Photo From Flickr.com

Photo from kwiaht.com

DISTRIBUTION

The Northwester Salamander ranges along the Pacific Coast from extreme northern California to Southeast Alaska, where it has been collected at only two localities: southeast of Ketchikan on Mary Island, and northwest of Chichagof Island near Pelican. The only other record was a globular egg mass, presumably of this species, found in Figure Eight Lake, Stikine River, on June 21, 1991.

When molested, this species assumes an elevated-tail pose and secretes a white, milky fluid from its grandular areas. This secretion may cause skin irritation in some people. Some salamanders may also make a series of ticking sounds when disturbed.

Two subspecies are generally recognized; one occurs in Alaska. Some authors suggest subspecific recognition is not warranted, whereas other suspect these populations may represent separate species.

(Information cited: www.alaskaherps.info / S. O. MacDonald)

Photo from flickr.com

Alaska Herpetological Society

The Alaska Herpetological Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the field of Herpetology in the State of Alaska. Our mission is to promote sound research and management of amphibians and reptiles in the North and to provide opportunities in outreach, education, and citizen science for individuals who are interested in these species.

WEB:
WWW.AKHERPSOCIETY.ORG

FACEBOOK:
ALASKA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NORTHWESTERN SALAMANDER

Ambystoma gracile

Photo from Seattle.gov

INFORMATION

This information on the Northwestern Salamander (*Ambystoma gracile)* has been provided by the Alaska Herpetological Society.

You can help locate this species on our website, via a voucher or via the epicollect app. See www.akherpsociety.org for more information.

Photo from humboltherps.com

Photo from http://slatermuseum.blogspot.com/

DID YOU KNOW...

That the Northwestern Salamander has large paratoid glands behind the eyes for a reason? These secrete toxins and are often shown to predators before they strike. Many predators go for the head first but this is unwise if you're pursuing a Northwestern Salamander! Another cool fact is that this species is often found as neotenic - adults that have retained their juvenile characteristics like gills!

Northwestern Salamander Information

ADULT

Adults are 20-22cm (7-8.7 in) total length from nose to tip of tale. Gray/brown color, smooth skin, costal grooves evident, large paratoid glands behind eyes, back may have flecks of green or yellow. Males become darker than females during the breeding season.

LARVAE

Larvae are 7.5-15cm (3-6 in) long, body is brown, olive green or light yellow on top, sides are blotched (sooty) with yellow spots, glandular stripe on tail fin.

EGGS

Eggs are laid in clusters of 30-270 eggs (often 60-140), masses usually 5-15.2cm (2-6 in) in diameter, masses sometimes have green color from algae, attached to vegetation, submerged trees in slow moving streams, ponds or lakes (usually permanent).

FACTS

The Northwestern Salamanders are found in coastal forests, next to freshwater (ponds, lakes, muskegs); under logs or rocks. Adults are terrestrial and primarily live underground. They are usually active on the surface only during rains and migrations to their aquatic breeding sites.

The eggs of this salamander are laid in early spring in a single, firm jelly-like mass (see photo on right) about the size of an elongated grapefruit and attached underwater to submerged sticks and stems. Sometimes they turn greenish in color due to the presence of a green algae lining the egg-capsules. The larvae show extreme variation in appearance; they hatch in about a month and spend up to two years in water. Some may remain aquatic as gilled adults. Metamorphosed adults are known to travel at least 1.5km to reach suitable breeding sites.

Photo from flickr.com

HANDLING AMPHIBIANS

It is actually illegal in the State of Alaska to handle or remove Native amphibians from their habitat without a scientific collection permit.

Handling them can increase the spread of disease and allows deadly chemicals like bug spray and sunscreen to easily penetrate their permeable skin. Removing them can hurt populations and change their genetic structure. Never move amphibians from place to place.

When possible, scrub boots, waders, nets and other equipment with a 5% bleach solution between sites or when you return home. This helps to stop the spread of diseases like chytrid fungus which has been identified in Alaska and can cause mass amphibian mortality.

Also, never release a pet amphibian into the wild!