

spotted dusky salamander *Desmognathus conanti*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Caudata

Family: Plethodontidae

ILLINOIS STATUS endangered, native

FEATURES

The spotted dusky salamander averages two and one-half to five inches in length. The body is tan or brown with six to eight pairs of red or golden spots along the back. These spots may fuse to form a light-colored band. A light line is present from the eye to the angle of the jaw. The tail is triangular in cross section.

BEHAVIORS

The spotted dusky salamander may be found in the southern tip of Illinois. It lives in woodland seeps and cold springs or streams. This salamander is very alert and quick. Breeding occurs in spring and fall. Clusters of 10 to 20 eggs are deposited in nests near the water. The female stays with the eggs and sometimes eats them. Hatching occurs in one to two months depending on the temperature. The larvae reach the water by wriggling. Transformation occurs in less than a year. This salamander eats earthworms, slugs and arthropods (spiders, insects, mites and others).

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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