



Mudpuppy's Pond

What's a Mudpuppy, anyway?

A Really Cool Dude!

When it comes to squiggly creatures, the Mudpuppy Salamander is one of the squiggliest! The Mudpuppy is an amphibian, like frogs and toads. Amphibians need plenty of moisture to stay alive. It's no wonder, then, that they're slimy and feel like holding a handful of jelly.

A Mudpuppy never leaves the water. If it did, it would suffocate. It breathes through bushy red gills its whole life. You can get an idea of how cold a pond is by looking at a Mudpuppy's gill. If the water is cold and full of oxygen, its gills are smaller. In warm, stagnant water, a Mudpuppy needs large gills to get enough oxygen.

Mudpuppy habitat in Missouri includes large creeks, rivers, and reservoirs. They lay low during the day, usually hidden in deep pools under submerged logs, rocks, or tree roots. They feed at night on crayfish, mollusks, small fish, and worms. A Mudpuppy may take the bait on your fishing pole! If you do catch one, admire his awesome red gills and release him back to the wild.

(Fun books you can find at your library:

Young Naturalist Field Guides: Snakes, Salamanders, and Lizards, by Diane Burns; Salamanders, Creepy Crawlers, by Lynn Stone (great photos); Reptiles and Amphibians, by Catherine Howell.

A great book for your family is Amphibians and Reptiles of Missouri by Tom R. Johnson and published by MDC.)

