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Slimy Salamanders (*Plethodon glutinosus complex*)

Slick and Smooth Sallies!

Slimy salamanders belong to a relatively large group of plethodontid, or lungless salamanders found in forests and woodlands of much of the eastern United States and North America. Consisting of anywhere from three to over twelve species and subspecies, depending on taxonomy, these lungless salamander species, unlike most other groups of salamanders do not require standing water or wetlands in order to breed and reproduce, often living and reproducing under and within moist rocks, logs, leaf litter, and other downed and rotting vegetation on the forest floor. As their names imply, these salamanders, when threatened, can emit an extremely sticky and potentially distasteful substance to discourage predation or being eaten. These medium to large, slender bodied salamanders can be identified by their pronounced costal grooves, and color and pattern ranging from solid dark blackish or bluish-black to having some or numerous lighter colored spots, flecks, or mottling. Most of the lungless salamander species are infrequently kept in captivity, although for the intermediate level enthusiast, these uncommonly seen species can make for highly enjoyable additions to most any collection.

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: Plethodontidae

Genus: *Plethodon*

Species: *Plethodon glutinosus complex**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, slimy salamanders can attain longevity of at least 5 years or potentially more.

Distribution and Habitat

Slimy salamanders are a widely distributed group of salamander species over much of the eastern United States in North America, where they may occur most often in moist, undisturbed woodlands, forests, and wooded ravines where they may be found within and under rocks, logs,

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leaf litter, burrows, and other ground cover debris. During humid and moist, or rainy weather, these salamanders move more frequently above ground.

Conservation Status

Conservation status dependent upon the species. Some Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD).

Experience Level Required

Moderate/Intermediate.

Size

Slimy salamanders typically range from 4 to 7 inches as adults.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured lid or aquarium hood. A single adult slimy salamander can be housed in a secure, well ventilated 10 to 15 gallon aquarium or other enclosure with coconut husk, chemical free potting soil, sphagnum moss, or cypress mulch substrate. Substrate should be maintained at slightly moist levels, but should not be allowed to become too moist or dry. Any substrates used should also be maintained at as neutral of a PH as possible, and should be monitored using a PH meter. Artificial plants, cork bark hides, and driftwood can also be included as cage furnishings and additional hiding places. These salamanders can be housed together in appropriately larger enclosures depending on the age, size, and sex of the animals. Floor space is more important than height for these salamanders.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Slimy salamanders 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, or UTH (under tank heating element). Maintain these salamanders within a temperature range of low 60's to mid-70 degrees F. Do not exceed 75 to 80 degrees F. 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; Slimy salamanders are insectivorous, and in the wild they will feed on a variety of insects, worms, and other invertebrates. They will also occasionally consume smaller vertebrates as well, and can also be cannibalistic under certain circumstances.

In captivity, slimy salamanders may have voracious appetites, but should not be overfed in order to prevent obesity and other health related concerns. Providing variety is important, and these salamanders can be fed chemical and pesticide free earthworms, white worms, waxworms, silkworms, crickets, or roaches. No additional vitamin, mineral, or nutrient supplements are required to maintain these salamanders if the above varied diet is followed, although gutloading or supplementing with calcium and vitamin D3 can still be beneficial for their optimal health and well-being. 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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Slimy salamanders are delicate, soft bodied amphibians with sensitive, permeable skin as with most amphibians. Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling them, and avoid wearing any lotions, creams, or oils before handling any amphibian. Handling these salamanders should be minimized whenever possible and only when absolutely 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.

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