

# What Crossing Guard Volunteers Do

Crossing Guards help reduce salamander and frog mortality at sites where these amphibians must cross roads to reach their breeding pools. Most also assist with data collection.

The long-term survival of vernal pool breeding amphibians is threatened in areas fragmented by roads. The loss of these amphibians will impact the viability of more remote pools, and will degrade the forest food web. Helping salamanders cross roads is fun, but it's also important.



## Amphibian migration takes place:

- 🕒 Between mid-March and late April
- 🕒 When the ground has thawed
- 🕒 Temperatures are above 40° F
- 🕒 It is raining or very wet
- 🕒 At night

Sign up for e-mail alerts at [beec.org](http://beec.org) to receive our predictions for when you should go out.

### What time should I arrive at my site?

If conditions are ideal, salamanders will begin moving at dark, but you might not see them in large numbers until later in the evening—after 9 pm

### What do I do when I get there?

If there is a Site Coordinator or other volunteers there, check in. Volunteers walk up and down the section of road where the salamanders and frogs are crossing. When an amphibian is found, it is gently picked up and moved across the road in the direction it is heading.

**Be patient.** Don't assume amphibians are not moving just because you don't see them on a single pass through the site.

### Collecting data

Keep a count of the numbers of each amphibian species you find. Dead amphibians are counted too, and recorded separately. They should be removed from the road so they are not counted again. Download a data sheet [BEEC.org](http://BEEC.org), or e-mail [patti@beec.org](mailto:patti@beec.org) to receive data sheets printed on write-in-rain paper. If your site has a coordinator, report your numbers to her. If not, please send your numbers to [Patti@beec.org](mailto:Patti@beec.org) or fill in the form at the website.

### Hot Tips!

1. **Safety:** Be sure to wear reflective, light colored clothing. Inexpensive flashing warning lights that can be clipped on your clothing are available at hardware and sporting goods stores. Reflective vests are strongly recommended. Hardware stores also sell reflective tape that can be applied to clothing.
2. **BRIGHT LIGHTS:** Dim flashlights can vastly reduce your efficiency at finding and moving amphibians. Some volunteers have learned the hard way that an ordinary flashlight, especially

one with waning batteries, might not reveal salamanders until they're, well, upon them. If, on the other hand, you have a bright light, you can clearly see all amphibian movement over a large swath of road and can move quickly and confidently. **Note:** LED lights are not as good as the old incandescents for spotting salamanders. The incandescents have a much more penetrating light.

3. **The efficient walk:** With a bright light, stride briskly along your stretch of road, sweeping the light from side to side. Always check the area by your feet when changing direction or resuming activity. Note: This only works if you have a BRIGHT light.
4. **Bring a bucket:** Some volunteers collect salamanders in a bucket. This may be helpful if there is heavy traffic and/or high numbers of amphibians. Make sure the bucket is very clean, with no residual soap, detergent or chemicals of any kind.
5. **Keep your feet on the street:** Since salamanders are very difficult to see once they're off the road, don't step off the road yourself unless a car is passing.
6. **Clean hands:** Make sure your hands have no sunscreen, insect repellent or lotion on them. Salamanders readily absorb chemicals through their skin.



## Things to bring on Salamander Night

Get ready in advance!

Things to bring on crossing nights:

- ☛ Rain gear
- ☛ Reflective clothes
- ☛ Bright flashlight
- ☛ Extra batteries

Optional:

- ☛ Camera
- ☛ Spatula for dead amphibians
- ☛ Clean bucket
- ☛ Data sheet and clipboard
- ☛ Crossing signs (with flashing lights)

## At BEEC.org you will find...

An interactive map showing all known crossing sites. Find the site nearest you.

Sign up for the salamander alert hotline and receive e-mail notices when the salamanders are likely to move.

More information on the amphibians, vernal pools, and more.



## Who's Out on Amphibian Nights?

The most common amphibians are:

### Spotted Salamander



These chunky salamanders range in length from 6 - 9 inches and are gray to black in color. They have two rows of yellow polka dots.

### Jefferson's Salamander

The Jefferson's has pale blue flecks on a brown to gray background. The Jefferson's are up to 7 inches in length.



### Spring Peeper

These frogs are TINY. Look for the dark X mark on their backs.



### Wood Frog



Light brown with a dark bandit mask, these 2-inch long frogs are abundant early in the season.

## Become a Salamander Crossing Guard



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