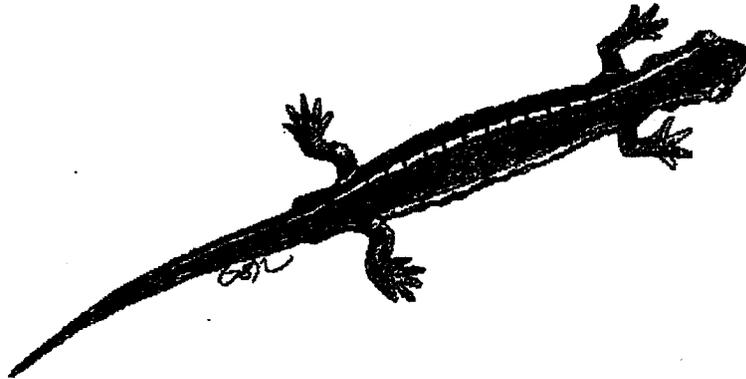


Olympic Salamander

Rhyacotriton olympicus
Family Dicamptodontidae



BLM Status: Sensitive (OR)

Global Rank: G2G3

State Rank: S2 (WA); S3 (OR)

Distribution: Found in coastal areas from the Olympic Peninsula, Washington, south to the vicinity of Point Arena, Medocino County, California. Inland populations west of Cascade crest from the vicinity of Lewis County, Washington, to the upper Umpqua River drainage, Douglas County, Oregon.

Description: Adults reach to about 4 in. (10 cm.) in total length. Their small size and large eyes are distinctive among western aquatic and semiaquatic salamanders. The diameter of the eye opening roughly equals the distance between the front corner of the eye and the tip of the snout. The head is small, body is long, and limbs and tail are short. Coloration is plain brown or olive mottled with dusky above, and orange or yellow below. Males have prominent squarish vent lobes.

Reproduction: Most breeding occurs in spring and early summer with a lesser peak in



Current range of the Olympic salamander

fall and winter. Clutches of 7 to 16 eggs are laid which take up to 7 to 10 months to hatch. Larvae have short gills and adult proportions and live in clear shallow water, in the muck of seepages, and in accumulations of dead leaves in creeks. They are slow to metamorphose, perhaps requiring over three years to do so. Sexual maturity may take six to seven years to reach.

Food: The diet consists of aquatic and semi-aquatic invertebrates, including amphibids, springtails, fly larvae, worms, snails, and spiders. They search for prey under rocks and other objects in streams.

Habits: The salamanders are most abundant in rocks bathed in a constant flow of cold water, and also occur in cool rocky streams, lakes, and seeps that are well-shaded and with banks covered with moss and ferns. They tend to remain in the splash zones of waterfalls within conifer and alder forests.

Management Implications: The Olympic salamander has been split taxonomically into three species: the Cascade torrent salamander (*R. cascadae*) found in the Oregon Cascades as far south as northern Lane County; the Columbia torrent salamander (*R. kezeri*) found in extreme northwestern Oregon; and the southern torrent salamander (*R. variegatus*) found south of Tillamook County and in the Cascades of eastern Douglas County into California. The Columbia torrent salamander is a BLM sensitive species. Current ecological information does not differentiate between the three species, so this account applies to all three species.

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.

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