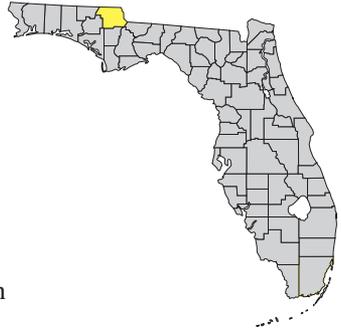


GEORGIA BLIND SALAMANDER

Haideotriton wallacei

Order: Caudata
Family: Plethodontidae
FNAI Ranks: G2/S2
U.S. Status: None
FL Status: Species of Special Concern



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Description: A small (to 3 in. = 7.6 cm), white to yellowish or pinkish-white, blind cave salamander. Eyes absent (tiny dark spots in young). Feathery external gills long and red; head relatively long and somewhat flattened. Skin slightly translucent; four very slender legs; tail laterally flattened and with conspicuous fin.

Similar Species: None in Florida.

Habitat: Subterranean waters of caves formed in limestone, often in caves used by bats. Most easily seen resting on bottom sediments in small pools, but extent of use of less accessible waters is unknown. Has also been pumped from deep groundwater wells.

Seasonal Occurrence: Present in cave waters year-round; extent of seasonal and age-related movements, as well as breeding cycle, unknown.

Florida Distribution: Known from fewer than two dozen caves in Jackson County in vicinity of Marianna.

GEORGIA BLIND SALAMANDER

Haideotriton wallacei

Range-wide Distribution: A very small region of southwestern Georgia and adjacent panhandle Florida. This is the only white blind cave salamander east of the Mississippi River.

Conservation Status: Some inhabited Florida caves are within Florida Caverns State Park and a nearby state environmental unit; however, these do not fully protect the local aquifer inhabited by these salamanders.

Protection and Management: Protect local aquifer from pollution, siltation, and changes in water level, the last resulting principally from withdrawal for human needs but also from stream impoundment (flooding); agricultural chemicals pose a major threat in region. Protect cave entrances from rock quarrying and vandalism. Maintain prohibition on collecting except for science.

Selected References: Ashton and Ashton 1988a, Bartlett and Bartlett 1999, Conant and Collins 1991, Georgia DNR 1999, Moler (ed.) 1992, Petranka 1998.