

California Slender Salamander

Batrachoseps attenuatus
Family Plethodontidae



Global Rank: G5

State Rank: S2 (OR); S5 (CA)

Distribution: In coastal area from extreme southwestern Oregon (near mouth of Rogue River) to vicinity of San Benito River, the Sierran foothills from Big Chico Creek to the American River drainage. There are scattered populations in the Sacramento Valley and isolated populations in Shasta County, California. They range from sea level to 4,000 ft. (1,220 m.) in elevation.

Description: Adults reach nearly 2 in. (4.7 cm.) in snout-vent length. Total length is 1 1/2 to 2 times the snout-vent length. The head is narrow, the body and tail long, and limbs very short. The belly is black or dusky, usually arranged in a fine unbroken network. The undersides of the tail are often lighter than belly and tinged with yellow. Ventral surfaces including the midline of the tail and finely speckled with white. A dorsal stripe is often present and is brick-red, buff, or yellow. The remaining dorsal color is sooty to black. There are 18-20 costal grooves and 10-12 costal folds between adpressed limbs. Males have a more pointed lower jaw and a broader and more squared off snout than females.



*Current range of the
California slender salamander*

Reproduction: Breeds from October to January, with peak breeding in November. Eggs are laid in moist places under surface objects and in burrows during the late fall and winter, often in communal nests. Young emerge in winter and spring.

Food: Feeds on small insects and other invertebrates searched for under surface objects.

Habits: Found in all successional stages of blue oak savannah, digger pine-oak and chaparral types. It prefers the blue oak savannah with scattered trees. It is the only slender salamander found in oak woodland north of the Merced River. Found under logs, boards, bark, and in damp leaf litter and rotting logs from the time of the first rains until the beginning of the dry period in late spring or summer.

Management Implications: Common in preferred habitat.

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.