

# Mabee's Salamander (*Ambystoma mabeei*)

## A Virginia Threatened Species



This is a relatively small species with a small head and long slender toes. Adults measure 8-12 cm. They are colored dark brown-gray to black with silvery white flecks that are abundant on the sides, but sparse on the back. The belly is light gray or gray-brown with a few flecks.

This species is known from six localities in the coastal plain in extreme southeastern Virginia: the cities of Hampton and Suffolk and the counties of York, Southampton, Gloucester, and Isle of Wight. It is also found in Newport News.

Breeding sites are comprised of fish-free vernal ponds or ephemeral coastal plain sinkholes up to 1.5 meters deep, with surrounding forests generally composed of hardwoods mixed with pine. It is also found in low areas adjacent to coastal rivers and pine savannas, and in bogs, ponds, low wet woods, and swamps. The breeding season is in the late fall to early spring. The female attaches the eggs singly or in loose chains to leaves, twigs, or other bottom debris in shallow ponds. The clutch size is 2-6 eggs. During non-breeding seasons, this salamander is known to live and wander in the uplands adjacent to breeding ponds.

This species is known to eat zooplankton, arthropods, crustaceans and worms. It forages in the water and on the ground.

If you have any questions or encounter this salamander and need assistance, please contact John Kleopfer of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (804-829-6703; John.Kleopfer@dgif.virginia.gov).

**THE MABEE'S SALAMANDER IS A PROTECTED SPECIES IN VIRGINIA: IT IS UNLAWFUL TO HARM, COLLECT, OR POSSESS THESE SALAMANDERS.**