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The Life of a Salamander



Right now, during the Spring, thousands of salamanders are taking the voyage from their hiding places to shallow pools of water, known as vernal pools, to lay their eggs. This marks the beginning of the life cycle for salamanders!



One common type of salamander is the yellow spotted salamander. Once the spotted salamander's eggs hatch, usually in early summer, the larva emerges from the egg with fully formed gills to breathe underwater. Over time, the larva forms front limbs and back limbs while still living in an aquatic environment.

Within two to four months of hatching, the spotted salamander larva develops into a mature salamander and lose the gills that allow them to breathe underwater. At this point, the salamanders make their way onto land to find a hiding place of their own until the life cycle begins again the following year!

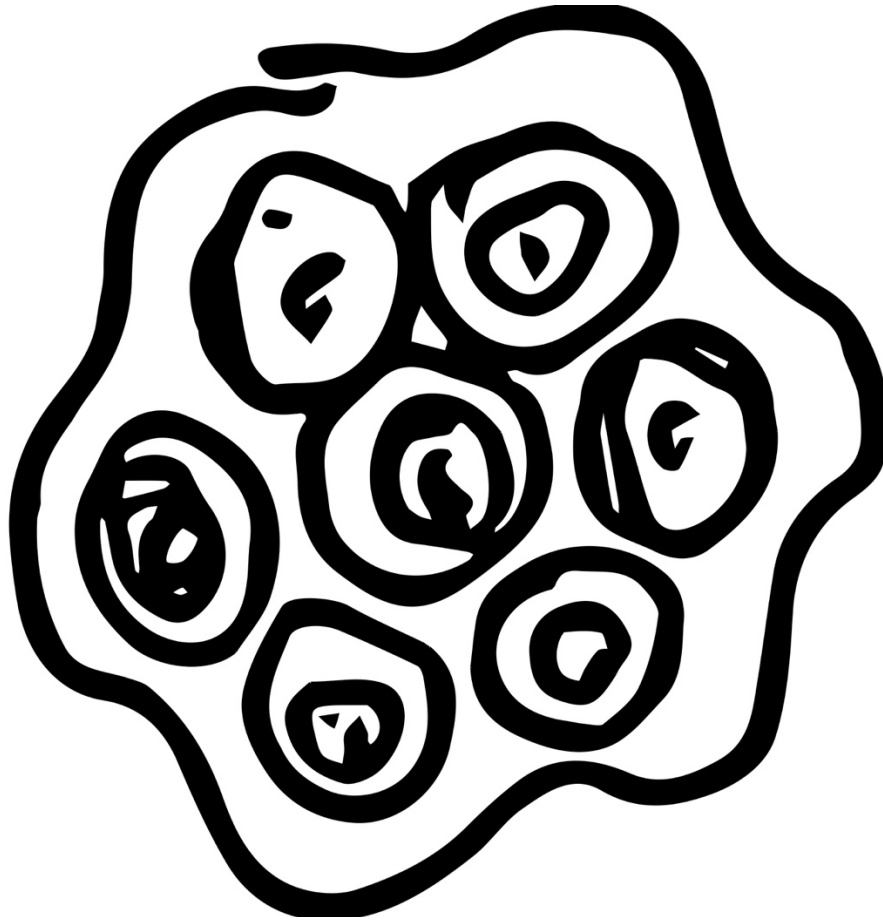


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Spotted Salamander Coloring Sheet



Let your creativity flow and color the salamander life cycle while learning a little more about what it's like to be a salamander!



An adult female salamander lays a clump of eggs known as an egg mass in a vernal pool.



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Spotted Salamander Coloring Sheet (Cont'd)

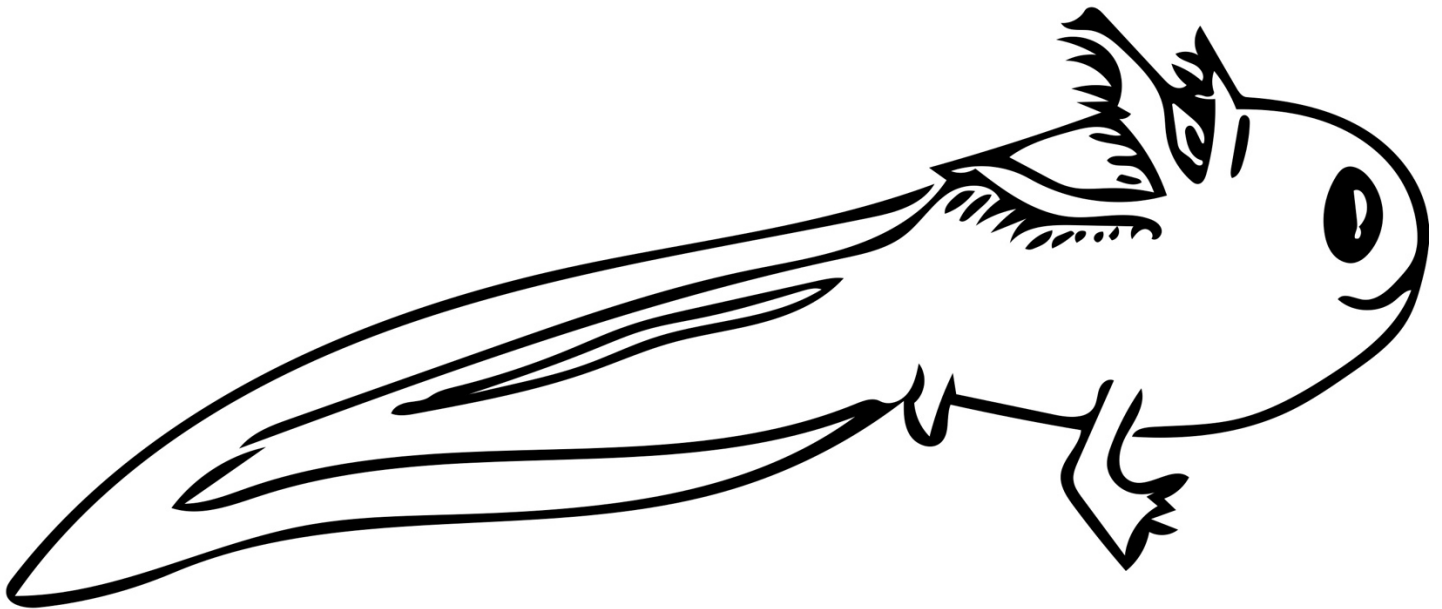


Within 30-60 days larvae emerge from the egg mass! These larvae have no arms or legs, so they must swim around like a tadpole. They have large feathery gills that allow them to breathe underwater.



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Spotted Salamander Coloring Sheet (Cont'd)

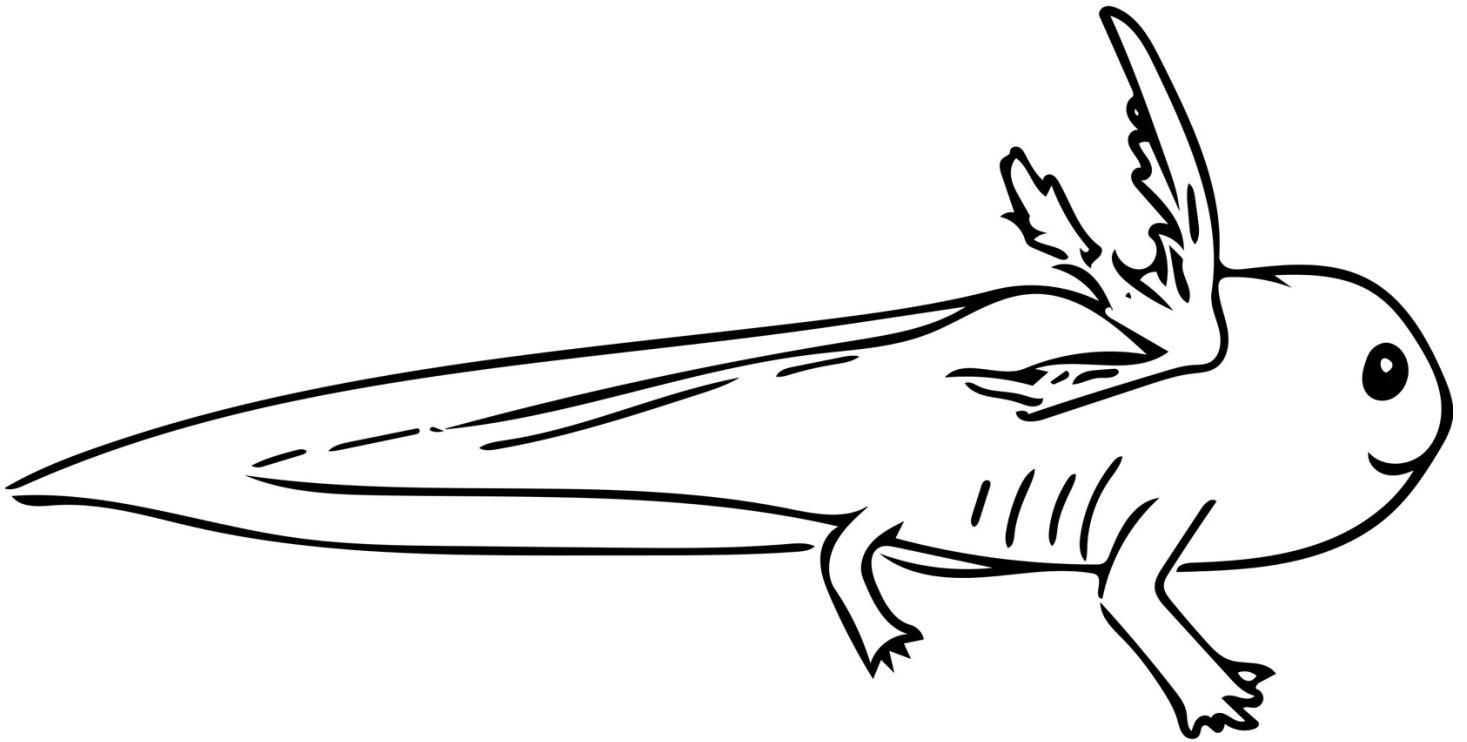


Soon, the larvae grow forelimbs but still rely heavily on their tails to move around.



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Spotted Salamander Coloring Sheet (Cont'd)

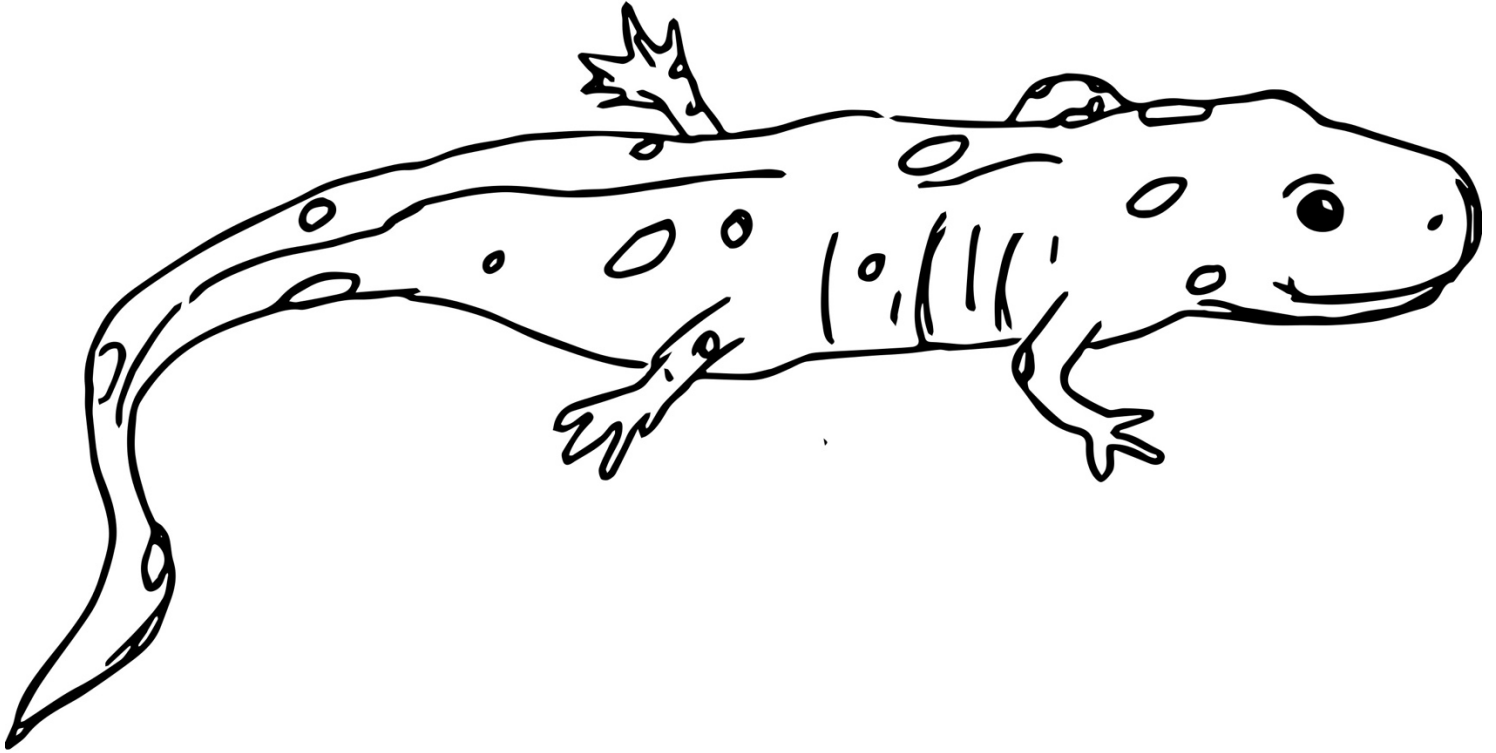


Eventually, these larvae get their back legs too!



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Spotted Salamander Coloring Sheet (Cont'd)



By the end of summer, a fully formed spotted salamander emerges from the water, ready to find a suitable habitat. The life cycle will begin again the following spring!