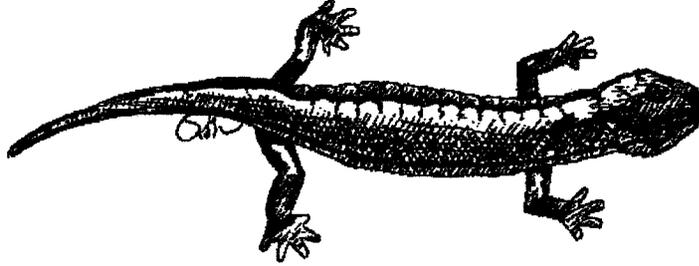


Shasta Salamander

Hydromantes shastae
Family Plethodontidae



Global Rank: G1G2

State Rank: S1S2 (CA)

Distribution: Known only from limestone country in northern California south of Mount Shasta in the headwaters of Shasta Reservoir-Backbone Ridge, Mammoth Ridge, Hirz Mountain, and adjacent areas of Shasta County. Ranges from about 1,000 ft. (300 m.) to 3,000 ft. (910 m.) in elevation.

Description: Adults reach up to 2 1/2 in. (8.7 cm.) in snout-vent length. The body is less flat, toes less webbed, and limbs longer than similar salamanders more developed for crevice living. Adpressed limbs overlap by 1/2 to 1 1/2 costal folds. Coloration is gray-green, beige, tan, or reddish above, usually with yellow on the tail. There are white blotches on the chest and abdomen. Young are gray-green, olive, tan, or reddish on upper body, and yellowish above on the tail.

Reproduction: Probably breeds from May to July, with peak breeding in June. Mean clutch size is 7 eggs (range 5 to 12). It is thought to breed and to lay and brood eggs in moist caverns.



Current range of the Shasta salamander

Food: Diet is insects and other invertebrates which it searches for under surface objects and in caverns.

Habits: Primarily a cave dweller and less specialized for crevice dwelling than similar salamanders. Restricted in distribution to limestone outcrops and caverns, but may be found under rocks in the open during wet weather. Found in all successional stages of digger pine-oak, ponderosa pine, and black oak types. It enters moist caves in the summer. Not thought to be territorial. The home range may be up to one acre.

Management Implications: Rare due to limited habitat. Has a special habitat requirement for moist limestone outcrops and caverns.

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.