

# Mountain Dusky Salamander

## Mountain Dusky Salamander - Pl.24

(*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*)

**Identification:** 2 3/4" - 4 3/8". The Mountain Dusky Salamander looks very much like the Northern Dusky Salamander. Tail shape is the key to distinguishing these two species in New Jersey: the tail of the Mountain Dusky Salamander is much rounder than that of the Northern Dusky Salamander. The tail is slightly longer than the rest of the body. Color and pattern show a lot of geographic variation, and the color darkens and patterns fade with age. Ground color is very similar to the Northern Dusky Salamander—brown, tan or gray. In our area, the Mountain Dusky Salamander has a broad stripe with dark, straight borders running down the back and tail. The color of the stripe may be red, yellow, brown, olive, or gray; usually with a central line of v-shaped marks. There is a light line from eye to corner of jaw. The underside is light gray to dark gray.

**Where to find them:** Prefers wet, wooded uplands. May be found far from water during wet weather. Typically found under debris in soggy areas near streams, springs and other small wet spots. May be found in trees or shrubs after dark.

**When to find them:** Usually found at night when it is actively foraging.

**Range:** Mountainous portions of the Northern Region.

**Note:** Tail shape differences between the Mountain Dusky Salamander and the Northern Dusky Salamander may reflect differences in where they breed. According to Petranka (1998), salamander species that breed in streams have keeled, triangular tails, while terrestrial breeding species have round tails. So, take note of location if you see breeding or nesting behavior of these species.

## Mountain Dusky Salamander

(*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*) - text pg. 34

### Key Features

- Brown to gray in color.
- Tail round and slightly longer than rest of body.
- Light, dorsal stripe with dark borders extends along the body and tail (no spots present as in the northern dusky salamander).



New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife ~ 2002



Excerpt from: "Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of New Jersey"  
Order the complete guide at - <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/products.htm>