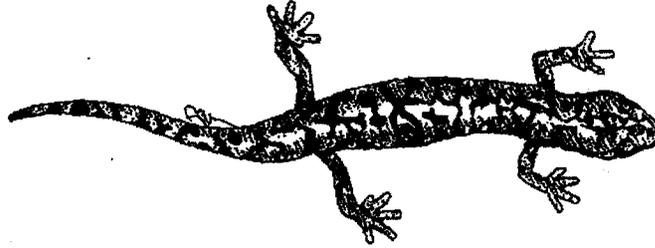


Clouded Salamander

Aneides ferreus
Family Plethodontidae



Global Rank: G3

State Rank: S2 (CA); S4 (OR)

Distribution: Ranges from extreme southwestern Washington, Coastal and Cascade Mountains of Oregon and California. Also occurs on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, but may have been introduced there. Extends from sea level to about 5,400 ft. (1,650 m.) in elevation.

Description: Adults reach up to 5 in. (13 cm.) in total length. As with all Plethodontidae lungless salamanders, there is no free-living larvae stage. Young emerge fully formed. They are slim, long-legged, agile, and excellent climbers. Toes have slightly broadened and squarish tips. There are usually 16 costal grooves. Coloration varies from brown, clouded with ash, greenish gray, pale gold, or reddish above, and dusky below. Recently hatched young have a copper or brassy dorsal stripe which soon is reduced to patches on the snout, shoulders, and tail, and stripes on the upper surface of the base of limbs. Mature males have a heart-shaped mental gland that is absent in females.



Current range of the clouded salamander

Reproduction: Eggs are laid from spring to early summer and hatch in September and October. Clutch size averages 14 eggs (range 8-18) and eggs are brooded, usually by the females, until they hatch. The incubation period is about two months. Females breed in alternate years.

Food: Clouded salamanders eat small invertebrates, including ants, beetles, mites, spiders, and springtails. In one study in Oregon, 57 percent of the diet was comprised of ants.

Habits: The clouded salamander is primarily a forest dweller, found in moist areas under loose bark of standing or fallen dead trees and other debris. It may be common at the edges and within clearings caused by fire or timber harvest if large downed logs are present. It may climb trees to at least 20 ft. (6 m.). It becomes inactive in cold weather. Colonies may be found deep inside downed logs, especially during the summer.

Management Implications: Populations of this salamander can adapt to timber harvest practices that leave downed logs scattered in clearings, but not to young reforested areas lacking coarse woody debris.

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; Csuti, B., A.J. Kimerling, T.A. O'Neil, M.M. Shaughnessy, E.P. Gaines, and M.M.P. Huso. 1997. Atlas of Oregon wildlife. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, OR.