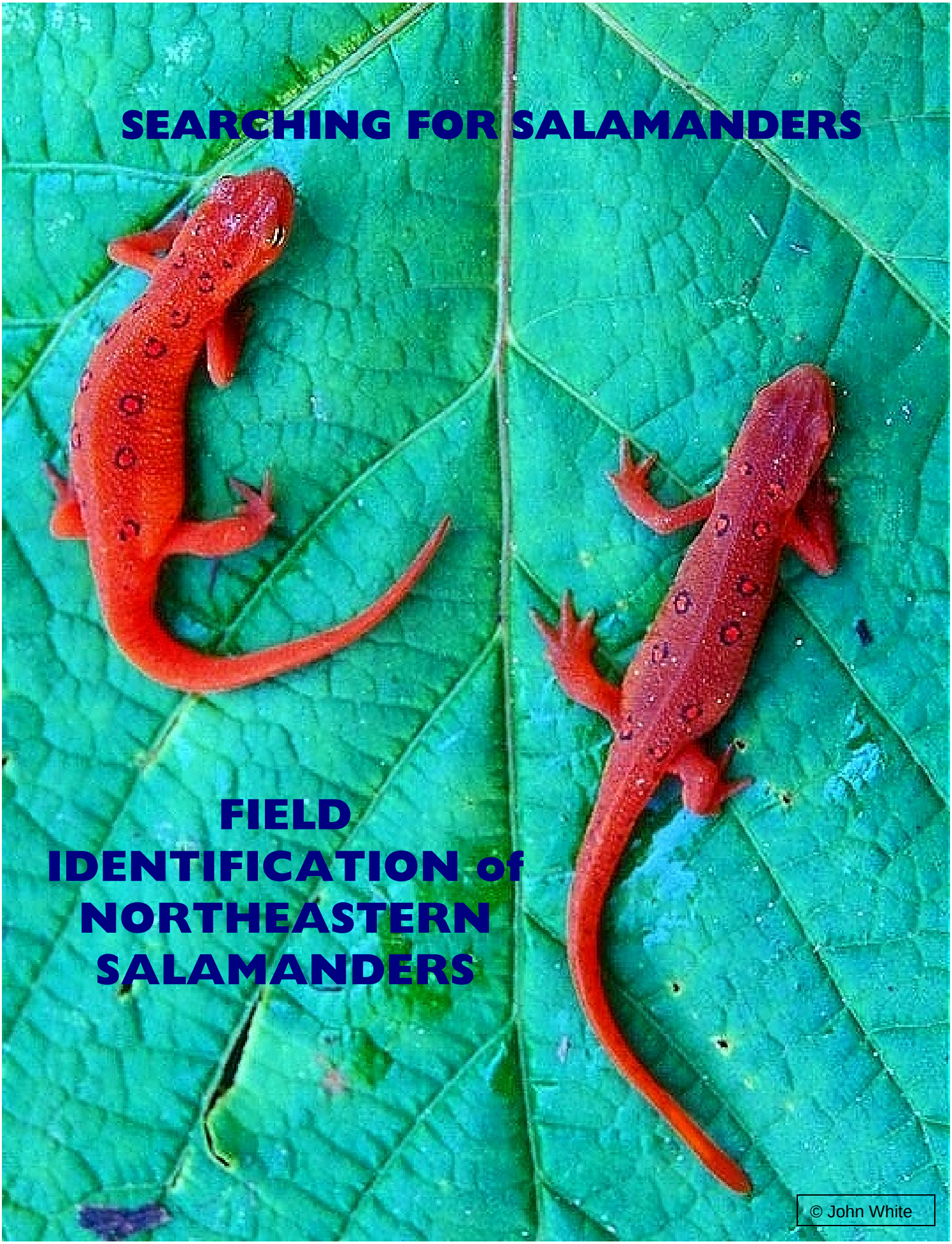
SEARCHING FOR SALAMANDERS



FIELD IDENTIFICATION of NORTHEASTERN SALAMANDERS

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Four-toed Salamander: *Hemidactylium scutatum*

MarkTegges

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ID: (5.1-10.2 cm) A small species distinguished by hind feet with 4 toes and a constriction at the base of the tail. It is reddish-brown above with grayish sides, and a white belly with black spots.

Habitat: Bogs, boggy streams and floodplains. Usually associated with sphagnum moss.

When a predator grabs the Four-toed's tail, it readily breaks off

Jefferson Salamander: *Ambystoma jeffersonianum*

E. Talmage

E. Talmage

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ID: (10.7–18 cm) Long toes, long snout, and slender build. Dark brown/gray back with a distinctly paler belly. Small bluish flecks of color on limbs and lower body are usually present.

Habitat: Mixed or deciduous forest. Hides in underground retreats but is brought out by heavy rains and warm temperatures to migrate to breeding ponds.

Northern Dusky Salamander: *Desmognathus fuscus fuscus*

Photos above by E. Talmage

E. Talmage

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ID: (6.4–11.5 cm) Gray or brown. It has a pale line from its eye to the angle of the jaw. Note the triangular tail. Adults are patterned with 6-7 pairs of oval blotches, often fused into a back stripe. The base of the tail is usually lighter.

Habitat: Most often found under moist forest litter or rocks; especially along edges of small woodland streams.

Northern Slimy Salamander: *Plethodon glutinosus*

Matt Herpjournal.com

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ID: (11.4-20.6 cm) Shiny black with small, scattered white spots and brassy flecks on top of head, back, and tail. It has larger white, gray, or yellow spotting on its sides. Belly is slate colored. Secretes a gluey substance from its skin.

Habitat: Moist banks, damp forested hillsides, and shady ravine slopes.

Northern Two-lined Salamander: *Eurycea bislineata*

Robin Jung, SERC.SI.EDU

Brian R. Mitchell

Brian R. Mitchell

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ID: (6.4-9.5 cm) Slender with a broad, yellowish back stripe from its snout to the tip of the tail. The stripe is flanked by dark lines from eye to tail. There are five toes on hind foot. The underside of the body and legs are yellow or orange-yellow.

Habitat: Look under objects at water's edge or in pockets of gravel in streamlets, where it feeds on aquatic insects.

Red-backed Salamander: *Plethodon cinereus*

Brian R. Mitchell

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Brian R. Mitchell

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ID: (5.7–10 cm) Has a slender body usually with a broad, straight-edged stripe from head to tail. Its stripe may be yellow, orange, or gray. The stripe is bordered by dark pigment that extends downward onto the sides of the body.

Habitat: Sift through leaves of forest floor; in burrows and under stones.

Red Salamander: *Pseudotriton ruber*

Chris Leary, USGS

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ID: (10-15.2 cm) Its body is red and chunky with both short legs and tail. It is speckled with many irregularly shaped black spots. The eyes are yellow.

Habitat: Leaf litter of cool, sheltered brooks and springs or nearby damp woodlands and meadows.

Red-spotted Newt / Eastern Newt: *Notophthalmus viridescens viridescens* Eft Stage

all photos by Brian R. Mitchell

Has an aquatic life stage as a larva with gills and as an adult without. Between, it lives on land for two to three years in a sub-adult, eft stage. Then, upon sexual maturity, it returns to the water. Sometimes the eft stage is skipped; or, if ponds dry up, adults revert to efts. The efts are toxic and their bright color serves as a warning!

ID: (5.7–12.2 cm) Aquatic adults are olive/yellow-green, or dark brown above and yellow below. They have up to 21 red spots at all life stages. Efts (immature) are brilliant reddish-orange. Rough skin.

Habitat: Adults are aquatic in ponds, lakes, and slow rivers. Efts are terrestrial in moist forests, especially after rains.

Spotted Salamander: *Ambystoma maculatum*

biology.usgs.gov/npsveg/apps/index.html

C. Slesar

Jim Andrews

ID: (11.2–19.7 cm) Spotted salamanders often are large with a thick body and glossy black head. They have 2 rows of up to 50 round yellow/orange spots run from eye to tail tip. Its background color is black with a slate-grey belly.

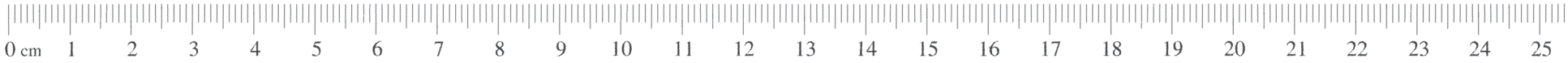
Habitat: Mixed or deciduous forest. Hides in underground retreats but is brought out by heavy rains and warm temperatures to migrate to breeding ponds. Not commonly found outside the breeding season.

Spring Salamander: *Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*

all photos by Brian R. Mitchell

ID: (10.8–21.9 cm) Spring salamanders have a light bar that runs from the eye to the nostril. They have a sturdy body and keeled tail and are salmon, brownish-pink, yellowish-brown or orange, or reddish-brown; patterns vary.

Habitat: Springs, cool and clear mountain brooks, shaded seepages and wet caves.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