

which includes Nova Scotia. In the hybridization zone, look for a lighter belly with gray around the vent to distinguish the Blue-spotted and Jefferson.

Normally this species ranges in size between 4 to 5 1/2 inches (9.5 to 14.2 cm). If you run across a specimen larger than this without distinct spots but having light flecking report it to a museum or the Island Naturalist editor. These variations would suggest you have a Jefferson Salamander or a hybrid, either of which would be important to have documented on Prince Edward Island. Please colour photograph or collect the specimen.

This salamander eats invertebrates including insects and earthworms. It breeds in woodland ponds, ditches, and other bodies of fresh water where it can congregate in quite large numbers in spring. The male of this species deposits a spermatophore which is taken up by the female. It lays its eggs, often under leaves or bottom litter, either singly or in small clusters (Cook, 1967 reported up to six in a cluster) in shallow water. Depending on the temperature, the eggs hatch within a few days to a week to form a larvae with front legs. The back legs develop quickly as growth is promoted by its voracious appetite. They consume a variety of aquatic invertebrates as well as larvae small enough for them to swallow. Transformation usually occurs in July or August and the young adults quickly disperse

The Blue-spotted Salamander is normally found in moist habitats such as woodlands, especially in woodlands with well rotten deadfalls touching the ground. On rainy nights in early spring it may be found crossing roads or wandering. In dryer conditions and during daylight hours, the Blue-spotted Salamander is normally found under boards, log piles, and larger rocks where the moisture and food foraging conditions are often similar to those found under rotten logs which they prefer. Its numbers in various covertypes of Island forest are not known and are currently being investigated. You can assist by reporting your sightings to the editor of the Island Naturalist.

SPOTTED SALAMANDER

This species is also a member of the mole salamanders and therefore has four toes on the front feet and five of the rear feet. The adults of this species are usually distinguished by the irregular row of yellow to orange spots running from their eye to the tail tip on each side of their bluish, black, or slate-coloured back. However, unspotted individuals are known to occur. The bellies of adults of this species are slate grey.



spotted salamander

As with the Blue-spotted Salamanders, the Spotted Salamander is primarily a woodland species. It too congregates at woodland ponds and other appropriate fresh water breeding sites to breed, often after warm rains. In early spring, the adults migrate in large numbers to the breeding ponds where the male, after courtship, lays a spermatophore. The female takes up the spermatophore and subsequently lays a mass of up to 200 eggs, each in two jelly coats. This mass of eggs takes on water and, within one hour, may be swollen up to 4 inches (10 cm.) across. The eggs hatch within 2 to 4 weeks into 1/2 inch long larvae which subsequently feed aggressively. They may grow to a size of about three inches (7.6 cm.) in three months after which they transform into adults. The adults may reach a length of 9 3/4 inches (24.8 cm.) in some areas of its range but the largest recorded by Cook (1967) on Prince Edward Island was 6 7/8 inches (17.4 cm).