

Woodland Pool Wildlife



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Hudson River
Estuary Program

a photo identification guide

This guide includes the main group of animals that depends on woodland pools for breeding (mole salamanders, wood frogs, and fairy shrimp), and a number of other wildlife species that may be observed in pools. More comprehensive guides to wildlife, vernal pools, and wetland plants may be needed to identify the rich diversity of life that thrives in this habitat.

Mole Salamanders

(pool-breeding salamanders in the family *Ambystomatidae* that spend much of their time underground)



spotted salamander

Ambystoma maculatum

Gray to black with yellow spots in 2 rows along back.

Size: adult length is usually 5.0-8.0 inches in total length (TL)

Eggs: firm masses of 50-200 eggs, attached to twigs or stems; clear or white



Jefferson salamander*

Ambystoma jeffersonianum

Gray to brown with pale blue to white flecked underside.

Size: adult length is usually 4.0-7.0 inches in TL, large and robust

Eggs: masses of 20-30 eggs, often sausage-shaped

NOTE Hybrids of Jefferson and blue-spotted salamanders are common and have features of both species.



blue-spotted salamander*

Ambystoma laterale

Coloring resembles enamelware pots, black with blue-silver flecks.

Size: adult length is usually 3.0-5.0 inches in TL, slender bodied

Eggs: laid singly, in small clusters, or in sheets on pool bottom



marbled salamander

Ambystoma opacum

Dark with silver-gray (females) to white (males) bands on back.

Size: adult length is usually 3.5-4.0 inches in TL, stout bodied

Eggs: between 50-200 laid in fall in dry pool bed

Outreach on woodland pool conservation is part of a larger NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program initiative to partner with local communities to conserve the diversity of plants, animals, and habitats that sustain the health and resiliency of the entire estuary watershed. For more information, visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/52325.html> or <https://hudson.dnr.cals.cornell.edu/>.



Cornell University



Hudson River
Estuary Program

A Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Wood frog

Rana sylvatica



Orange to dark brown with dark "mask" from each eye to tympanum.

Size: adult length is usually 1.5-3.0 inches

Eggs: > 1,000 in a 2.5-4.0 inch diameter mass, often laid communally in "rafts."

Fairy shrimp

C: BRANCHIPODA O: ANOSTRACA



Orange to green, swim upside down in pools from late winter to early spring.

Size: adult length is usually 0.5-1.5 inches

Eggs: carried in a brood pouch, eventually released.

Signs of Pool Breeding

The presence of spermatophores, egg masses, and developing amphibians in woodland pools is a good indication of breeding activity.



More Woodland Pool Wildlife

The following group includes wildlife species that may use woodland pools for foraging, resting, and/or breeding in addition to using other habitat types.

spotted turtle



spring peeper



American toad



four-toed salamander



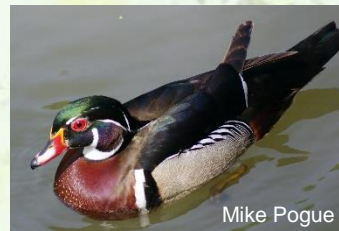
Blanding's turtle*



spadefoot toad**



wood duck



red-spotted newt



* In the Hudson Valley, limited to Dutchess county.

** In the Hudson Valley, limited to Dutchess and Albany counties.

For more wildlife information: *The Amphibians and Reptiles of New York State* (Gibbs et al. 2007)
A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools (Kenney and Burne 2001).