

IDENTIFICATION KEY: SALAMANDERS OF VANCOUVER ISLAND AND THE GULF ISLANDS



Kristiina Ovaska

Are the sides without distinct vertical grooves (costal grooves)?
Is the underside bright orange?

← YES

Roughskin Newt
Taricha granulosa
YES →

↓ NO



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Ted Davis

Is there a prominent protuberance (parotoid or poison gland) on each cheek, behind the eye? Is the body robust rather than slender?

← YES

Northwestern Salamander
Ambystoma gracile
YES →

↓ NO



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Is the tail keeled rather than rounded? Is there a yellowish stripe with ragged edges along the mid-back and tail?

← YES

Long-toed Salamander
Ambystoma macrodactylum
YES →

↓ NO



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Is there a constriction at the base of the tail? Is the salamander translucent pinkish brown or tan with yellow tinge at base of legs (hatchlings less than 3 cm long may be mottled dark)?

← YES

Common Ensatina
Ensatina eschscholtzii
YES →

↓ NO



Ted Davis

Key developed by Kristiina Ovaska & produced by the Salt Spring Island Conservancy in partnership with British Columbia Ministry of Environment.



Are the toe-tips square-shaped rather than rounded? Is the salamander mottled with black or grey, often with a bronze tint?



Is there a broad, even-edged yellowish, olive or orange stripe along the mid-back and tail? Or is the salamander black with only a hint of stripe or no stripe and with fine white speckling on the head and sides (melanistic form)?



List of salamander species:

Pond-breeding salamanders:

Family Salamandridae (newts):

Roughskin Newt (*Taricha granulosa*)

Family Ambystomatidae (mole salamanders):

Northwestern Salamander (*Ambystoma gracile*)

Long-toed Salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*)

Completely terrestrial salamanders:

Family Plethodontidae (plethodontids):

Common Ensatina (*Ensatina eschscholtzii*)

Wandering Salamander (*Aneides vagrans*)

Western Redback Salamander (*Plethodon vehiculum*)

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