

# VERNAL POOL AMPHIBIAN EGG MASS IDENTIFICATION

## Wood Frog



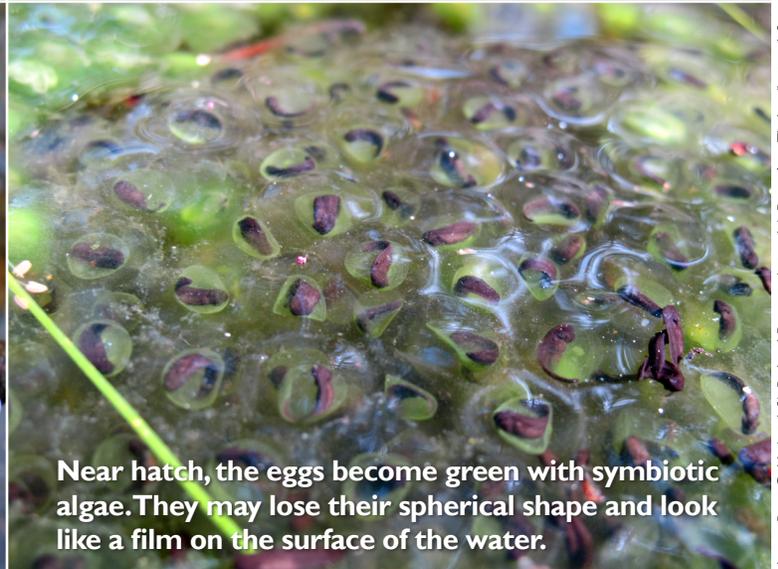
Freshly deposited wood frog eggs are a dense mass the size of a golf ball.



They may appear bubble-like at the surface of the water.



As the eggs absorb water, the mass swells to the size of a softball.



Near hatch, the eggs become green with symbiotic algae. They may lose their spherical shape and look like a film on the surface of the water.



**WOOD FROG** egg masses are **spherical, lumpy blobs the size of baseballs or softballs**. Each mass may contain **up to 1,500 individual eggs**, which become green with symbiotic algae as the season progresses. Unlike salamander eggs, wood frog egg masses do not contain an outer, gelatinous casing. Many wood frogs lay their eggs communally, and you may find large stretches of wood frog eggs containing thousands of embryos. These egg rafts may appear bubble-like at the surface of the water.

Please return to:



photos: Russ Cobb (top left); Richard Bonnett (top right); Brett Amy Thelen (bottom left and bottom right); Dave Huht (wood frog)

# VERNAL POOL AMPHIBIAN EGG MASS IDENTIFICATION

## Spotted Salamander



Spotted salamander eggs are often attached to twigs.



They are often laid communally, and they hold their shape out of water.



The outer casing is clear or milky-white in color.



After several weeks, they may become green with symbiotic algae.



**SPOTTED SALAMANDER** egg masses consist of **30 to 150 individual eggs surrounded by stiff gelatin**, which holds its shape out of water. The masses range in diameter from one to six inches, are **circular to oval or kidney-shaped**, are often attached to twigs, and may be widely distributed throughout the pool. They are **clear or white in color**, and may turn green later in the season as algae grows inside the gelatin.

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photos: Brett Amy Thelen (top left); Russ Cobb (top right); Richard Bonnett (bottom left); Linda Ruth (bottom right); Dave Hutch (spotted salamander)

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## Jefferson Salamander



Jefferson salamander eggs appear loose or “drippy” out of water.



They are often deposited in cylindrical “tubes” along the length of twigs.



Hybrid egg masses often contain pearl-like, white, infertile embryos.



Jefferson salamander egg masses are usually smaller in size and number than spotted salamander masses.



**JEFFERSON/BLEU-SPOTTED SALAMANDER** egg masses are cylindrical in shape when attached to twigs and irregular when attached to soft vegetation. The masses are clear and not as stiff as spotted salamander eggs. They may appear loose or “drippy” out of water. They are typically found in **small clusters of 12 to 75 eggs**. Egg masses laid by Jefferson/blue-spotted hybrids often contain many white, infertile eggs.

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# VERNAL POOL AMPHIBIAN EGG MASS IDENTIFICATION

## Spermatophores



**SPERMATOPHORES** are deposited by both spotted and Jefferson salamanders. They **look like bread crumbs** scattered on the vernal pool floor, and are **often attached to twigs, stems, or leaf points**. Each spermatophore is composed of a white or yellow capsule on top of a clear, gelatinous platform.

## EGG MASS OVERVIEW



**WOOD FROG**  
**Texture:** Tapioca Pudding  
**Shape:** Spherical  
**Number of Eggs:** Up to 1,500



**SPOTTED SALAMANDER**  
**Texture:** Jello  
**Shape:** Circular to Oval or Kidney-shaped  
**Number of Eggs:** 30 to 150



**JEFFERSON SALAMANDER**  
**Texture:** Jelly  
**Shape:** Cylindrical or Irregular  
**Number of Eggs:** 12 to 75

Please return to:



photos: Brett Amy Thelen (top left, bottom left, and bottom middle); Nathan Schaefer (top right); Russ Cobb (bottom right); Dave Huth (salamanders)