

Pennsylvania's Most Fascinating Salamanders

Eastern Hellbender

Eastern hellbenders are Pennsylvania's largest salamander measuring up to 20 inches long. They are gray or olive in color with heavily wrinkled skin. Their eyes are tiny, and they have a rudder-like tail. They live in fast moving streams with clear water and boulders or large stones. The number of Eastern hellbenders in Pennsylvania has been decreasing because of habitat destruction and pollution.

Some people think that they have a venomous bite, but they do not. If you accidentally catch one while fishing, you can easily take it off the hook. They are sometimes called "snot otters."



Eastern Hellbender



Mudpuppy

Mudpuppy

Mudpuppies are the second largest salamander in Pennsylvania measuring up to 13 inches long. They are called mudpuppies, or waterdogs, because people once believed that they could make a barking sound like a dog.

Mudpuppies are gray to rusty brown in color with dark blue to black spots. They have external gills their entire life and four toes on their front and hind feet (most salamanders have five toes on the hind feet). They are found in lakes, rivers and streams in the western part of the state and are most active at night.



Spotted Salamander

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Spotted salamanders are fairly common but rarely seen, because they spend most of their lives underground (like a mole). People are most likely

to see spotted salamanders when they migrate to **vernal pools**. This happens during warm, rainy nights in late winter or early spring.

Spotted salamanders are black or dark gray in color with two rows of large yellow or orange spots on their backs. They can be up to 8 inches long. These salamanders are found throughout Pennsylvania in hardwood forests with **vernal pools** or ponds.



Eastern Red-spotted Newt (efts)



Eastern Red-spotted Newt (adult)

Eastern Red-spotted Newt

Eastern red-spotted newts are common in Pennsylvania and may be found in damp woods as eft (especially on rainy days). The larvae and adults may be found in ponds and lakes. This species is somewhat small, measuring up to 4 inches.

Eastern red-spotted newts go through three stages of life, each with its

own coloration. Larvae are greenish yellow. The eft are orange with black-bordered red spots on their back. This bright color warns predators that they secrete toxins. Adults are olive in color with a yellow belly and black speckles all over. They have black-bordered red spots on their backs.

Pennsylvania's Salamanders Checklist

A complete list of Pennsylvania's **22** species of salamanders.

Giant Salamanders

- Eastern Hellbender
Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis

Mudpuppy Salamanders

- Mudpuppy *Necturus maculosus*

Mole Salamanders

- Blue-spotted Salamander
Ambystoma laterale
(endangered species)
- Jefferson Salamander
Ambystoma jeffersonianum
- Marbled Salamander
Ambystoma opacum
- Spotted Salamander
Ambystoma maculatum

Newts

- Eastern Red-spotted Newt
Notophthalmus viridescens viridescens

Lungless Salamanders

- Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander
Desmognathus ochrophaeus
- Eastern Mud Salamander
Pseudotriton montanus (endangered)
- Eastern Redback Salamander
Plethodon cinereus

- Four-toed Salamander
Hemidactylium scutatum
- Green Salamander
Aneides aeneus
(threatened species)
- Longtail Salamander
Eurycea longicauda longicauda
- Northern Dusky Salamander
Desmognathus fuscus
- Northern Ravine Salamander
Plethodon electromorphus
- Northern Red Salamander
Pseudotriton rube
- Northern Slimy Salamander
Plethodon glutinosus
- Northern Spring Salamander
Gyrinophilus porphyriticus porphyriticus
- Northern Two-lined Salamander
Eurycea bislineata
- Seal Salamander
Desmognathus monticola
- Valley and Ridge Salamander
Plethodon hoffmani
- Wehrle's Salamander
Plethodon wehrlei

Northern Slimy Salamander

Northern slimy salamanders are a woodland species, measuring up to 7 inches. Their skin secretes a sticky mucus that is difficult to wash off.

Northern slimy salamanders are black with many small, white or silver spots. They can be found beneath rocks and rotting logs. These salamanders are common throughout Pennsylvania.



Northern Slimy Salamander