



Western New York Herpetological Society

www.wnyherp.org

Common Name: Tiger Salamander

Latin Name: *Ambystoma tigrinum*

Native to: Southern Canada to Mexico

Size: 6 – 13 inches snout-tail length

Life span: If kept properly they can survive 15 – 20 years in captivity

Special Note: Because the Tiger Salamander can be found in New York, please be sure that you acquire only captive bred sub-species not found locally. The subspecies most commonly found in pet shops are from Texas and California.

General Appearance: The tiger salamander has wide rounded snout with a stocky body and small eyes. The coloration varies from black to olive green to even yellow. There are usually dark spots or blotches on a lighter background or yellow spots on a dark body giving it its “tiger” markings. Males generally have a longer tail.

Housing Requirements:

Enclosure: A 10-gallon or 15-gallon aquarium with a secure wire mesh top is adequate for one to two salamanders.

Temperature: Daytime temperatures can range from 65° – 75° F while nighttime temperatures can drop as low as 60° F.

Heat/Light: Tiger salamanders do well at room temperature and rarely need any additional heat sources. UV light is also not required, but they will do well with photoperiod provided by a regular fluorescent light.

Substrate: Substrates which can hold humidity and allow for burrowing are preferred. Bedding such as potting soil (without vermiculite), ground coconut, ground cypress and sphagnum moss can all be used.

Environment: These nocturnal salamanders like moist surroundings with places to hide and burrow. Live plants can be used to help maintain the enclosures humidity levels. Pieces of drift wood and cork bark also provide great places for your salamander to hide as well. A large shallow water dish should also be provided.

Diet: These salamanders eat anything they can fit in their mouths in the wild. In captivity they can be fed crickets, earthworms, wax worms and night crawlers. They can also occasionally be offered pinky mice. Catching wild insects to feed your salamander can be risky as these insects may contain pesticides and be harmful to your salamander. Because these salamanders can be cannibalistic it is not recommended to house smaller salamanders with larger salamanders.

Maintenance: The enclosure should be spot cleaned as needed and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. A 5% bleach solution makes an excellent disinfectant. It is extremely important to completely rinse the enclosure and cage accessories so as to not poison the salamanders. Like all amphibians, salamanders’ skin is very sensitive to the environment and the oils and salts from your hands could harm your salamander. It is recommended to handle these animals and little as possible and thoroughly wash your hands before and after handling the salamander and any cage accessories. Fresh water should be provided daily.

Other references or recommended reading:

Bolyard, Paula. “Tiger Salamander.” Retrieved 6/2/2003. <http://home.neo.rr.com/edzoo/Scales/tiger_salamander.htm>

“Tiger Salamanders.” Retrieved 6/2/2003. <<http://exoticpets.about.com/library/weekly/aa100200a.htm>>

Edmonds, Devin. “Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*).” Retrieved 6/2/2003.

<<http://www.amphibiancare.com/frogs/tigersalamander.html>>

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