



Paddletail Newts (*Pachytriton* spp.)

Broad Tailed Giants

Paddletail newts are large, stocky bodied newt species. Two species are most well known in the pet trade, the Spotted Paddletail Newt (*Pachytriton brevipes*) and Paddletail Newt (*Pachytriton labiatus*). These newts are large, stocky bodied species ranging in color from dark brown, brownish gray, to olive gray with a ventral, or belly surface consisting of reddish, reddish brown, reddish orange, to brown mottling. A row of reddish spots and stripes is also present along their tail and bodies. The Spotted Paddletail Newt (*P. brevipes*) tends to be a lighter brown, reddish brown, to orangish brown with numerous dark spots, streaks, or mottling present. The heads of both species are broad and flattened, and the tails are broad, laterally flattened, and paddle like, hence their common name.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Caudata/Urodela

Suborder: Salamandroidea

Family: Salamandridae

Genus: Pachytriton

Species: *Pachytriton* spp.*

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, paddletail newts can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

Paddletail newts are habitat specialists indigenous to clear, well oxygenated streams and rivers of south central to south eastern China.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

Legal and Regulatory Status (*Subject to Change)

Consult with your local, municipal, and state ordinances and regulations for any ownership

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restrictions.

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Paddletail newts are a large species of newt that average between 5 and 7 inches in size.

Housing and Enclosure

Both species of paddletail newts are predominately aquatic and require the appropriate aquatic setup. Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A minimum of 5 to 10 gallon aquarium, terrarium, or other enclosure is suitable per one of these newts. Fine grain sand or gravel can be used as a substrate, but must not be easily ingestible by these newts. Alternatively, a bare bottom, or no substrate can be utilized. In their natural ranges, these newts can be highly territorial and aggressive towards other newts, and thus should not be housed together or communally. This includes any other newt or salamander species, and any fish. The enclosure should consist of a primarily aquatic setup with an appropriate filter that can be used to help maintain water clarity and cleanliness. Also provide ample hiding opportunities and other cage décor and furnishings in the aquarium using live plants and rocks, PVC pipes, or clay flower pots, or other commercially available aquatic hides. Enclosures should be spot cleaned, sterilized, and water cleaned and changed regularly every 1 to 2 weeks. A partial water change and periodic aeration of 10 to 20% is recommended weekly in this regard.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Paddletail newts prefer cooler temperatures below 65 degrees, although they can tolerate temperatures in the low to mid 70's, such as 70 to 75 degrees F, but not for prolonged periods. Paddletail newts have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, submersible water heater, or UTH (under tank heating element). They are susceptible to health and husbandry related issues if water temperatures are too cold or too warm for these unusual amphibians. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Carnivorous; Paddletail newts are largely opportunistic feeders in the wild, feeding on small fish, a wide range of invertebrates, and carrion. Paddletail newts feed using a method known as suction feeding, or buccal pumping, and should thus be provided adequately sized food items. Food items that are readily accepted by these amphibians can include earthworms, waxworms, bloodworms, small feeder crickets and roaches, mealworms, silkworms, or other feeder insects as well as commercially available diets and fish pellets. Recommended feeding is two to three times weekly. Feeder insects should also be gut loaded and dusted with additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplements as well prior to feeding to ensure optimal nutrition and health. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

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As with most amphibians, Paddletail newts are fragile and sensitive animals, and handling should be done carefully or avoided and kept to a minimum whenever possible. Ideally, an aquarium net of appropriate size can be used to move aquatic caudates whenever necessary. ****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. MAHS cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety, including any and all MAHS logos and disclaimers.

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