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Blue-spotted Salamander

By Silas L.

On April 25, 2022, we didn't see any Blue-spotted Salamanders at our vernal pool in Oakland Maine. I wondered why? Blue-spotted salamanders have a very



limited range. Due to their endangered status and subterranean existence, they are not often encountered. The Blue-spotted Salamander is a small to medium-sized salamander with an average length of 3 to 5 inches from head to

tail, it has a dark gray to a black base color with baby blue spots scattered over its body. Blue-spotted salamanders are found in eastern-central North America and stretch across northern New England. They are found around the Great Lakes and west as far as Manitoba Canada. The blue-spotted salamander lives in deciduous and coniferous forests. They are most abundant in moist woodlands with sandy soil. They differ from other salamanders in that they are found above the ground throughout the warmer months. During the day they stay undercover out of the direct sunlight. They spend the summer and fall in damp forests, searching for food at night.

The Blue-spotted Salamander's life cycle starts with the eggs. The eggs are similar to frog eggs because they are both clear gelatin-like clumps found in vernal pools and other small bodies of water. The easiest way to tell them apart is salamander eggs have this thin layer of jelly-like wrapping surrounding the eggs to keep them together and protect them. The Salamander's next stage in the life cycle is also like frogs. Salamander nymphs and frogs both live in water for this stage in their life. Unlike the frog, the salamander has legs as soon as it hatches from the egg. Both the frog and the salamander have a paddle tail to help them propel themselves through the water but as the frog loses its tail when it gets older, the salamander's tail becomes round instead of flat. One of the most noticeable differences is the salamander has external gills and the frog doesn't. The frog has to develop legs and lose its tail before it can leave the water. The salamander just has to get bigger and develop lungs. Only after it's done developing will it leave the water.

Although we didn't see any Blue-spotted Salamanders at our vernal pool, I'm still very interested in the habits, and conservation of this species.

Citation Maine department of inland fisheries and wildlife

<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/species-information/reptiles-amphibians/blue-spotted-salamander.html>

https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Ambystoma_laterale/

Animal diversity web