

USACE Natural Resource Management Reptiles & Amphibians



Oregon Slender Salamander

FAST FACTS

REASONS FOR LISTING STATUS: The Oregon slender salamander is considered a Species of Concern (SoC) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 2012, USFWS received a petition to list the Oregon slender salamander as endangered or threatened and critical habitat be designated. A review of the petition by USFWS in 2015 found that it presented substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted.

Additionally, the species has a NatureServe Rank of Vulnerable due to its small range, dependence on late-successional habitat characteristics, and reliance on downed and decaying large logs. It is considered a conservation strategy species in Oregon.

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: Most of this species' range is on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains, but several sites exist on the eastern side. Land use activities that affect substrate, ground cover, including down wood, forest condition, and microhabitats can negatively affect individuals or populations at occupied sites.

Data gaps for the species require additional research to improve understanding of habitat requirements and evaluate the effects of habitat fragmentation on genetics. (Oregon Conservation Strategy)

HABITAT NEEDS: The Oregon slender salamander inhabits late-successional and second-growth forests.

- The species is often associated with large diameter, decaying Douglas fir logs and bark debris mounds at the base of snags.
- Local populations will benefit from maintaining an undisturbed cool, moist surface and subsurface refuges.
- Surface disturbance activities are recommended to occur during periods of in-activity for the species to further minimize individual and population loss.

Description: Oregon slender salamanders have a long, thin bodies and grow to be approximately four inches in length. They have a red-dish-brown, ragged edge stripe that runs along the top of the head to the tip of the tail with black or dark brown sides. The belly is black with large white flecks. This species does not have lungs; they breathe through their skin.

Photo: Oregon Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, USACE NWP, Oregon Conservation Strategy

Natural Resource Management (NRM)

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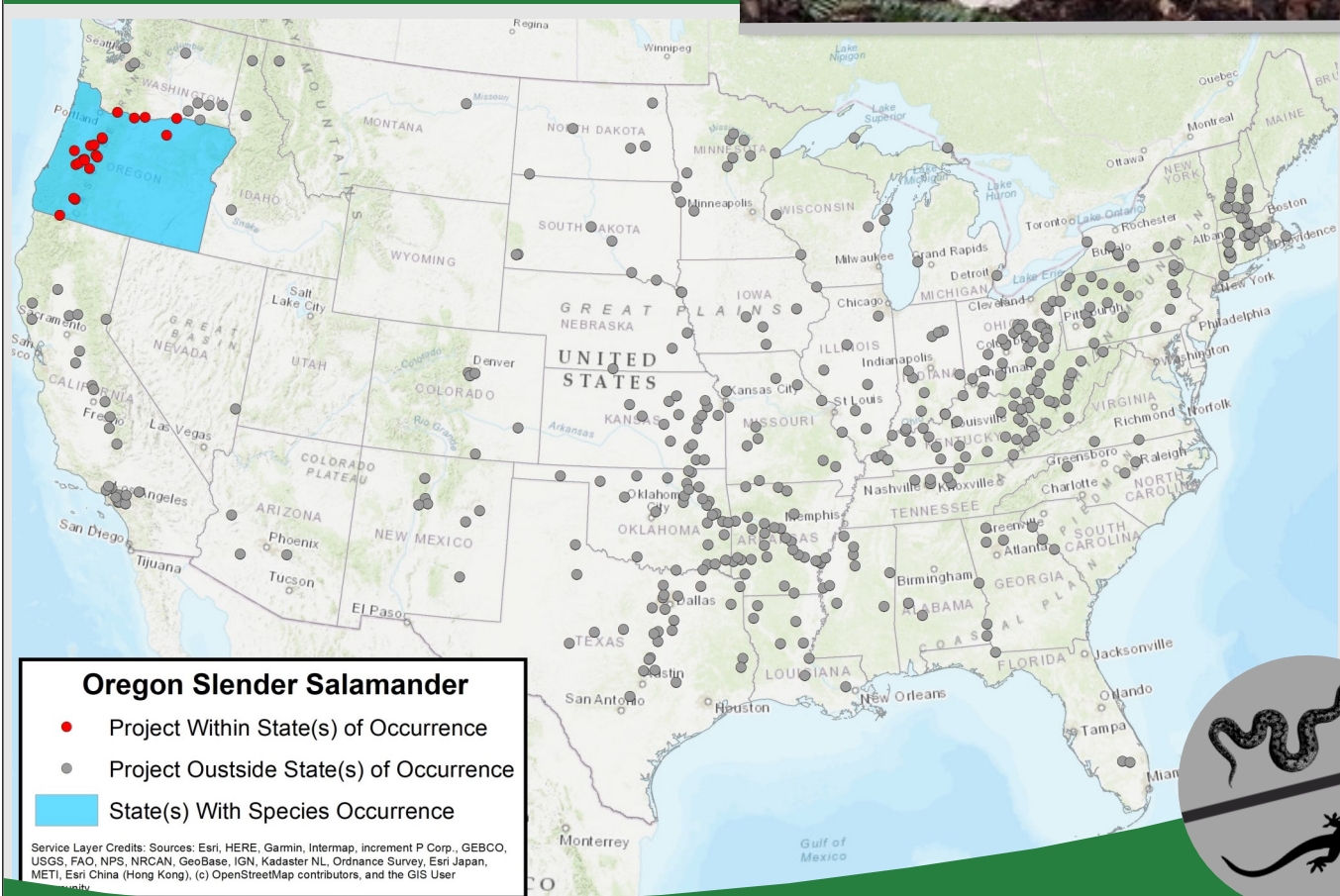
USACE ROLE: Increased habitat protection is an important conservation strategy for the Oregon slender salamander. USACE operates several projects within the species' range, specifically within the Willamette Valley. These projects play an important role in the provision of suitable habitat.

Photos: Artificial Cover Object (ACO) placed at Fall Creek Reservoir, Lane Co, Oregon. Each ACO consists of 3 untreated pine boards, the base measures 12in wide, 6ft long and 2 inches thick. Two top boards are used (6in x 6ft x 1in) with cedar lath strips to create the interstitial spaces favored by woodland/arboreal salamanders. Both bottom and top boards allow for individual salamanders to move freely when foraging and provides two capture locations per ACO.



WHAT IS USACE NRM DOING: In support of USACE's Environmental Stewardship mission, the Willamette Valley Project (WVP) Fern Ridge Project Office has been successfully monitoring pond breeding amphibians for the past 8 years. In 2016, the project began developing a terrestrial amphibian monitoring program. In the WVP, the program focuses on two salamander species, the Oregon slender salamander (*Batrachoseps wrighti*) and the clouded salamander (*Aneides ferreus*). Area Constrained Surveys (ACS) and Free Roam Hand Collection (FRHC) were executed at several project sites to determine presence or absence of the salamanders.

The information collected during these surveys is useful in many ways; confirming the presence of a sensitive species allows for proper environmental clearances and mitigation mandated by law. This also presents opportunities to inform other federal agencies, state and non-profit groups to the benefits of conducting these surveys and using ACOs for monitoring efforts.



Source: Map provided by Ashleigh Boss, ONSE fellowship, Institute for Water Resources

