

## MUDPUDDY

updated 03/17



<b>Range</b>	From New England west through the Ohio Valley, south to northern Georgia; found in all of the Great Lakes, except the western shore of Lake Superior
<b>Habitat</b>	Permanent freshwater bodies like rivers, reservoirs, and inland lakes; have been reported in water as deep as 100 feet (30 meters)
<b>Diet (wild)</b>	Insect larvae, worms, mollusks, fish eggs, and small fish
<b>Diet (captive)</b>	Small fish and worms
<b>Description</b>	Length: 8–19 inches. A large, aquatic neotenic (permanent larvae) salamander; distinct feature is the red feathery external gills that is the salamander's only method of breathing. The body is usually gray or brownish-gray with black spots. The tail is vertically flattened and there are four toes on each foot. Mudpuppy young have light and dark stripes.
<b>Lifespan</b>	Wild: 11 years. Captivity: 25 years
<b>Reproduction</b>	Between 18–180 pea-sized eggs will be attached to the bottom of a log or rock that is 2–4 feet underwater. The female protects the eggs until they hatch 1–2 months later, depending on water temperature. Mudpuppy young begin life in a larval stage, which can last 4–6 years. Mudpuppies reach sexual maturity when they are about 8 inches long (at about 4–6 years). Mating usually occurs during the fall with solitary males seeking out females in their shelters and performing a courtship display. The male deposits spermatophores that the female stores in their cloaca until she lays eggs in late spring.
<b>Behavior</b>	Mudpuppies are nocturnal and spend the day hiding in deep water under rocks or fallen logs. Mudpuppies can walk along the bottom or swim similar to a fish. Shallow water is preferred during the spring and fall, while they seek deeper water during the summer and winter. Except for the mating season, mudpuppies are solitary creatures that are usually found in clear water but can withstand muddy waters if clear water is available for reproduction. If living in muddy or weedy water, a mudpuppy may be active during the day. Their predators include fish, snakes, and herons.
<b>Our animals</b>	2 undetermined sex
<b>Cool stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudpuppies from cold, clear, highly oxygenated water have short gills; those from warm muddy water have long bushy gills.</li> <li>• Mudpuppies have no negative impact on humans. Some people believe that they eat the eggs of game fish, but there is no evidence that mudpuppies impact game fish populations. People are also sometimes frightened by the strange appearance of mudpuppies, but they are completely harmless.</li> <li>• Mudpuppies are active throughout the year, even when rivers and lakes are frozen over in winter. They have been found at living at depths of 100 feet (30 meters) in Lake Michigan.</li> <li>• Mudpuppies have sense organs in their skin that help them detect water movement and pressure changes. These sense organs also help them avoid predators. Mudpuppies also have a good sense of smell which is used to locate prey. Their small eyes are used primarily to perceive changes in light.</li> </ul>

Phylum  
ChordataClass  
AmphibiaOrder  
CaudataFamily  
ProteidaeGenus  
Necturusspecies  
*N. maculosus*