

## Interesting factoid about Tennessee

In 1995, in recognition of Tennessee's unique natural heritage, the state legislature designated the Tennessee cave salamander the official State Amphibian. You may be wondering, "What are salamanders and why are they important?" Salamanders are the group of animals, including newts, sirens and amphiumas, that have smooth, moist, porous skin, lay jelly-like eggs and have a long tail. Often they are mistakenly referred to as "spring lizards," when in fact they belong to the group of animals known as amphibians. Unlike lizards, a type of reptile, salamanders lack scales on the body, do not have claws on the toes, and cannot survive far from moisture.

Salamanders are their hiding places prey. Most species eat such as worms, insects spring and red other salamanders. important as food for raccoons, opossums, and snakes. In some abundant vertebrate also important as biological indicators as their porous skin is sensitive to environmental toxins.



nocturnal and come out from during moist nights to hunt for large amounts of invertebrates and snails. A few species, like Salamanders are equally many other animals, such as bears, mink, river otter, frogs places they are the most animals in the forest. They are

A few of the more common Salamanders of the more than 40 varieties that live in Tennessee are the Hellbender, the Spotted Salamander, the Marbled Salamander, the Tiger Salamander and the Mudpuppy.

Watch for some merchandise coming soon sporting this sweet BT and friends. The fabulous artwork was generously provided to the BTCA by Mary Jung.