



VERNAL POOLS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

WHAT ARE VERNAL POOLS?

- Shallow depressions that are seasonally flooded from rainfall and snowmelt.
- Vary in size from a few feet to several acres.
- Often dry during the summer months which can make them difficult to identify.
- Appear every year in the same location, except in dry years.
- Found in a variety of sites such as forests, river floodplains or adjacent to other wetlands.
- Vital feeding grounds for many rare wildlife species.
- Protected as wetlands under New Hampshire state law.

WOOD FROG

Rana sylvatica
PRIMARY INDICATOR SPECIES



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- 1.5" -3" brown or orange frog
- Dark mask across eyes
- Call resembles short quacks like a duck

WOOD FROG EGGS



© BRETT AMY THELEN

Egg masses:

- Are tennis ball shaped and sized
- May contain over 1,000 eggs
- Lack thick outer gelatinous layer

SPOTTED SALAMANDER

Ambystoma maculatum
PRIMARY INDICATOR SPECIES



© MIKE MARCHAND

- Can be up to 8" in length
- Black or bluish-black body with round, yellow or orange spots
- Use vernal pools only for breeding and spend the rest of the year in surrounding forest

SPOTTED SALAMANDER EGGS



© BRETT AMY THELEN

Egg masses:

- Are often irregularly shaped
- Contain fewer individual eggs than wood frogs
- Covered by an outer gelatinous layer
- Often attached to sticks or twigs



FAIRY SHRIMP

Genus *Eubranchipus*
PRIMARY INDICATOR SPECIES



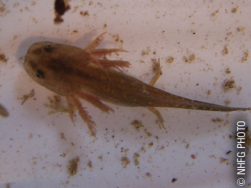
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- Free-swimming filter feeder
- Have transparent, elongated body and swim with their legs
- Adults die with the drying of the pool but their drought-resistant eggs remain until the pool fills again

MARbled SALAMANDER LARVAE

Genus *Ambystoma opacum*
PRIMARY INDICATOR SPECIES

STATE ENDANGERED



© NHFG PHOTO

- Larvae are dark brown or black with bushy gills and light spots that form a line on each side with a long dorsal fin
- Similar in appearance to spotted and blue-spotted salamander larvae

SPRING PEEPER

Genus *Pseudacris c. crucifer*



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- A small 1-inch frog with a darker 'X' across its back
- May breed in vernal pools but can also breed in swamps or ponds
- The 'peep' of the spring peeper is one of the loudest known animal sounds

CADDISFLY LARVAE

Several Families
SECONDARY INDICATOR SPECIES



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- Adults lay eggs in dry vernal pool depressions in the fall
- Larvae have a caterpillar-like appearance and construct tubular cases out of grass, leaves, or twigs
- Cases look like small sticks or miniature log cabins

FINGERNAIL CLAM

Family *Sphaeriidae*
SECONDARY INDICATOR SPECIES



© KILEY BRIGGS

- Less than 1 inch; also referred to as pea or pill clams
- Bear live young that are miniature versions of the adult

SPOTTED TURTLE

Genus *Clemmys guttata*



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STATE THREATENED

- May use vernal pools for feeding or hibernation
- Vernal pools provide refuge during long-distance terrestrial movements



Learn more about vernal pools at
wildnh.com/nongame

