

Rise and slime! It's salamander time

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.01.20

Word Count **390**

Level **400L**



Image 1. Eastern tiger salamanders have a smiley face and a very long tail. The amphibian nearly disappeared in Maryland because of development and pollution, but 1,000 to 2,000 now live in the state, according to research. Photo: Emilio Concari/Maryland Department of Natural Resources

One kind of salamander looks like it smiles. It is the Eastern tiger salamander. It is like a lizard.

Scientists work at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. It is called DNR for short. They like the tiger salamander.

This kind of salamander is not seen much.

People started taking the land where salamanders lived. The salamanders almost died out in Maryland. Now they are coming back.

Scott McDaniel leads a wildlife group in Maryland. He said kids are happy to see salamanders.

Beth Schlimm is a scientist at the DNR. She said people notice birds or furry animals. She said she likes "slimy things."

Some salamanders give off something sticky. It comes from their tails. It is to fight off other animals.

Tiger salamanders are important. They eat smaller living things. They get eaten by larger animals.

Breathe Through Their Skin

These salamanders breathe partly through their skin. Mr. McDaniel said they need wetlands. Wetlands have lots of water. It is where they lay eggs.

The salamanders need ponds without fish for their eggs, Ms. Schlimm said. The eggs need sunlight, too. It matters how deep the water is. If the water is too shallow, the eggs dry out, she said. If it is too deep, the sun will not get to the eggs.

She visited wetlands in Maryland. People changed the plants there back to what they used to be. That helped the salamanders.

Ms. Schlimm counted salamander eggs. It was to see how many salamanders are around.

Tiger salamanders can be 14 inches long. They dig holes under the dirt. That is where they live most of the time. That means they are hard to find. They come out at night to eat.

Swim Like Alligators

Mr. McDaniel said they use their tail to move through the water. They swim like alligators, he said.

Spring evenings are the best time to see salamanders. Do not take them home, though.

They could still die out. People should not keep them for pets.

They eat almost anything they can catch. Snails, worms and insects are their food.

The salamanders can live for 15 years.



Quiz

1 Which sentence from the Introduction [paragraphs 1-8] explains WHY salamanders were dying out?

- (A) One kind of salamander looks like it smiles.
- (B) This kind of salamander is not seen much.
- (C) People started taking the land where salamanders lived.
- (D) He said kids are happy to see salamanders.

2 What is a reason WHY salamanders have sticky tails?

- (A) to catch small animals to eat
- (B) to be able to lay their eggs
- (C) to fight off other animals
- (D) to swim very quickly

3 Read the paragraph below from the section "Breathe Through Their Skin."

The salamanders need ponds without fish for their eggs, Ms. Schlimm said. The eggs need sunlight, too. It matters how deep the water is. If the water is too shallow, the eggs dry out, she said. If it is too deep, the sun will not get to the eggs.

What is the focus of this paragraph?

- (A) what kind of water is best for salamander eggs
- (B) why ponds with fish are bad for salamander eggs
- (C) what the sun does to help salamander eggs to grow
- (D) why salamander eggs can dry out sometimes

4 What is the article MAINLY about?

- (A) noticing birds and furry animals
- (B) helping baby salamanders learn to swim
- (C) leading wildlife groups in Maryland
- (D) protecting Eastern tiger salamanders

Answer Key

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