



Northeast Vernal Pool Indicator Species



Wood Frog



Wood Frog Egg Mass

Each female lays a single
egg mass which contains
800 to 1000 eggs

Surface of mass is lumpy in appearance
and lacks outer coating of jelly



Wood Frog Egg Mass

Recently deposited eggs are
about the size of a golf ball

As the eggs absorb
water the mass swells
to the size of a softball



Wood Frog Egg Masses

Egg masses may look like
bubbles at the water surface

Often attached to vegetation,
wood frog egg masses may be
deposited in large rafts



Wood Frog Egg Masses

There may be multiple
layers of egg masses
below those visible at
the water surface

Some masses may be deposited on
or have fallen to the pool bottom

Often seen in pool shallows, wood frog tadpoles are small, dark, and numerous.

Large, chunky bull frog and green frog tadpoles usually overwinter in permanent bodies of water. No additional tadpoles are in pools in the early spring when wood frogs hatch.

Wood Frog Tadpoles



Bull Frog and Green Frog Tadpoles



Spermatophores

Male salamanders deposit their sperm in jelly capsules on leaf litter and submerged sticks

Spermatophores look like small white paint flecks on the pool bottom



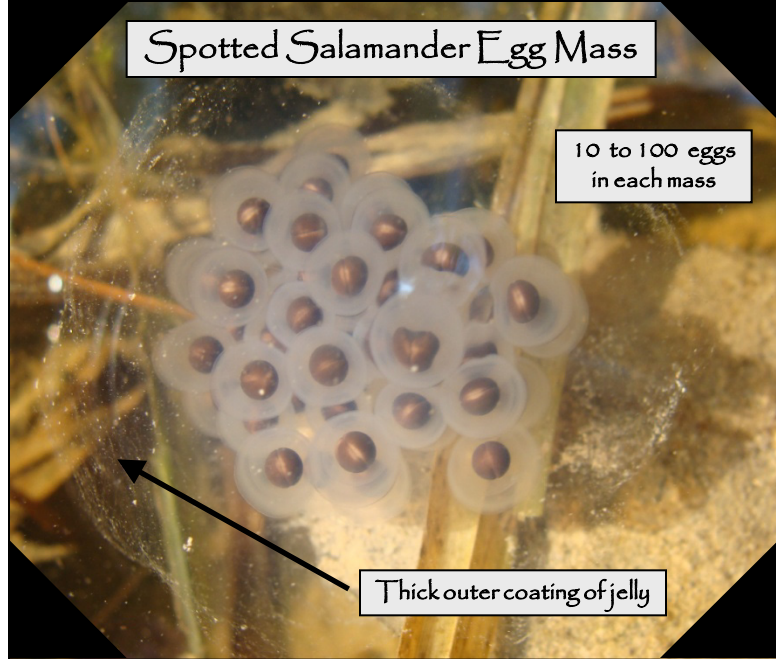
Spotted Salamander



Spotted Salamander Egg Mass

10 to 100 eggs in each mass

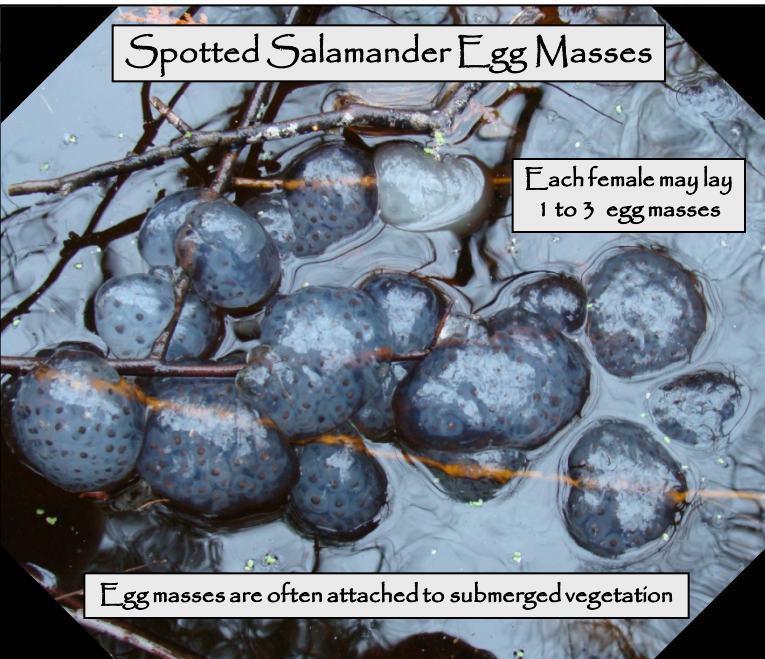
Thick outer coating of jelly



Spotted Salamander Egg Masses

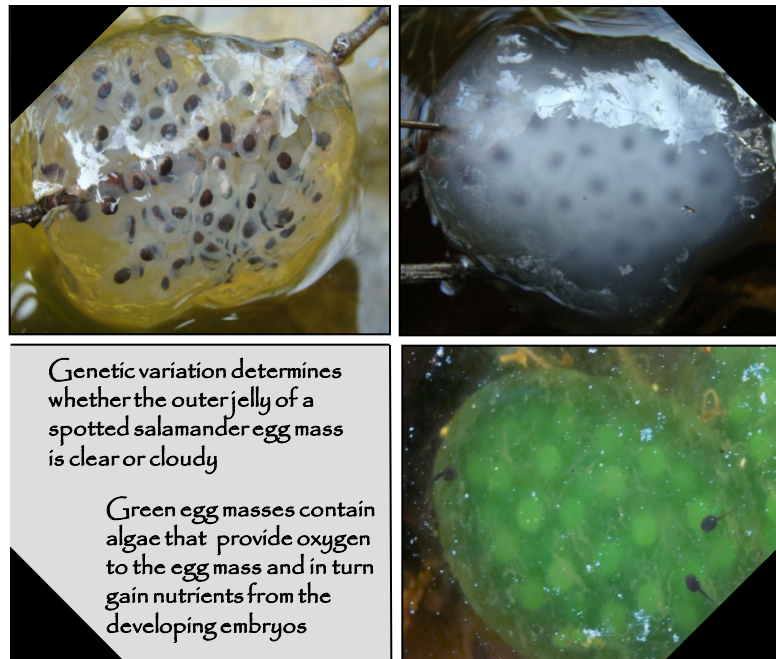
Each female may lay 1 to 3 egg masses

Egg masses are often attached to submerged vegetation



Genetic variation determines whether the outer jelly of a spotted salamander egg mass is clear or cloudy

Green egg masses contain algae that provide oxygen to the egg mass and in turn gain nutrients from the developing embryos

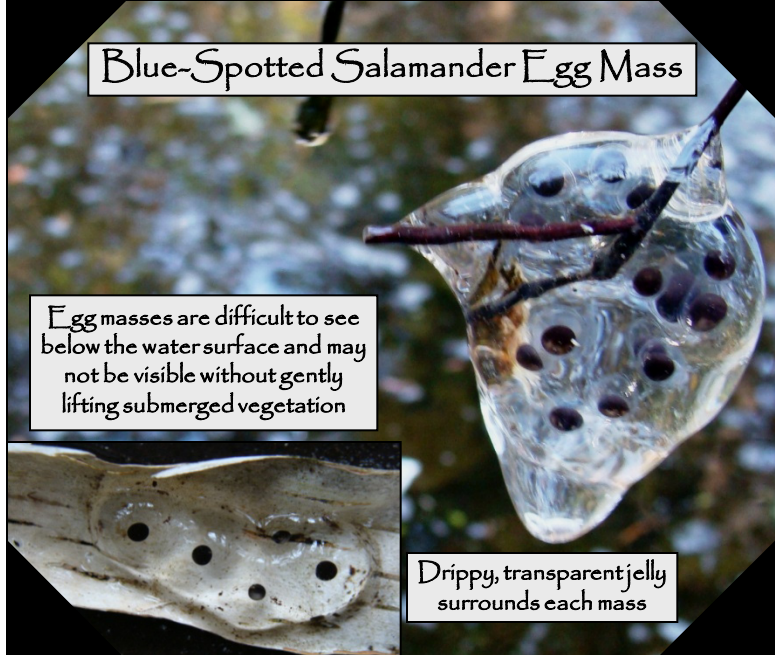


Blue-Spotted Salamander



Dark slender body with bright blue spots

Blue-Spotted Salamander Egg Mass



Egg masses are difficult to see below the water surface and may not be visible without gently lifting submerged vegetation

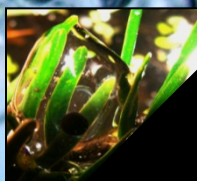
Drippy, transparent jelly surrounds each mass



Blue-Spotted Salamander Egg Masses



Blue-spotted eggs may be deposited individually on the pool bottom or in small clusters along submerged sticks



Jefferson Salamander



Grayish brown in color, with long slender toes and a rounded snout, these salamanders tend to be larger than Blue-spotted salamanders

Jefferson Salamander Egg Masses



Outer jelly is less firm than spotted salamander masses, but not as loose and drippy as is typical of blue-spotted masses

Egg masses tend to be smaller than those laid by spotted salamanders

Attached to submerged vegetation masses are often tubular in shape

Often brownish-grey and larger bodied than blue-spotted salamanders, blue-spotted/ Jefferson hybrids have varying amounts of light blue flecking



Hybrid Blue-Spotted Salamander

Hybrid Blue-Spotted Salamander Egg Masses

Often containing white infertile embryos, hybrid egg masses may be deposited in long strings of "pearls" along submerged vegetation

Marbled Salamander

Clutch of Marbled Salamander Eggs

Eggs deposited in dry Autumn pools are guarded until the pool refills with water in the spring

These crustaceans are often seen swimming around on their backs in the sunny shallows of a pool

Fairy Shrimp

Up to an inch in length, and often orange to tan in color, these animals may blend in with leaf litter on the bottom of pools

Mosquitoes

Up to half an inch in length, pupating mosquitoes are sometimes mistaken for fairy shrimp

Additional information is available at:
www.umaine.edu/vernalpools

Photos provided by Dawn Morgan, Aram Calhoun, Kevin Ryan, Richard Valk, and Steve Faccio, and Scott Egan
Cards compiled by Dawn Morgan, University of Maine