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CONTACT: Nicole Minadeo
nminadeo@sheddaquarium.org



Tiger salamander

Ambystoma tigrinum

This common salamander has the largest range of all salamanders in North America, with more than a million of them living in most areas of the continent. Exceptions are western Nevada and eastern California, New England and the Appalachian range. Though many are striped, like tigers, some tiger salamanders have spots or splotches.

- The tiger salamander is the largest land-dwelling salamander species in North America, while the hellbender is the largest water-dwelling salamander.
- There are a number of subspecies of tiger salamander. Sonoran tiger salamander is endangered and is found only in the Huachuca and Patagonia mountain highlands in Arizona.
- To defend themselves, tiger salamanders will raise their hind legs and wave their tail. Adults can excrete a sticky, toxic substance along the tail that sticks to the predator, inhibiting their attack. This noxious substance repels and can even kill a predator.
- The tiger salamander is prey for snakes, owls and other birds, and mammals including raccoons, bobcats, coyotes and badgers. Salamander larvae may be preyed on by water bugs, insects, other salamanders and other amphibians.
- After the ground thaws in late winter or early spring, mating begins. Females lay up to 100 fertilized eggs, which attach to underwater vegetation. Each subspecies lays eggs slightly differently, with some laying a single egg, and others laying them in small clusters or in strings.
- Eggs hatch in anywhere between six to 50 days, depending on the water temperature and subspecies. The larval stage lasts a minimum of 10 weeks.

Quick Facts

Length: 8.5 inches (21.5 cm)

Appearance: Large head and thick body that is dark brown or black with tan or yellowish spots, splotches or stripes

Life Expectancy: 16 years

Diet: Beetles, snails, insects, centipedes, slugs, worms and other invertebrates

Range: Most of North America with soil suitable for burrowing and a nearby water source

Behavior: Seeks or creates burrows to hide from predators

Immerse yourself in the amazing world of *Amphibians* at Shedd Aquarium's special exhibit featuring 40 species of salamanders, frogs, toads and worm-like creatures called caecilians. Learn how these fascinating animals reproduce and adapt to survive today's changing world, and every day actions we can take to protect their future. *Amphibians*, sponsored by Walgreens, runs May 2015 through 2017.

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