

LIFE HISTORY NOTES

Life History Notes is analogous to Geographic Distribution. Individual notes are to concern only one species, and authors are requested to choose a keyword which best describes the nature of their note (e.g., Reproduction, Longevity, Coloration, Morphology, etc.). Figures are permissible to illustrate any data, but should replace words rather than embellish them. The section's intent is to convey information rather than demonstrate prose! Articles submitted to this section will be reviewed and edited prior to acceptance.

Standard format, for this section is as follows: **SCIENTIFIC NAME** (in caps), **COMMON NAME** (in parentheses) as it appears in **Standard Common and Current Scientific Names for North American Amphibians and Reptiles**, (Second edition. Collins, Conant, Huheey, Knight, Rundquist and Smith, 1982), **KEYWORD** (in caps). **DATA** on the animal (one, or at most two, references may be *briefly* cited in text—**DO NOT** include complete literature reviews—use summary articles wherever possible). Place of deposition or intended deposition of specimen(s), and catalog number(s). Then, skip a line and close with **SUBMITTED BY** (Name(s) in caps, and address(es) in full -- no abbreviations).

(NCN) used for common name = no recognized common name.

Recommended citation for articles appearing in this section is as for Geographic Distribution.

CAUDATA

AMPHIUMA TRIDACTYLUM

(Three-toed Amphiuma). **Feeding.** The feeding habits of *Amphiuma tridactylum*, along with other life history characteristics of this species, are poorly known. Crayfish are presumed to be the primary prey item of *A. tridactylum*. However, it appears that a variety of food items are taken that are dependent on factors such as size of the *Amphiuma*, season, and local prey abundance (see Hamilton 1950. Nat. Hist. Misc. 62:1-3; Chaney 1951. Copeia 10:45-49). Here we give an account of a previously unreported prey item for *A. tridactylum*, the common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*).

The *A. tridactylum* (adult female; 523mm SVL, 640mm TL) was collected on 28 February 1988 at 2300h from a ditch located in Hammond, Louisiana, using a wire mesh funnel trap. Examination of stomach contents revealed the remains of a juvenile snapping turtle (50mm est. CL) and several crayfish (*Procambarus* sp.). Twenty-six *Amphiuma* stomachs were examined; no other contained a turtle.

We would like to thank R.A. Seigel for his critical review of this note. The new prey item has been deposited in the

amphibian and reptile collection of Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU #766).

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PLETHODON VANDYKEI (Van Dyke's Salamander). **Reproduction.** *Plethodon vandykei* is one of the least-studied species of western salamander, and little is known about its habitat requirements or life history. Recently, Lynch and Wallace (1987. J. Herpetol. 21(4):337-340) described the courtship and spermatophore of *P. vandykei* from the Rocky Mountains, but only a single nest has been found in nature (Noble. 1925. Amer. Mus. Novit. 166:1-10). Noble mentioned little pertinent biological information on the clutch.

On 21 May 1988, I found a second nest and eggs of *P. vandykei* near a tributary of Elk Creek, at the north end of Lake Cushman, Mason County, Washington (T23N, R5W, Sec 5, SE 1/4). The nest was located in the moist interstices of a partially rotted log (= decay class 3; Maser et al. 1979. In: Thomas (ed.). USDA For. Serv. Agric. Hnbk. No. 553, pp 78-95). The log, probably a Douglas fir, measured 85cm in diameter and about 5m in length. The nest was situated 9cm from the surface of the log, 30cm from the cut end of the log, about 1.5m above the ground, and about 2m from a small headwater stream. An adult female *P. vandykei* (98mm TL, 53mm SVL, and 2.2g) was found under the same slab, 4cm from the clutch. The egg mass consisted of 7 cream-colored eggs in a grape-like cluster measuring about 17.6mm by 11.8mm. No embryos were evident, suggesting that the eggs had only recently been deposited. The eggs were 5.3mm in diameter, and were covered by a thin jelly coat. The eggs did not appear to be suspended by a string, as mentioned by Noble (1925), but they might have been jarred loose when the slab covering the nest was removed. The temperature of the nest cavity was 11°C, considerably cooler than the outside temperature near the creek (29°C).

The surrounding forest was an old-growth stand of western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), and grand fir (*Abies grandis*). Some canopy trees had been cut down (including the nest log). Some of the logs had been bucked up, while others remained intact on the forest floor. The understory was composed of western hemlock, salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), huckleberry

(*Vaccinium* sp.), and devil's club (*Oplopanax horridum*). The forest floor had a thick carpet of moss and herbs. The nest log was located on a 14° slope facing NNE. Nine other *P. vandykei* were found in the stand, of which eight were found in or under large logs near the creek. *P. vandykei* is often associated with seeps and streamside talus (Nussbaum et al. 1983), but none was found in the splash zone of the creek, or the talus seep from which it had originated. Two *Plethodon vehiculum* and two *Rhyacotriton olympicus* were also found in the stand.

P. vandykei is protected in the State of Washington, so a photograph of the adult and egg clutch was deposited in the University of Washington Burke Museum (UWBM 2206).

I thank Keith B. Autry, R. Bruce Bury, and Richard L. Wallace for reviewing the manuscript. Contribution 106 of the Wildlife Habitat Relationships in Western Oregon and Washington Project, USDA Forest Service.

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PSEUDOEURYCEA BELLI

SIERRAOCCIDENTALIS (Pine Oak Salamander). **Habitat.** On 24 June 1987, four *P. b. sierraoccidentalis* were observed at ca. 6km WNW Ocampo, Chihuahua, Mexico, in the Sierra Madre Occidental (VanDevender et al. in Press. SSAR Herp. Review). The salamanders (SVL ca. 70-85mm) were emerging from holes formed by rotted tree roots in a roadcut during a light, drizzling-misty rain in the first hours of dark. Emergence was stimulated by a heavy downpour in late afternoon that was probably the first major storm for the summer monsoon. However, the soil around the holes and the salamanders' skin was not wet, suggesting that the response was to very high humidity rather than moisture penetrating the soil. The only previous specimens of *P. b. sierraoccidentalis* (the type series) collected in September 1964 under logs and rocks in pine-oak woodland near Yecora, Sonora, were not active (Lowe et al. 1968. Los Angeles Co. Mus. Nat. Hist. Contr. Sci. 140:1-11). *Bufo occidentalis* (pine-oak toad) and *Halactophryne tarahumarensis* (Tarahumara barking frog) were also active; male *H. tarahumarensis* were calling.

The regional climax for the elevation is Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland. Oaks are very important at the locality, with *Quercus coccolobifolia* (Encino Verde), *Q. penniveria* (handbasin or crackleleaf oak), and *Q. scytophylla* (silverleaf oak) as dominants. *Quercus arizonica*