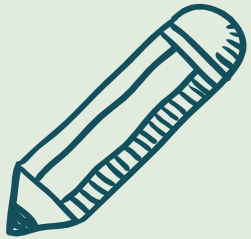
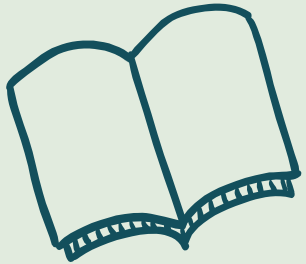

Majestic Trees
Welcome to your spring class!
University of Oregon ELP
2020

Materials for today!

Take 1-2 minutes to go gather these supplies, if you have them

- Pencil
- Paper or a notebook



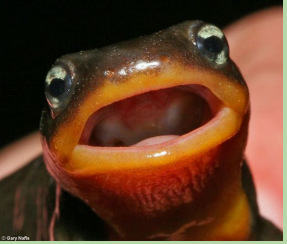


Today’s topic is rather slimy...

Objectives

Today we will learn the difference between a salamander and a newt. We will also learn about 3 different salamanders native to Oregon.

With a raised hand, can anyone tell me the difference between a salamander and a newt?



So, why should we care about these slimy creatures?

Their *niche*, or role, in the ecosystem is to helps control pests by eating insects like mosquitoes.

Their absorbent skin makes salamanders vulnerable to drought and toxic substances, and some of their populations are in trouble due to climate change or poor air quality.

When their populations decline, they serve as an indicator that their ecosystem, like the forest they live in, may be unhealthy.

All newts are salamanders, but not all salamanders are newts.

Salamanders:

-long tails
-soft, moist skin
-can live on (or in) the ground and in water

Newts:

-dry, rough skin
-external gills
-live semi-aquatic

Most newts have webbed feet and a paddle-like tail, which make it easier to live in the water.

Salamanders typically have longer and more rounded tails with well-developed toes for digging in soil.

Northwestern salamander:

These large-bodied salamanders have solid brown skin that is smooth and moist. Adults can grow to almost 10 inches in total length.

Although they're incredibly common in Oregon, they are hard to find...

Any guesses where these live?

Northwestern salamanders live in moist forests or partly wooded areas... underground!

They like moist crevices within logs or rodent burrows because it shelters them from extreme weather and predators.

When disturbed, the northwestern salamander makes a ticking sound and gets into a defensive posture.

Larvae and terrestrial adults are mildly poisonous, because of this they can generally survive alongside predatory species, like bullfrogs.

Rough-skinned newt

On your paper, write down what you already know about the rough-skinned newt.

Where have you encountered them? What were they like?

Did they have a personality? Do you have any interesting facts?

Rough-skinned newt

Named for their bumpy texture, these newts also have a bright orange belly and brown body. They can grow up to 8 inches long.

Rough-skinned newts have a poison in their skin and eggs to protect them from predators. A milky white substance is released from glands when disturbed, which is why we avoid hand-to-mouth contact after handling.

Rough-skinned newt

They find protection inside or under soft logs.

These small critters travel long distances between their breeding and non-breeding habitat (spring and fall), which is why we may see them crossing roads as they migrate.

Black Salamander

- Unlike the other salamanders we looked at, these are lungless and breathe through their skin.

- They don't have to drink water because their skin absorbs it.

Black Salamander

- Lives in forests, open woodlands, and streamside habitats
- During drier periods, they have to find shelter within large decaying logs or even along streams.

On your paper in front of you, write down 3 things you learned about salamanders and newts. Which species was your favorite?

Thank you for tuning in, and we hope you have fun creating your very own salamander or newt species!