red spots along its back (hence, the name). The tail is prominently keeled in males, less so in females. Newts are commonly found in almost any relatively clean pond, lake, swamp, or slow-moving stream near forests. While the red dots warn predators of toxins in the skin that can cause severe sickness or death, snapping turtles, garter snakes, some birds, aquatic insects and fish will eat them. Length: 2½ to 5 inches.

Northern Dusky Salamander— Northern dusky salamanders occur in a wide range of brown and gray color patterns. With a light-colored line from the eye to the back of the mouth and much larger hind legs than front legs, it is often confused with the mountain dusky salamander. However, the northern dusky can be dis- tinguished from its cousin by the sharp keel found along the top of its tail. The larval stage spends two or three months in streams, and adults seldom travel far from a stream edge. Length: 2½ to 4½ inches.

Note: Length of each salamander is given as total length measured from the end of the snout to the tip of the tail. However, since pieces of the tail are often lost to predators and the tail will regenerate, this measurement can vary greatly for otherwise similar sized animals.


This project was funded by Return A Gift To Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and NYS Biodiversity Research Institute.

New York State is home to 18 species of salamanders, nine of which live in or along lakes, ponds, streams and rivers. Sometimes confused with lizards (which are reptiles and have scales), salamanders are amphibians with smooth, moist skin. Because salamanders rely on their moist skin for a portion of their breathing, most are rarely found far from water or a moist terrestrial habitat. Occasionally, salamanders may spend much of their time under a rock or log, or in a crevice or small mammal burrow. Thus, they are rarely seen. Salamanders eat a variety of things, including small insects, spiders, worms, slugs, fish and frog eggs, and even other salamanders. In turn, salamanders are eaten by a number of larger predators, including fish, snakes, turtles, birds, and a variety of mammals such as raccoons, foxes, skunks and shrews. Many salamander species produce toxic or distasteful secretions that provide some protection from predators.
Two-lined Salamander—Yellowish-tan in color, the two-lined salamander is easily recognized by the two dark racing stripes along their sides and the orange shading under the tail. They occur along fast-flowing streams in a wide range of habitats, from remote, undisturbed forests to city parks. They have been even found in some cold water lakes at depths of more than 30 feet. Thin-bodied with small legs and long tails, these salamanders are sleek and speedy, capable of bursts of speed as they flip and run along the ground, diving into nearby streams to escape danger. Length: 2% to 4% inches.

Mountain Dusky Salamander—Though similar in color to the northern dusky salamander, the mountain dusky has a round tail. The larval stage metamorphoses into small juveniles that often have a red-orange stripe along the back and look similar to a small redback salamander. Adult mountain dusks are found along stream edges to well within the surrounding forest—most commonly along seeps or creeks. Although fairly tolerant of habitat disturbances by humans, the highest densities of dusky salamanders are found in larger forests with clean streams. Length: 2% to 4% inches.

Red-spotted Newt—One of New York’s most familiar salamanders, the red-spotted newt is perhaps best recognized in its terrestrial juvenile red eft stage. However, this newt is primarily aquatic, with the olive green adults—having a yellow belly and two rows of bright red spots along its back (hence, the name). The tail is prominently keeled in males, less so in females. Newts are commonly found in almost any relatively clean pond, lake, swamp, or slow-moving stream near forests. While the red dots warn predators of toxins in the skin that can cause severe sickness or death, snapping turtles, garter snakes, some birds, aquatic insects and fish will eat them. Length: 2% to 3% inches.

Northern Dusky Salamander—Northern dusky salamanders occur in a wide range of brown and gray color patterns. With a light-colored line from the eye to the back of the mouth and much larger hind legs than front legs, it is often confused with the mountain dusky salamander. However, the northern dusky can be distinguished from its cousin by the sharp keel found along the top of its tail. The larval stage spends two or three months in streams, and adults sedentary far from a stream edge. Length: 2% to 4% inches.

Note: Length of each salamander is given as total length measured from the end of the snout to the tip of the tail. However, since pieces of the tail are often lost to predators and the tail will regenerate, this measurement can vary greatly for otherwise similar sized animals.

Authors: Abih Broich and Peter K. Duryea. Maps prepared by John Osard. Art work by Jean Gawalt, Graphics & Layout by Frank Hercz. Maps based on New York Amphibian and Reptile Atlas data. This project was funded by Return a Gift To Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the NYS Biodiversity Research Institute.

New York State is home to 18 species of salamanders, nine of which live in or along lakes, ponds, streams and rivers. Sometimes confused with lizards (which are reptiles and have scales), salamanders are amphibians with smooth, moist skin. Because salamanders rely on their most skin for a portion of their breathing, most are rarely found far from water or a moist terrestrial habitat. Often, salamanders spend most of their time under a rock or log, or in a crevice or small mammal burrow. Thus, they are rarely seen. Salamanders eat a variety of things, including small insects, spiders, worms, slugs, fish and frog eggs, and even other salamanders. In turn, salamanders are eaten by a number of larger predators, including fish, snakes, turtles, birds, and a variety of mammals such as raccoons, foxes, skunks and shrews. Many salamander species produce toxic or distasteful secretions that provide some protection from predators.