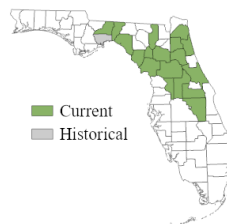


STRIPED NEWT

Notophthalmus perstriatus

Order: Caudata
Family: Salamandridae
FNAI Ranks: G2G3/S2
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: Threatened



Description: A relatively small salamander, 2.4–3.9 in. (61–99 mm) with several distinct life stages. Adults and older juveniles are olive to greenish brown with red line running down each side of back and terminating on tail. Belly yellow with black spots; skin rough, not slimy as in most salamanders. Larvae aquatic, brown, with bushy external gills between eyes and front legs, and dorsolateral lines generally broken into segments. Juvenile terrestrial eft stage, when present, rough-skinned, dull orange to reddish brown with two red stripes. Tail in all aquatic stages with dorsal and ventral fins, which are lacking in terrestrial stages.

Similar Species: Adult and eft of central or peninsula newt, *Notophthalmus viridescens*, lack red stripes; however, larvae are difficult to distinguish from striped newts of similar age.

Habitat: Xeric upland communities, principally sandhill but also scrub; occasionally in pine flatwoods. Breeds in isolated, mostly ephemeral wetlands (depression marshes) that lack predatory fishes as a result of periodic drying cycles. Occasional fire and relatively undisturbed soil and vegetative groundcover are important terrestrial habitat components.

Seasonal Occurrence: Terrestrial juveniles and adults present but inconspicuous (mostly below ground surface) in uplands year-round. Various life stages occupy wetland breeding habitats much of year, with adults typically entering ponds October–March, and larvae and paedomorphic adults present March–December or until ponds dry. Most juveniles depart ponds for surrounding uplands in late spring or summer.

Florida Distribution: In Florida, the striped newt occupies two principal regions of occurrence that may be separated by a gap of inappropriate habitat (Farmer et al. 2017).

Striped Newt

Notophthalmus perstriatus

The larger region centers around north-central peninsular Florida (Clay, Alachua, Putnam, and Marion counties) but extends south to Osceola County and northeast to Duval County. The western population is primarily in Leon County in the central Panhandle (Munson Sandhills south of Tallahassee). This population has nearly been extirpated, but is part of a reintroduction project. Recent (post-2010) discoveries of breeding ponds in Jefferson and Taylor counties are the first records from the Big Bend region of Florida. In total, recent records (2000–2016) compiled by Farmer et al. (2017) documented 106 breeding ponds in 13 counties (though possibly extirpated in 2).

Range-wide Distribution: Although the range lies principally in Florida, it extends northward into southwestern and eastern Georgia.

Conservation Status: Species has undoubtedly declined range-wide as a result of habitat disturbance and destruction, mostly for silviculture. Most of the best remaining populations are on protected lands, including national forests, military installations, and an ecological preserve.

Protection and Management: Maintain ecological integrity and optimum habitat conditions of terrestrial and aquatic habitats that support striped newts on both conservation and private lands. Management generally entails use of prescribed fire and protection of the natural soil horizon and vegetative groundcover. Protect populations on private lands, including at least some in Georgia, by conservation agreements or land purchases. Protect terrestrial habitat within at least 2 km surrounding breeding ponds, and maintain broad natural upland connections between any ponds within 2 km of each other. Allow fires, especially during the growing season, to burn into dry wetland basins to reduce organic matter and limit hardwood encroachment. Prohibit off-road vehicle use within isolated wetland basins. Limit or ban collecting except for scientific and conservation purposes. Consider listing the species as threatened at both federal and state levels.

References: Ashton and Ashton 1988a; Bartlett and Bartlett 1999; Farmer et al. 2017; Franz and Smith 1999; Johnson 2001, 2005; Moler (ed.) 1992; Petranksa 1998; Powell et al. 2016.



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