

Tiger Salamander

(Ambystoma tigrinum)



DID YOU KNOW:

Tiger salamanders are the world's largest land-dwelling salamanders. They can grow to be 8 to 13 inches long and live up to twenty-five years. In Asia, the Chinese Salamander that is totally aquatic can grow up to 5 feet! Salamanders, like all amphibians, must have water. They absorb water through their skin and they must lay their eggs in water.

EATING HABITS:

Both adult and young are predators of a variety of other water creatures, including insects, crustaceans, worms, snails, fish, tadpoles, frogs and even other salamanders.

THE YOUNG:

After emerging from hibernation, and after the rains begin and temperatures warm, adult tiger salamanders breed. Female salamanders lay up to 1,000 eggs. In a few weeks the larvae emerge, breathing through gills and feasting on aquatic creatures. Between July and early September, the larvae change into land-dwelling young adults. The gills are absorbed into the head and the legs become bigger and the tail thinner. This change is common to all amphibians (tadpoles are frog larvae).

HABITAT (HOME):

Tiger salamanders live in swamps, woodlands and prairies where ponds, streams and marshes are nearby. Even though they live in our area, we seldom see them because they are good at hiding, spend most of the time below ground, and are usually active at night.



DEFENSIVE HABITS:

Camouflage and staying hidden are their best defense. Because there are so many predators on their eggs and larvae, laying many eggs helps make sure that some salamanders will survive. These creatures are very sensitive and have no defense against water pollution.

UNUSUAL FACTS:

- Tiger salamanders have five basic senses: touch, taste, sight, hearing and smell. They also can detect ultraviolet and infrared light and the Earth's magnetic field.
- They feel temperature and pain and will respond to pollutants, like acids, that leak into our waterways.
- Salamanders are cold-blooded with porous skin so they must respond quickly to any changes in their environment to survive.