

The Green Salamander

Aneides aeneus

THREATENED

photo-Tom Diez

General characteristics

The Green Salamander belongs to the lungless salamander family. This salamander family has more known species than any other. As an individual species, however, the Green Salamander has been placed on Pennsylvania's List of Threatened Species. Found in only a small area of southwestern Pennsylvania, its restricted habitat is such that concern has been expressed for its continued existence. Drastic changes to its restricted preferred habitat will affect the ability of this attractive salamander to continue to maintain stable populations in Pennsylvania.

Reaching a length of just over 3- to 5-inches, the Green Salamander spends most of its day in hiding, preferring to move about in the relative safety of the night.

photo-Gary Pflato



The Green Salamander reaches a length of just over 3- to 5-inches.

Identification

The Green Salamander is aptly named and is considered our only truly green salamander. It has green or greenish-yellow and gray irregular patches resembling lichens that stand out boldly against an otherwise black body. It is a slender salamander with a somewhat flattened body. The head, however, appears to be swollen in the area just behind the eyes. The toes are square-tipped and expanded. As a lungless salamander, the Green Salamander breathes through thin, moist skin. Its costal grooves number 14 to 15.

Range

In Pennsylvania, the Green Salamander is found only in a small portion of Fayette County in southwestern Pennsylvania. Its natural range, however, extends south into Alabama, making the lower part of Pennsylvania just about the northernmost extent of its range.





Green Salamanders can be found in the loose bark of a rotting tree or stump.

Habitat

The Green Salamander appears to prefer only sandstone outcroppings of particular geological formations in Pennsylvania, in areas that are damp, but not necessarily wet. It takes refuge in the sheltered, narrow crevices typically found in these large faces of stone. However, it would not be unusual either to find the Green Salamander curled up under a stone or beneath the loose bark of a rotting tree or stump. Although it likes humid areas, it also seeks protection from the sun and rain. It occasionally climbs trees, but most often is seen at or near ground level.

Reproduction

The Green Salamander seeks its mate sometime from May to August. Some 10 to 20 sticky eggs are produced. The female attends the eggs during the 12 or so weeks they take to hatch. There is no aquatic larval stage, and the hatchlings are about 7/8 inch long. The incubation process may at times be difficult, because the eggs are attached in strands to the upper surfaces of narrow cracks in the salamander's rocky home. Sometimes, they may even be deposited in the confined space where bark has separated from the solid inner wood of a tree.



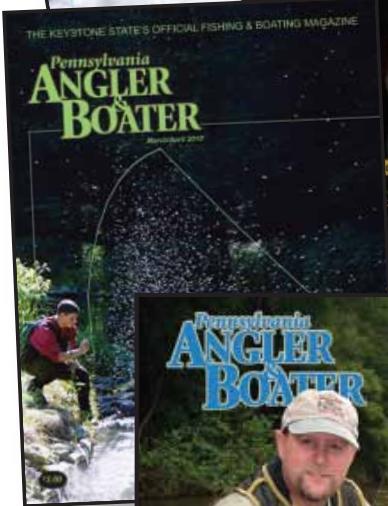
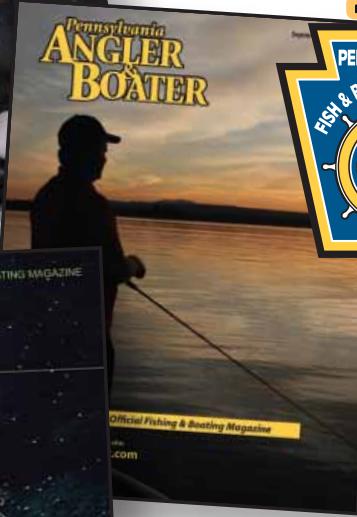
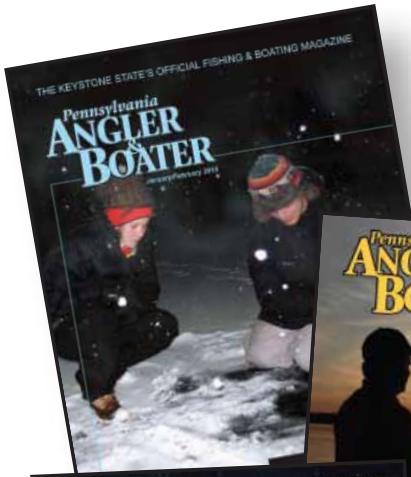
The Green Salamander takes refuge in sheltered narrow crevices typically found in stone.

Food

Small insects make up most of the Green Salamander's diet. Sure-footed and hunting at night, the Green Salamander scales sheer rock walls in search of beetles, ants and even mosquitoes. ☐



The Green Salamander is a slender salamander with a somewhat flattened body.



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