

# Who lives in Dead Man's Pond?

## **Spotted Salamander, *Ambystoma maculatum***

**Other common names: Yellow-spotted salamander**

Family: Mole Salamander family, *Ambystomatidae*

The **spotted** salamander lives in and around Dead Man's Pond in Victoria Park. It is one of several species of native amphibians that call the Pond home.

In early spring, the **spotted** salamander lays its eggs in **Dead Man's Pond**. These jelly-like egg masses contain 100 to 200 eggs.

They soon hatch (4-8 weeks) and by mid-summer you can see salamander larvae feeding on small creatures and insects in the pond. They are **brownish** in colour and are distinguished from frog tadpoles by external gills that make them look a bit like small



Soon front and then back legs appear and the salamander develops lungs. It then leaves the pond but remains near the pond edge under rocks and leaves for a period of time.



The adult salamander is about 9 inches long, has a **bluish-black body** with two rows of **yellow** spots. It lives in the woods near the pond under logs, leaf litter or rocks. They feed on invertebrates such as insects, slugs, worms, millipedes and spiders. The adult salamanders sleep all winter in a burrow in the woods and emerge during early spring rains to breed in Dead Man's Pond.



## Cool facts about the Spotted Salamander

- Salamanders have **no ears**. They can't hear anything but they can sense vibrations in the ground. This lets them know when there is movement nearby.
- Salamanders are **nocturnal**. They are busy at night, hunting and eating while most humans are sleeping.
- If a salamander loses a body part such as a leg or its tail it will re-grow. This is called **regeneration**.
- The salamanders' moist, thin **skin absorbs oxygen** and helps it breathe.
- Salamanders take the same route to and from their breeding pond every year.
- **Bright spots** on the salamander's body warn other animals not to eat it because it tastes awful.
- The spotted salamander can **live up to 20 years**.

## Salamander populations are **declining** all over the world. **Why?**

**Salamanders are sensitive to changes in their environment such as pollution, habitat loss, disease, ultraviolet light and the introduction of nonnative predators.**

**Salamander populations are affected by specimen collection and the pet trade.**

## How can we help the salamanders in Dead Man's Pond?

- **Tell everyone** you know how cool salamanders are!
- **Protect** their **habitat** in Victoria Park by staying on the trails and not trampling the grass near the pond edge.
- **Don't touch** a salamander unless it is absolutely necessary. Their skin absorbs whatever is on our hands and things like sunscreen and insect repellent can make them sick or even kill them.
- **Reduce** the **pollution** in Dead Man's Pond – don't throw garbage in the pond!
- **Keep dogs out** of the pond.
- **Don't collect** salamander eggs or tadpoles from Dead Man's Pond – enjoy watching them in their natural habitat. Come back and visit the Park often throughout the summer so you can see the different stages of their life cycle.



For more information contact: The Parks and Recreation Department 892-3837  
[www.city.charlottetown.pe.ca](http://www.city.charlottetown.pe.ca)