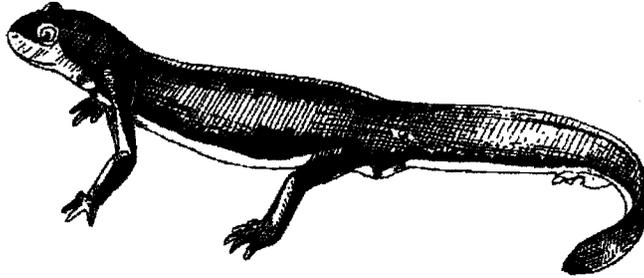


California Newt

Taricha torosa
Family Salamandridae



Global Rank: G5
State Rank: S4 (CA)

Distribution: Coast ranges of California from Mendocino County to the western slope of the Peninsular Ranges in San Diego County and western slope of Sierra Nevada south to Breckenridge Creek and Mill Creek in Kern County. Isolated population at Squaw Creek in Shasta County. Ranges from near sea level to about 6,500 ft. (2,000 m.). Found in all successional stages from blue oak savannah to mixed-conifer types. Prefers deciduous riparian habitats.

Description: Adults reach up to 3.5 in. (8.7 cm.) in snout-vent length. They are similar to the rough-skinned newt except are usually lighter brown above and with less contrast between dorsal and ventral colors on the sides. Lower eyelids are light-colored, eyes are large, and corneal surfaces extend to or beyond the outline of the head when viewed from above. Teeth in the roof of the mouth usually in a Y-shaped arrangement. Breeding males have smooth skin, bulbous vent, a flattened tail, and dark skin on underside of feet.



Current range of the California newt

Reproduction: The newt moves to pools in streams (and some ponds and lakes) during the first rains in the fall. They breed from December to May, with a peak in activity from February to April. Eggs are laid in clumps attached to submerged vegetation and the undersides of boulders.

Food: Searches for insects under surface objects and in streams.

Habits: Home ranges estimated at about 1 ac. (0.4 ha.), not including movement to and from breeding sites. Found in all successional stages from blue oak savannah to mixed-conifer types, but prefers riparian deciduous vegetation.

Management Implications: Common in preferred habitat. No known management concerns. Wartiness is apparently caused by disease, and is more extreme in the southern part of the range.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Verner, J., and A.S. Boss. 1980. California wildlife and their habitats: Western Sierra Nevada. USDA Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, GTR PSW-37, Berkeley, CA.