



Salamanders

Commonly Seen by Crossing Brigades

The first four on this sheet are mole salamanders, members of the family *Ambystomidae* and the genus *Ambystoma*. They spend their lives as moles do, underground in tunnels.



Costal grooves

Spotted Salamander

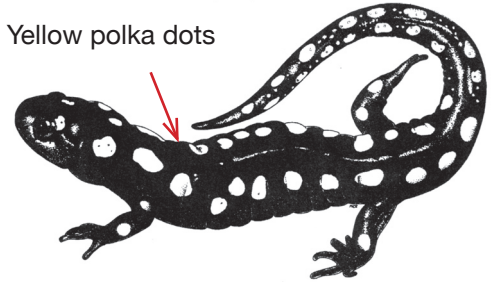
Ambystoma maculatum

Spotted salamanders are the amphibians that make crossing nights a big event. Adults range in length from 6 - 8" and are gray to black in color.

Look for these field marks:

- Two irregular rows of yellow spots
- Broad, rounded snout

Yellow polka dots



Blue-Spotted Salamander

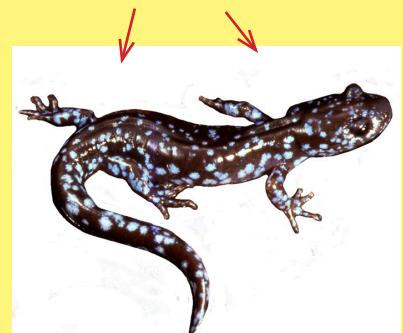
Ambystoma laterale

Far less common than the spotted salamander in our region, the blue spotted are occasionally seen at some crossing sites. They are smaller and slimmer than the other mole salamanders, about the size of a red eft. They are black with blue spots or flecks. They are more common in lowland areas.

Look for these field marks:

- Blue or pale blue spots and flecks on entire body, including legs and head

Blue flecks on legs and back



Jefferson Salamander

Ambystoma jeffersonianum

The Jefferson is a solid brown to gray salamander. They are about the same size as spotted salamanders, up to 7" in length.

Look for these field marks:

- Long toes (males toes longer than females)
- Head widest behind the eyes



Long toes

Jefferson Complex Salamander

Blue spotted and Jefferson salamanders have hybridized. The hybrids are larger than the blue-spotted, and may have blue flecking on bellies and sides.

If you see this one, be sure to get a picture!

Marbled Salamander

Ambystoma opacum

This salamander has never been documented in Vermont, but is found just to the south in Massachusetts. These mole salamanders lay their eggs in vernal pools in the fall, but might be about on any rainy night. They are 3½ - 4¼" long.

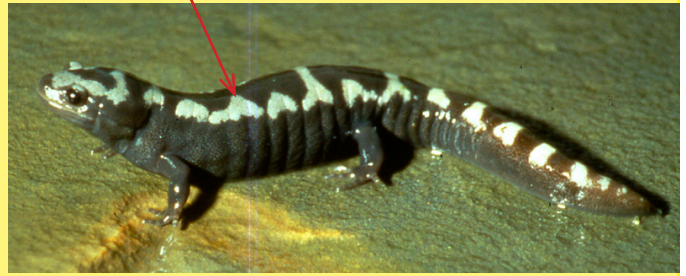
Look for these field marks:

Irregular silver or gray stripes or bands on back

Stout body

Thick tail

Irregular gray bands



Eastern Newt

Notophthalmus viridescens

The newt has two distinct life stages: the eft stage and the adult stage. In the eft stage, they are terrestrial, bright orange to yellow-green and have dry, granular skin. In the adult stage, the newt is olive green, smooth skinned, and aquatic. They are 1½-4" long. You are more likely to see the eft stage out wandering on wet rainy nights.

Look for these field marks:

Row of red spots down each side of the back

Black line around each spot

Gold-colored eye



Row of red spots outlined in black

Eastern Red-backed Salamander

Plethodon cinereus

Quick, slender, and small (2 - 3½" long), these salamanders can be difficult to see and even harder to catch.

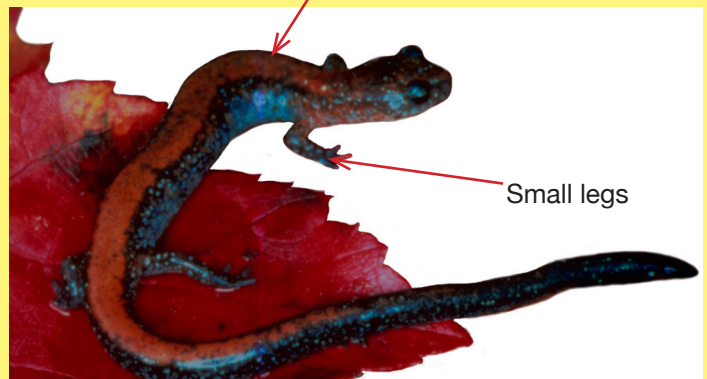
Look for these field marks:

Small legs

Wide stripe of red, yellow, or gray down back

Darker stripes on the sides fade to paler, salt-and-pepper speckled belly.

Broad stripe down back



Please note: A small, slim salamander with a reddish back *might* be the unusual four-toed salamander. If its belly is bright white with black spots, try to get a photo!



Photos: Leo P. Kenney

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