



zigzag salamander

Plethodon dorsalis

Kingdom: Animalia
 Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
 Class: Amphibia
 Order: Caudata
 Family: Plethodontidae

FEATURES

The zigzag salamander averages two and one-half to three and one-half inches in length. It is a red-backed or uniformly dark salamander. A zigzag, lobed, straight or wavy red or yellow stripe is present down the back. The belly is mottled with orange or red.

BEHAVIORS

The zigzag salamander lives under rocks on wooded hillsides. In dry conditions it may retreat to crevices, caves or below ground. It is nocturnal. It breeds in fall, with eggs deposited under rocks or in rock crevices. The female guards the eggs until hatching, which happens in late summer. The newly hatched larva is attached to a yolk sac for a day or so after hatching. After this time, the gills disappear, and the hatchlings are terrestrial, which is different than in most other amphibian species. They remain terrestrial as adults. The zigzag salamander feeds on worms, sowbugs, centipedes, insects and spiders.

HABITATS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests | <input type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs | <input type="checkbox"/> swamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> temp water supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> marshes | <input type="checkbox"/> wet prairies & fens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peatlands | |

ILLINOIS STATUS

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> common | <input type="checkbox"/> endangered | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>native</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>exotic</u> | |

ILLINOIS RANGE

southern tip

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2006.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume I: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.