

# 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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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*)

Funding provided by:

