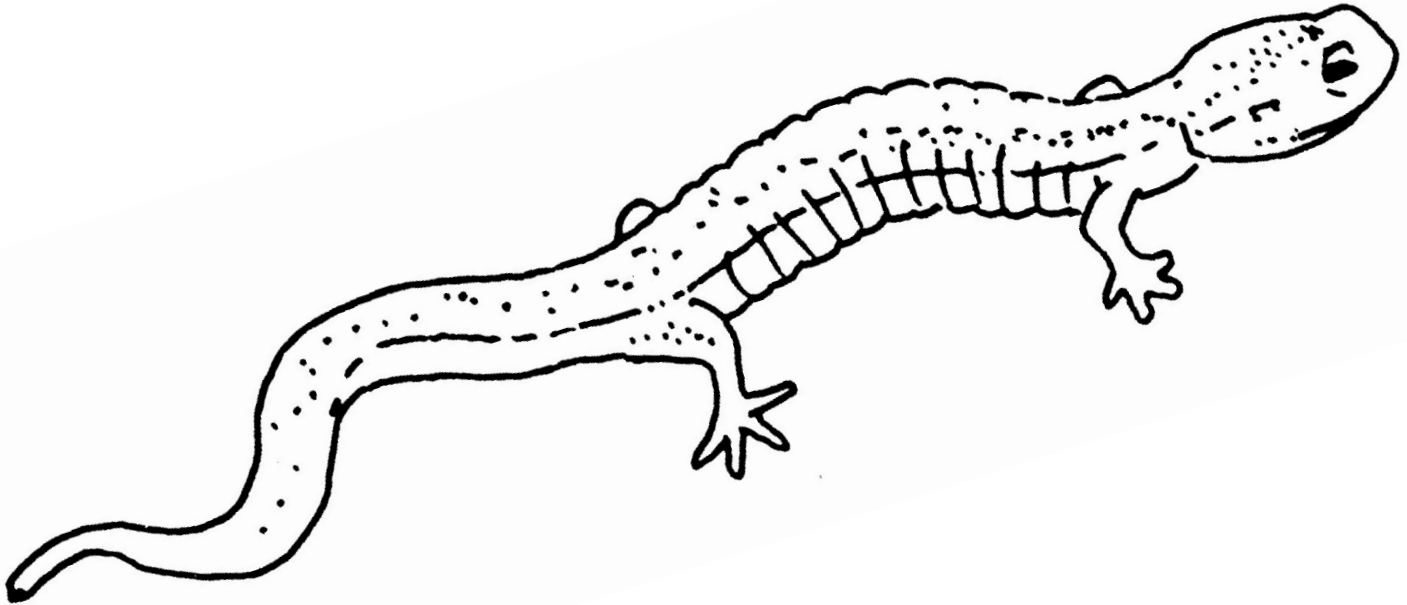




PA's Amphibian and Reptile Coloring Series

Four-toed Salamander



All About Me: Hello! I am a Four-toed Salamander. We are a secretive amphibian. We are small, with adults grow from two to three and a half inches long. One cool fact about us is if we are grabbed by a predator, our tail easily breaks from our bodies. We can then slip away, and the hunter is left holding just the tail. After escaping, we bide our time, waiting for a new tail to be regenerated. There are two distinguishing characteristics that help identify us. As our common name implies; only four toes appear on each hind foot, where most other salamanders have five toes. The other important and distinctive feature is our bellies. They are marked with large, bold, black spots that stand out against an almost pure white background color. Our backs are either reddish, or yellow tan. Our sides are gray. Our thick tails are marked near the base with a constrictive ring, indicating the point at which it would separate. The number of our costal grooves varies from 12 to 14. We may be found statewide in Pennsylvania, but our numbers are spotty. We have special habitat requirements. We prefer boggy areas with an abundance of sphagnum mosses, and in Pennsylvania that somewhat restricts our range. We can live in leaf litter in damp forests, but a pond would have to be close by. Because of our special needs, our populations have been harmed by expanding human development of lands. We feed on a variety of small insects and other invertebrates.