

# SALAMANDER, TIGER

## RANGE:

Eastern and Central North America to California and south into Mexico.

## HABITAT:

Arid sagebrush plains, pine barrens, mountain forests, and damp meadows where the soil is loose. Also in mammal and invertebrate burrows.

## SIZE:

Up to 14 inches.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Up to 25 years.

## REPRODUCTION:

- Males are often larger than females, have longer tails, thicker legs, and very swollen cloaca during the breeding season.
- Tiger Salamanders migrate to shallow ponds, lakes, and temporary pools to breed. This occurs in the early spring (January to March) for northern dwellers, and usually in the winter in southern dwellers.
- The male drops a sperm packet (spermatophore) which the female picks up with her cloaca.
- The Tiger Salamander lays 100 eggs in a 3x4 inch kidney-shaped jelly mass which it attaches to submerged plants.
- The gilled larvae usually metamorphose into lung-breathing adult Tiger Salamanders that return to the land. However, some northern montane populations do not metamorphose, but retain their larval gills as aquatic adults.
- Higher concentrations of iodine in the water or the administration of thyroxin can induce the neotenic salamanders to metamorphose.

## DIET:

**Wild:** Voracious consumers of earthworms, large insects, small mice and amphibians.

**Zoo:** Crickets, earthworms.

## BEHAVIOR:

The Tiger Salamander is nocturnal, living beneath logs and rocks or burrowing in soft ground in the forests and damp meadows during most of the year. It leaves its shelter briefly on rainy nights and for a few days during the rainy season when it migrates to water to mate.

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The largest land salamander.
- It has a wide head, small eyes, 11 –14 costal grooves, and a laterally compressed tail.
- It is dark brown to black with light olive to yellow spots or bars. There are 9 subspecies with varied colors and patterns.
- The Tiger Salamander uses vision, the Jacobson's organ and its sensitivity to ground vibrations to locate its prey.

## STATUS:

Populations are stable although many amphibian species are threatened by pollution, habitat loss, and over exposure to ultraviolet rays due to Ozone depletion.

theZOO  
LOUISVILLE

PHOTO  
COMING  
SOON

Order:	<b>Urodela (Caudata)</b>
Family:	<b>Ambystomatidae</b>
Genus:	<b>Ambystoma</b>
Species:	<b>tigrinum</b>