

**Wisconsin Salamander Survey 2010-11**  
**St. Croix Wildlife, Inc.**  
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Volunteers for the Wisconsin DNR Frog and Toad Survey have collected valuable information on anuran (frog and toad) species since 1981. Citizen monitors, many associated with state Audubon chapters, began collecting distribution data on our “silent amphibians” in 2008. In the past four years over 100 Wisconsin Salamander Survey (WSS) monitors have documented the presence or absence of four woodland species (tiger, spotted and blue-spotted salamanders and central newts) in 175 potential breeding habitats in 25 counties across the state.

The WSS develops statewide geographic distribution information and fills in gaps on four terrestrial woodland species, documents new county records for these species, increases awareness of and conservation for salamanders, and is a precursor to a long-term monitoring effort.

**Methods**

Monitors place traps in potential breeding habitats when frost has left the ground, ice has pulled away from pond edges, and immediately following the first spring rain. These conditions typically exist from late March in southern Wisconsin to mid- to late April in the far north. Volunteers place 5 funnel traps in each potential breeding pond and check them for 5 consecutive days.

Potential breeding habitats are fishless, semi-permanent to permanent or long-duration ephemeral ponds located in open and closed canopy settings, or adjacent to these community types. Uplands surrounding the pond within 300 meters support natural vegetative communities, e.g., old field, prairie, woodland, forest or a combination thereof. Croplands and pastures are excluded, in general.

**2011 Results to Date**

Twenty one citizen monitors surveyed 22 wetland sites in 13 counties that met protocol criteria for potential breeding salamanders. Monitors detected at least one individual salamander in 12 of 22 sites surveyed. They caught and released at least one individual of the four targeted species; 11 central newts, 1 tiger, 22 spotted and 191 blue-spotted salamanders.

A first-year monitor in Hayward caught the most individuals- 69 blue-spotted and 18 spotted. A monitor in Jefferson county caught and released 43 individuals of 3 species- blue-spotted, tiger and central newt. Three other monitors caught 2 species and 9 monitors recorded individuals of a lone species.

Citizen monitors surveyed potential habitats in urban and suburban Madison for the fourth consecutive year, the most thorough sampling to date of any Wisconsin city. Their data, combined with anecdotal records, gives an accurate picture of salamander occurrence in and around Madison and we can now map current distribution. We will map salamander distribution in other urban communities as data becomes available in subsequent years.

Monitors in the Green Bay area focused on urban habitats in 2011. A monitor caught 18 blue-spotted in a park on the city’s southwest side, verifying anecdotal reports at this site during the 1990’s and early 2000’s.