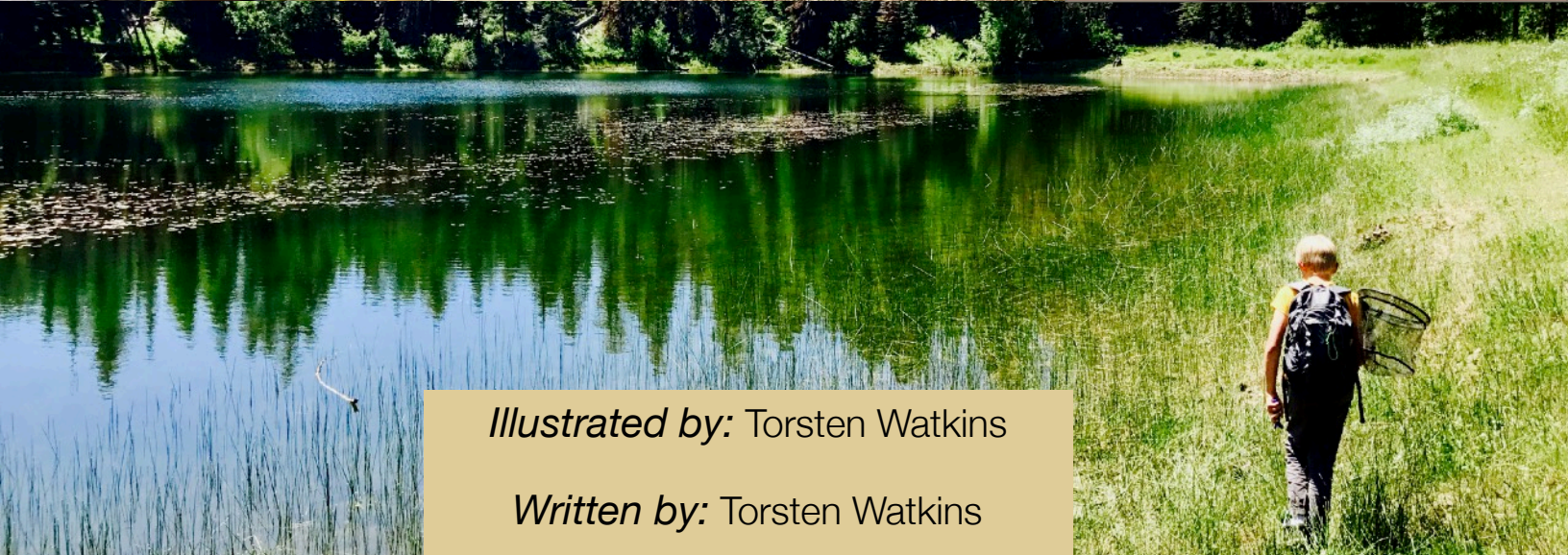


Reptiles and Amphibians
Of
Chelan County



Illustrated by: Torsten Watkins

Written by: Torsten Watkins

Chelan County Herpetofauna list:

Eastern long toed salamander	Valley garter snake	X = Invasive
Blotched tiger salamander	Wandering garter snake	
Rough skinned newt	Northern pacific rattlesnake	
Coastal giant salamander		
Coastal tailed frog		
Great Basin spadefoot toad		
Boreal toad		
Northern Pacific treefrog		
Cascades frog		
American bullfrog X		
Columbia spotted frog		
Eastern snapping turtle X		
Western painted turtle		
Slider X		
Northwestern alligator lizard		
Pygmy short horned lizard		
Northern sagebrush lizard		
Northwestern fence lizard		
Nevada side blotched lizard		
Skilton's skink		
Northern rubber boa		
Western yellow bellied racer		
Common sharp tailed snake		
Northern desert nightsnake		
Great basin gopher snake		

Eastern long toed salamander:

Ambystoma macrodactylum columbianum

Description: Adults can reach up to 3-6 1/2 inches . Long toed salamanders are named for the long fourth toe on their hind limbs. They are dark olive to dark brown with an olive to yellow stripe going down their back. The stripe is often split into blotches and the edges are uneven. White fleckings occur on their sides and underside.

Range: Can be found throughout Chelan county.

Habitat: Found in many habitats including: Forests, sagebrush, meadows, and urban areas. Usually lives a subterranean life but can occasionally be found underneath surface objects or surface active on rainy nights, like many other salamanders. Commonly found in irrigation. Usually occurs in or near moist areas or water sources.

Habits: At low elevations breeding begins in late winter or early spring, at high elevation sites breeding begins once the ice/snow melts, around May-June or July. Salamander larvae take about a year to metamorphosize at low elevations but 2-3 years at higher elevations. Adults are found commonly near or in breeding ponds during breeding season. Long toed salamanders feed on small invertebrates like crickets, earthworms, beetles, or spiders.

Blotched tiger salamander:

Ambystoma mavortium melanostictum

Description: A very robust salamander, the Blotched tiger salamander has a dark base color. They have light (yellow to olive) blotches, spots, or stripes earning them the name “Tiger salamander”, these bars can come in many different patterns and can be faded in older individuals. Round snout. Adult Blotched tiger salamanders can get up to 9-13 inches

Range: Southeastern and Northeastern Chelan county, eastern.

Habitat: Arid regions, usually shrub steppe or grassland. Can also be found in open areas in Douglas fir/ponderosa pine woodlands. Found near water sources without predatory fish. Requires soil that it can burrow through. Usually lives in burrows of its own construction.

Habits: Breeding occurs in March-late April in permanent or seasonal water sources with no predatory fish. Larvae metamorphosis in about 2 years. Adults are rarely surface active and only become surface active during breeding migrations or rainy nights. Blotched tiger salamanders are largely subterranean. Blotched tiger salamanders can feed on earthworms, insects, small mice, and snails. Larvae can become cannibalistic.

Eastern long toed salamander:

Ambystoma macrodactylum columbianum



Blotched tiger salamander:

Ambystoma mavortium melanostictum



Rough skinned newt:

Taricha granulosa

Description: Light brown-black dorsally, bright yellow-orange on their underside. Rough/granular skin. During mating season males develop smooth skin, a large tail fin, dark nuptial pads, and an overall puffy appearance.

Range: Native to central/south western Chelan county.

Habitat: Moist coniferous forests and woodlands, can also occur in more open areas like meadows.

During breeding season rough skinned newts are found near ponds, slow streams, lakes, and other slow/ or still water sources. Activity occurs at day and night, most likely because of their defense.

Habits: Adults will migrate to breeding sites, this may occur in late winter-July. Mating season is around those times, at low elevations eggs are laid December-July while in high elevations eggs are laid in June-September. Larvae metamorphose in their first year in low elevations but usually in their second year at higher elevations. Rough skinned newts are quite common during their spring migrations, they can migrate quite far. When threatened Rough skinned newts will curl up revealing their bright underside, this is called the unken reflex. This is meant to show any potential predators that they are very poisonous. Rough skinned newts carry the neurotoxin, tetrodotoxin. Tetrodotoxin is the same poison found in Pufferfish and can be deadly if ingested. Please wash your hands after handling a newt.

Coastal giant salamander:

Dicamptodon tenebrosus

Description: Adults can reach up to 13 inches. One of the largest species of salamander in the Pacific Northwest. Tan-brown-dark brown or a reddish brown background with tan-gold-dark brown marbling (bars or stripes). Gray underside, costal grooves indistinct.

Range: Native to parts of western Chelan county. Populations west of Lake Wenatchee, like Sears Creek

Habitat: Moist coniferous forests, prefers dense large forests. Can be found underneath surface objects like rocks and logs during the day. Primarily occurs near or in streams, small creeks, or other small, cold, moving water sources, surface activity occurs at night during wet periods. Prefers streams with little-no silt. Paedomorphs and larvae can be found suitable streams.

Habits: Eggs laid in spring-fall. Paedomorphism is quite common in this species. New metamorphs will move out of their streams during wet and rainy nights but not straying far from their original streams. As defense Coastal giant salamanders will arch their tails, bite, and excrete noxious secretions. Adults will feed on slugs, small birds, and reptiles/amphibians.

Rough skinned newt
Taricha granulosa



Coastal giant salamander
Dicamptodon tenebrosus



Coastal tailed frog:

Ascaphus truei

Description: Brown-gray with lighter colored mottling. Warty, vertical pupils and a black eye stripe extending from the snout-shoulder. Males have “tails” which are actually copulatory organs and tubercles on their palms and forearms. Voiceless, lack structures for producing noises.

Range: Most of western Chelan county, occurs in some parts of central Chelan county.

Habitat: Cold, clear, and rocky streams or small creeks in mature forests. Tadpoles can be found by turning rocks, adults/juveniles can be found on the shoreline or in the surrounding forest. Often found with Giant Salamanders

Habits: Breeding season in late summer and early fall, females will lay eggs the following year/years. Eggs laid on the underside of rocks, tadpoles can metamorphosize in 4 years (or more/less). Tadpoles have “suction cups” on their mouths that are used to cling to rocks. The males “tail” is used for internal fertilization. Adults are active at night and will feed on insects by the stream, can be found in surrounding forests during rainy days. Secretive.

Great basin spadefoot toad:

Spea intermontana

Description: Light gray-olive-brown, usually with two dark streaks down its back. They have scattered spots and blotches on their back, some with orange-red centers. Vertical pupils, named for the “spades” on the bottom of its hind feet. They are small black, flat projections, almost like an extra black toe. Some individuals are not as blotched or colored and are quite dull. Uprturned snout and a boss between their eyes and snout. Call a kwea kwea, or kwe-ee-ee-ee.

Range: Southeastern and northeastern Chelan county, eastern.

Habitat: Shrub steppe, open ponderosa pine forests, and grasslands. Sometimes found in slightly agricultural areas and urban areas. Will breed in permanent and temporary water sources like ponds, rain puddles, seasonal pools of water, and irrigation ditches. In areas with soli that it can burrow in.

Habits: Breeding take place April-June. Eggs hatch in a few days and depending on the water temperature the tadpoles can metamorphosize in a few weeks. Great basin spadefoot toads are nocturnal and hide from cold and dry times by burrowing into loose soil. Their “spade” is used for burrowing. Great basin spadefoot toads will become surface active during humid/rainy nights but can also be found in dry periods during the day. Adults feed on insects. Spadefoots have an irritating, distasteful skin secretion to deter predators.

Coastal tailed frog

Ascaphus truei



Great Basin spadefoot toad

Spea intermontana



Boreal toad:

Bufo boreas boreas

Description: Comes in many colors from green-brown-black. Dry, warty skin and pronounced parotoid glands. Can be mottled or have a solid coloring. Warts can be yellow-red-brown sometimes surrounded by a black ring. Dorsal stripe can be white-yellow. Ventral surface may be white-yellowish with small dark blotches. Call is a kuh-kuh-kuh-kuh sound almost like a plucking stringed instrument. Could also be a pip-pip-pip.

Range: Western and central Chelan county. Possibly some parts of eastern Chelan county.

Habitat: Meadow, forest, grassland, and woodland. Can be found quite far from water. During breeding season found in/near slow moving streams, ponds, small lakes, and reservoirs.

Habits: Breeding takes place in April-July, females lay hundreds of eggs. Eggs hatch in a week or two and metamorphosize in a few months. Metamorphs can be found in large groups along the shoreline. Adult and juvenile Western toads feed on insects, worms, slugs and spiders. Nocturnal. All life stages have toxins to deter predators, they will also urinate in large amounts to deter predators.

Northern Pacific treefrog:

Pseudacris regilla

Description: Comes in many colors like green, brown, red and gray. Dark eye stripe from the snout to the shoulder. Long blotches or spots occur on the back but some lack this. Expanded toe tips, the underside of the legs are yellow. Males have ashy colored throats while females only have cream colored throats. Call is a ribbet-ribbet and can sound muffled when in large choruses.

Range: Occurs all over Chelan county.

Habitat: Can be found in any moist or slightly moist habitats like woodlands, forests, grassland, meadows, and urban or suburban areas. Breeds in almost any water sources like ponds, reservoirs, lakes, marshes, and slow moving streams.

Habits: Breeding begins soon after snow melts in late March or April, In higher elevations breeding may begin in June or July. Eggs hatch in a few weeks and they metamorphosize in a few months. Most abundant frog in the PNW. Northern Pacific treefrogs will call in large loud choruses, sometimes they will even call during the day. Males will fight for calling territories by head butting and jumping on each other. Adults feed on almost any invertebrate that can fit in their mouth.

Boreal toad

Bufo boreas boreas



Northern Pacific treefrog

Pseudacris regilla



Cascades frog:

Rana cascadae

Description: Dorsal color is tan-brown-olive green. Inky spots or blotches on its back. Eye points outwards, yellow upper jaw stripe extends to the shoulder and a dark stripe occurs from the eye to the tympanic membrane. Eye Color is gold, underside is cream-yellow while the legs are yellow-honey. The groin is mottled. Call is a fast, throaty chattering noise, ung-ugn-ugn-ugn-ugn.

Range: Western Chelan county, some parts of central Chelan county.

Habitat: Found near water. Occurs in forests, meadows, ponds, lakes, and streams. Breeding occurs in ponds, lake shores, pools of water from streams, and other shallow water sources.

Habits: Breeding begins in April- July while the snow melts. Eggs hatch in a few weeks to a months and they metamorphosize in a few months. Breeding occurs in a few days. Breeding occurs at the same water source every year and adults/juveniles will go to nearby water sources as a summer foraging habitat. Adults feed on invertebrates.

American bullfrog:

Lithobates catesbeiana

Description: Brownish-olive-green with dark spots or mottling. Large eardrums, lacks a dorsolateral fold. Cream-yellow underside with dark mottling especially near the thighs. The call sounds almost like a cello or a double bass, "bvwum bwum".

Range: Non-native

Habitat: Warm, permanent water preferably with vegetation. Adults will often sit at the edge of the water of in the shallow end but when approached will let out a squeak and retreat for deeper water.

Habits: Breeding begins in May-June, eggs hatch in 6 days- a few weeks. Bullfrogs can inhabit human altered habitats and polluted waters even with predatory fish, they can also migrate large distances. They are a threat to some native frogs.

Cascades frog
Rana cascadae



American bullfrog
Lithobates catesbeiana



Columbia spotted frog:

Rana luteiventris

Description: Olive green-tan-brown dorsally, irregular black spots or blotches on its back sometimes they have lightly colored centers. The underside is cream colored, the hind legs are yellow-pinkish. Groin not mottled. Eyes pointing inwards. Call almost sounds like a faint woodpecker or someone faintly knocking on wood, uk-uk-uk-uk-uk-uk-uk.

Range: Central Chelan county and some parts of eastern and northwestern Chelan county.

Habitat: Almost always found near/in water, prefers slow or still water sources like ponds the edges of lakes and slow moving streams. Breeding occurs in shallow, exposed water like at the shore of a reservoir or a pond or wetland. Could be in shrub steppe, grassland, or forest. Open areas.

Habits: Breeding starts in March-April at low elevations but can start in May-June at higher elevations. Columbia spotted frogs will often lay their eggs communally. Eggs hatch in a few weeks, the hatchlings will cling to the remaining egg mass. Tadpoles metamorphosize in their first summer or fall. Columbia spotted frogs are active all year, during hibernation Columbia spotted frogs are still active underneath the ice. Adults feed on aquatic or terrestrial invertebrates, Northern Pacific treefrogs, and even young Columbia spotted frogs.

Eastern snapping turtle:

Chelydra serpentina serpentina

Description: Olive color becoming more of a yellow on the underside, neck, and base of the tail. Large head and limbs, reduced plastron, and a long thick tail with enlarged scales. The back of the carapace is serrated. Enlarged scales occur all over the body. Prehistoric appearance.

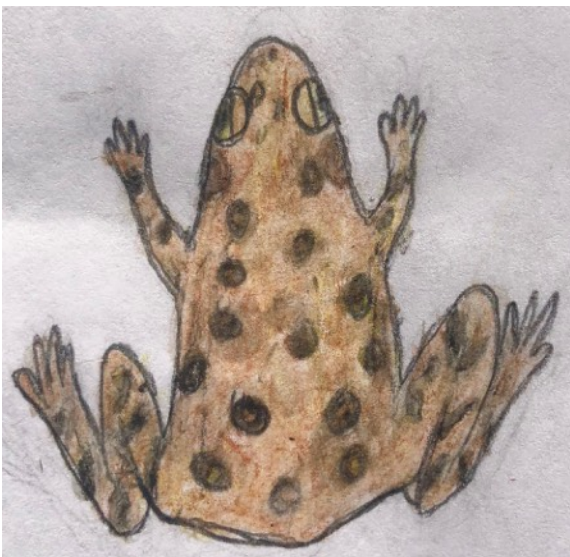
Range: Non native. One has been found in Lake Chelan.

Habitat: Prefers slow moving waters with muddy bottoms and lots of vegetation though they can be found in a large spectrum of habitats in their normal range.

Habits: Breeding probably occurs in spring, females lay 1-2 clutches per year. Rarely leaves the water to bask, usually hides during the mid day hours. If captured they can inflict a serious bite, handling snapping turtles is not recommended.

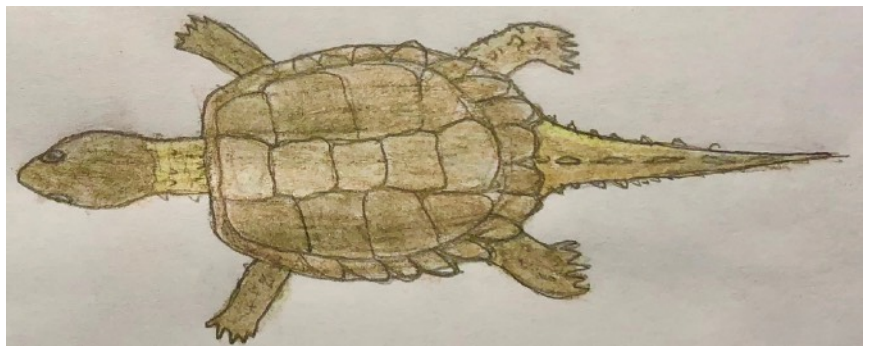
Columbia spotted frog

Rana luteiventris



Eastern snapping turtle

Chelydra serpentina serpentina



Western painted turtle

Chrysemys picta bellii

Description: Olive gray-blackish green carapace, reddish-bright red plastron, and yellow striped head, neck, and legs. Males have a concave plastron and longer claws than females.

Range: Southeastern and extreme northeastern Chelan county. Possible populations could occur central. There is a population at Beehive reservoir.

Habitat: Occurs slow waters with a large amount of aquatic vegetation like ponds, lakes, marshes, and slow moving rivers. Rarely leaves water except during the breeding season when females have to lay eggs. Basks on rocks, logs, mats of aquatic vegetation, and the shoreline. May be found on the substrate of a water source. Many painted turtles can be seen all at once on one basking site but they may get aggressive towards each other when it gets too crowded.

Habits: Females lay 4-20 eggs per clutch and lay them in sandy or grassy areas near the water. Western painted turtles are quick and will quickly retreat into the water if approached. Sometimes you can see them surfacing in the water to take a breath.

Slider:

Trachemys scripta

Description: Green-dark green carapace streaked with yellow and black, yellow plastron with dark blotches on each section. A large red or yellow blotch is present behind the eye, neck and legs have yellow stripes. Adults may become melanistic.

Range: Non-native.

Habitat: Shallow lake edges, ponds, and other shallow slow moving water sources. Prefers areas with muddy bottoms and dense vegetation. Basks on logs, rocks, or any other emergent object during warm and sunny days.

Habits: Breeding most likely occurs in the spring with females laying eggs in the early summer. Females lay more eggs depending on their size. Some females do not breed every year.



Top: Western painted turtle

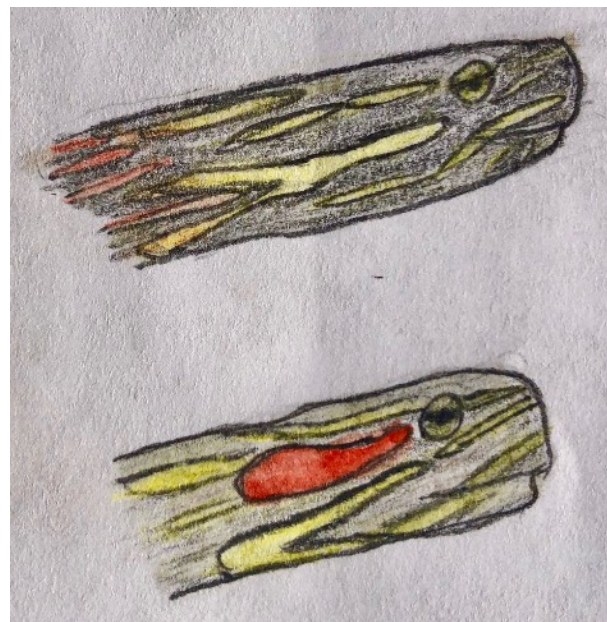
Chrysemys picta bellii

Bottom: Slider

Trachemys scripta

Right: Heads

Left: Plastrons



Northwestern alligator lizard

Elgaria coerulea principis

Description: Brown-dark brown-greenish brown dorsally with dark spots along the mid dorsal or dorsal area sometimes forming faint stripes down its back to its side. A longitudinal fold is located on each side of its body differing from all lizards. Juveniles have a coppery dorsal stripe sometimes with small dark spots in the middle of it. Can get up to 10 inches long

Range: Most of western and central Chelan county, occurs in some parts of eastern Chelan county. There is a population in the lake Clara and lake Marion area in south eastern Chelan county .

Habitat: Occurs in slightly moist and cools forests and forest clearings, requires forest clearings for basking and foraging. Likes grassy, rocky, or brushy areas and can be found underneath surface objects like rocks and logs but they can be quite secretive at times.

Habits: Breeding starts in April at low elevations and can start in June at higher elevations. Females retain the eggs in their body and the young are born (viviparous) in July-September. This species can be found at cooler temperatures than most other lizards found in Chelan county. Can often be observed foraging in grassy or brushy areas during the day.

Pygmy short horned lizard:

Phrynosoma douglassii douglassii

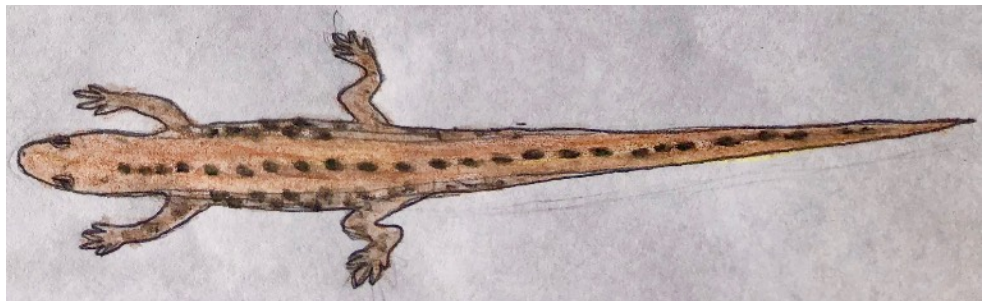
Description: Dorsal color depends on the substrate, this could include brown-tan-gray-blackish. 12 dark blotches edged by white arranged in a transverse pattern leaving the center of the vertebral area unblotched. Roundish body, short tail, "horns" are just stubby scales, a row of pointed scales is located along its side, rough in texture. The underside is white-yellowish. Size may be around 1.5 inches to 2.5 inches. Largest was around 4 inches.

Range: Most of Eastern Chelan county.

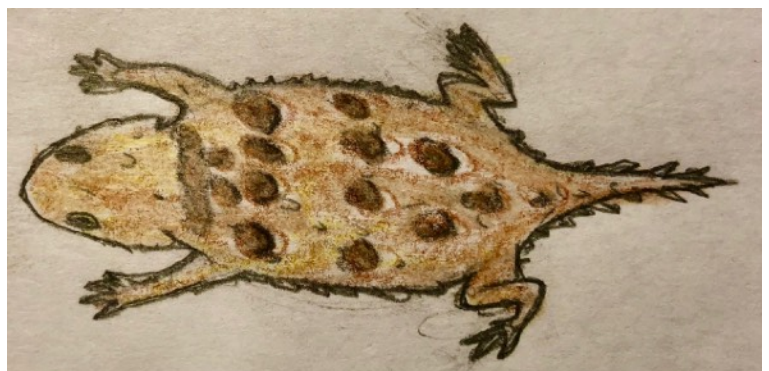
Habitat: Found in shrub steppe with loose soils for burrowing. Open, areas with scattered vegetation. Usually on slopes

Habits: Breeding starts shortly after hibernation (late March- late April). Females retain the eggs (vivaporous) and the young are born at around August-September. Activity primarily occur before noon in the morning hours with less activity occurring in the afternoon. Pygmy short horned lizards feed on insects, primarily ants.

Northwestern alligator lizard
Elgaria coerulea principis



Pygmy short horned lizard
Phrynosoma douglassii douglassii



Northern sagebrush lizard:

Sceloporus graciosus graciosus

Description: Basic colors are brown to gray, a light grey dorsal stripe runs from the base of its head to its tail, this stripe is bordered by a grey-brown stripe with darker blotches edged with white and this stripe is bordered by a light grey or white stripe. Usually blotched. Scales are small but not granular and have a short spine at the end. Ventrally male Sagebrush lizards have a light blue-dark blue coloration on their abdomen and have a mottled blue throat. Females lack these colorations but may have light mottling on their throats. The thighs are striped with black and white and lack any orange coloration. Females develop a rusty or orange coloration during breeding season.

Range: Easternmost Chelan county, probably north and southeastern.

Habitat: Primarily sagebrush but may occur in areas with other desert shrubs. Sometimes occurs in rocky areas without the presence of Northwestern fence lizards. Occurs in areas with sandy/loose substrates like sand dunes. Found less abundantly in areas with invasive plants like Cheat grass.

Habits: Breeding starts around April-May and females lay 2-7 eggs around June. Can be found basking in on small rocks or the at edges of shrubs. During hot weather Sagebrush lizards will retreat to the branches of a shrub. Feeds on insects and other small invertebrates.

Northwestern fence lizard:

Sceloporus occidentalis occidentalis

Description: Base color is grey-brown-black. Scales are large and have large spines at the tips. There may be a dark chevron (V shaped) pattern or dark triangular patches, this is less noticeable in darker individuals. Males may be speckled with blue dorsally. Ventrally males have large blue-dark blue patches on each side of the abdomen and a single or divided blue patch on the throat. Females lack these colors, but may have a light blue tinge on the underside. The thighs are orange.

Range: Eastern and central Chelan county. May occur in northwestern of Chelan county.

Habitat: Inhabit rocky areas like canyons, rock outcrops, and areas with spread out rocks or boulders. Can occur in drier more desert like areas or more forested areas.

Habits: Mating starts around late march or April. Males are territorial and will do push ups or head bobs to make use of high elevated perches. Eggs laying occurs in May-June and hatching occur a few months later around August or September. Feeds on insects and other small invertebrates. If disturbed they will retreat for the nearest cover (e.g crevice, shrub, or underneath a rock) or to another side from their perch.

Northwestern fence lizard

Sceloporus occidentalis

occidentalis

Undersides



Northern sagebrush lizard

Sceloporus graciosus graciosus

Undersides



Nevada side blotched lizard:

Uta stansburiana nevadensis

Description: Basic background color grey-brown. Granular scales (rounded scales, no overlapping) on the back. Side blotched lizards have a pair of bluish-black spots behind their arms hence their name, and a gular fold (a skin fold along the neck). Male side blotched lizards have a sprinkling of light blue or turquoise on their back and sometimes an orange suffusion along the sides of their body, neck, and tail. Females lack these colors but may have a light orange suffusion on their sides, females instead are sprinkled with dark flecks or spots. Can get around 5 inches long.

Range: May occur in the southeastern corner of Chelan county.

Habitat: Occur in desert like areas like shrub steppe that have sandy or gravelly soils and some shrubs or rocky canyons and rocks walls. Side blotched lizards emerge in the morning to bask and during hotter parts of the day will retreat to cover objects like rocks or hide underground.

Habits: Breeding starts in late March-April after hibernation and egg laying occurs in April-May, eggs hatch in a few months. Males are territorial and will head bob and do push ups to display their colors. Side blotched lizards can be observed quite closely. In areas where Side blotched lizards occur they can be quite abundant.

Skilton's skink

Plestiodon skiltonianus skiltonianus

Description: A brown stripe on the skinks back is bordered by a lighter stripe which is bordered by a dark brown-black stripe and that is bordered by another lighter stripe, all of these stripes start at the snout and continue down to the base of the tail. The tail is bright blue in younger individuals becoming a dull blue brown-brownish color as they become older. Younger skinks are also more vibrantly colored. During breeding season males develop an orange suffusion on their chin and the sides of their head. Smooth shiny scales arranged like round roof shingles.

Range: Central and eastern Chelan county. Possibly open areas in western Chelan county.

Habitat: Can occur in forest or woodland habitats, grassy slopes, meadows, canyons, suburban areas, and arid habitats like shrub steppe. In forested habitats can be found under woody debris but in arid habitats can be found under rocks or talus/scree. I have found them underneath splash blocks in urban areas.

Habits: Breeding may start in May-June and egg laying in June-July with the eggs hatching in July-August. Adults feed on insects and small invertebrates and may be seen foraging during sunny days. They move rather jerkily sometimes looking like a snake.

Nevada side blotched lizard
Uta stansburiana nevadensis



Skilton's skink
Plestiodon skiltonianus skiltonianus
Bottom: Tail



Northern rubber boa

Charina bottae

Description: Can be olive green-light or dark brown, young rubber boas are a shade of pink or tan. Rubber boas are named for the smooth leather feeling and appearance of their skin. Stout bodied with an indistinct neck and a very blunt tail resembling an extra head. Rubber boas have small eyes with vertical pupils. Rubber boas possess spurs beside their cloaca, males have larger spurs and they are curved downward while females are smaller and point towards the tail.

Range: Most of Chelan county, does not occur in the driest or wettest part of Chelan county.

Habitat: Occurs in forests, grassland, deserts, and woodlands close to water. Can be found under rotten logs, rocks, crevices, leaf litter, and bark. Secretive, mainly coming out during night but they may be active at other times. I have observed one slithering across a trail during a rainy day. Pregnant females may bask.

Habits: Breeding begins in April-May. Rubber boas are quite tolerant to cold weather and can be found during cold days. Rubber boas feed mainly on small mammals but have been known to feed on other animals. Kills prey by constricting it. Defense may be to coil up into a ball and strike with its tail, escape, or musk.

Western yellow bellied racer:

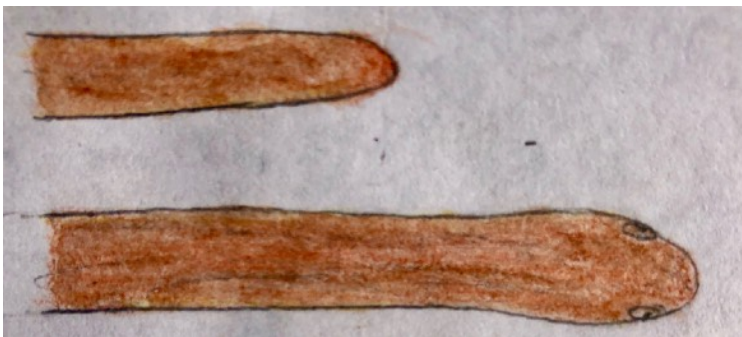
Coluber constrictor mormon

Description: Olive-greenish or reddish grey dorsally with a yellowish to creamish underside. Racers have very large eyes. Younger racers will have brownish blotches and spots along their back while their tail reflects their adult coloration, these blotches will fade away as the snake ages.

Range: Eastern Chelan county, enters some parts of central Chelan county.

Habitat: Shrub steppe, sagebrush flats, talus slopes, and meadows. Can be found in moist-semi arid places but are rarely found in forests.

Habits: Racers emerge from their dens in April-May and breeding usually starts after they emerge in may. Racers are active during the warmest part of the day. Eggs are laid in June-July, the eggs hatch in mid-late august. Racers are often too fast to catch and will attempt to bite when first handled. Racers feed mainly on insects. Racers do not constrict. Racers will return to the same den each fall and the same home range in the summer.



Northern rubber boa
Charina bottae
Top: Tail



Western yellow bellied racer
Coluber constrictor mormon
Top: Juvenile coloration

Common sharp tailed snake:

Contia tenuis

Description: Grey-reddish brown with the red intensifying towards the tail. Two light stripes occur on the back bordered by a darker section (grey-dark brown) on its side sometimes sprinkled with dark spots. Sharp tailed snakes will also have a dark stripe along their snout-behind their head, their underside is banded with black and white bars along each ventral scale. Named for the elongated, pointed scale at the end of its tail

Range: Occurs in central Chelan county. Populations are known to occur in the Leavenworth area (Eagle creek) and Entiat area.

Habitat: Can be found in Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests in meadows or open areas underneath woody or rocky debris. Only surface active in rainy periods where they will sometimes enter roads. Periods of most activity occur march-early June and late September-November. Found near water. Found in cooler and more humid environments than other snakes found in the area, They can be found around, less than, or more than 41%-59% and 55°F-56°F.

Habits: Eggs are laid in June or July and they hatch in the fall. Feeds almost exclusively on slugs. The tail spine is thought the hold its prey down but could also be used for defense or aid in burrowing. Secretive, will hide in burrows.

Northern desert nightsnake:

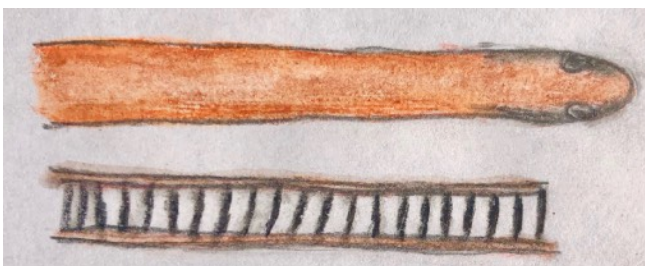
Hypsiglena chlorophaea deserticola

Description: Base color is tan with dark tan-brown blotches sometimes fusing to create a large blotch or the blotches will create almost a checkerboard pattern. Large blotch from the snout to the end of the neck, a dark stripe occurs on the upper jaw. Vertical pupils, the underside is bright white or pearl. This species is mildly venomous but it causes no harm to humans, rarely bites.

Range: Most of eastern Chelan county. May enter some parts of central Chelan county. A Population may occur in Leavenworth. Known to occur at Saddlerock.

Habitat: Found in low elevation arid areas, prefers rocky areas but may occur in places with shrubs and sandy soils or even a mix of both. Nocturnal. During the cooler seasons (April-early June) night snakes can be found underneath surface objects like rocks. When the temperatures become hot during the summer night snakes are surface active at the night but may be active during dusk or dawn. Can be found on paved roads. Secretive.

Habits: Breeding begins sometime in the spring and egg laying may occur in June. Night snakes mainly feed on small lizards but they may take other prey items. Night snakes will retreat to the nearest hiding spot when trying to escape. This species may be active during the afternoon hours.



Common sharp tailed snake

Contia tenuis

Bottom: Underside



Northern desert nightsnake

Hypsiglena chlorophaea deserticola

Great basin gopher snake:

Pituophis catenifer deserticola

Description: Tan-yellowish background with dark blotches running down their back and smaller blotches or spots along their side. Gopher snakes have a stripe running from the top of their head through the eye and through to the back of their head. "Tear drop" blotch.

Range: Eastern Chelan county and some parts of central Chelan county.

Habitat: Can occur in arid desert like environments, ponderosa pine/douglas fir forests, and agricultural/suburban areas. Will hide under surface debris like rocks or boards, or hide in burrows. During the cooler months of spring gopher snakes will be active during the middle of the day but as the temperature increases they become active during the morning and evening hours. During these times gopher snakes can be found basking on trails or roads.

Habits: Eggs hatch in September-October, breeding begins in the spring. Gopher snakes feed on small mammals, birds, and their own young. When prey is found gopher snakes will strike and constrict their prey. When disturbed gopher snakes will sometimes puff their heads up and shake their tail to mimic rattlesnakes. Gopher snakes are usually easily handled. Can hiss.

Wandering garter snake:

Thamnophis elegans vagrans

Description: Light grey-grey background with a dull yellow dorsal stripe which is uneven because of the two rows of dark blotches on each side of its body. The lateral stripes are also a dull yellow. There is a dark flecking ventrally. Wandering garter snakes can come in melanistic varieties.

Range: Most of Chelan county. May be absent from some parts of extreme western Chelan county.

Habitat: Can inhabit open forest, grasslands, woodlands, and shrub land usually near water like ponds, marshes, lakes, or rivers. Can also be found in rocky areas.

Habits: Breeding occurs in the spring shortly after they emerge from hibernation but at higher elevations may occur in late spring or early summer. Primarily active during the day but can be found in warm evenings. Usually seen basking in the morning. Diet is very diverse, when prey is found they will subdue their prey with their toxic saliva which does not pose a threat to humans, for larger prey they may coil around the victim to subdue it. Can be found in areas disturbed by humans. When disturbed they will retreat for cover like a bush, a crevice, rocks, or just try to slither away, they may also retreat for water. If caught they may musk and sometimes even bite.



Great Basin gopher snake
Pituophis catenifer deserticola



Wandering garter snake
Thamnophis elegans vagrans

Valley garter snake:

Thamnophis sirtalis fitchii

Description: Black-slate background with a bright yellow to pale yellow, straight edged vertebral stripe and yellow-pale grey lateral stripes. Small red blotches occur on their sides. Yellow blue to bluish underside and a light chin. A red blotch may occur on the cheek. Some valley garter snakes may have a light bluish tinge.

Range: Occurs in almost all of Chelan county, may be absent from extreme western and extreme southeastern Chelan county.

Habitat: Occurs in many habitats like grasslands, shrub lands, and forests. Usually found near water sources like wetlands, lakes, ponds, and marshes. In more dry areas they are found closer to water but in more moist areas they can be found quite far from water. Can be found under surface objects like rocks or logs, and can also be found along the shore of a water source or swimming in one.

Habits: Breeding begins in spring or later, egg laying occurs in May-June. Young are born July-September. Usually active during the day but may be active during the evening. When disturbed they will escape for cover or escape in the water. If captured they will musk or bite. These garter snakes also have toxic saliva which may cause a slight allergic reaction in some people.

Northern pacific rattlesnake

Crotalus oreganus oreganus

Description: Warning: Venomous, do not attempt to handle. Background color is gray, greenish, tan, or brown, dark blotches occur on the back and sides. Diamond shaped head. Heat sensing pits are located near the nostrils. Thick body. A “rattle” is located at the end of the tail. The number of rattles cannot tell the exact age of the rattlesnake. Hatchlings are born with a pre button and form new buttons each time they shed. The blotches on the rattlesnakes back form black and white stripes as they continue to the tail.

Range: Eastern and most of central and northern Chelan county.

Habitat: Found in arid areas like shrub steppe, sagebrush flats, dry forests, and other arid habitats. Usually occurs in rocky areas, like talus or rock crevices. During the spring when rattlesnakes emerge from their hibernation they can be found near their den/ hibernaculum (rock outcrop, talus, etc.). When the temperatures increase during the mid spring or early summer they can be found in the middle of the day. When the summer time temperatures come they are active during the dusk, dawn, or night time preferring the mid 70's. Can be found basking on roads and trails.

Habits: Breeding can occur at any time of their activity, but it most commonly occurs in the spring or fall. The female retains the egg, the young are born around August-September. When disturbed they will either stay still to avoid detection, slither away, seek for cover, or form a defensive posture and rattle. They rarely strike unless provoked, bites are usually caused by people stepping or trying to handle the rattlesnake. Bites are usually dry bites meaning no venom was injected.



Valley garter snake
Thamnophis sirtalis fitchii



Northern pacific rattlesnake
Crotalus oreganus oreganus
Bottom: Tail

About the Author:



A passionate amateur herpetologist, naturalist and hiker, Torsten Watkins lives in Wenatchee, WA . From an early age Torsten was very curious about nature and all the fascinating living creatures in it.

Torsten frequently can be seen hiking the foothills with his dad and beyond searching for his next great herp (reptile or amphibian) discovery, his most notable find was the first Northern Desert Night Snake in the Wenatchee area.

Torsten plans on continuing to study all that the herpetofauna world has to offer with dreams of finding the elusive Larch Mountain Salamander next!

References:

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Reptiles of Washington and Oregon, Robert M. Storm, William P. Leonard, 1995, Second 2000, Third 2006

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Cover photos:

First row (vertically): 1: Northern Pacific treefrog, Malaga, WA, Torsten Watkins. 2: Western painted turtle, Beehive Reservoir, WA, Nick Watkins 3: Great Basin sapdefoot toad, Malaga, WA, Nick Watkins. 4: Northwestern fence lizard, Saddle Rock, WA, Nick Watkins

Second row: 1: Northern desert night snake, Saddle Rock, WA, Torsten Watkins 2: Western yellow bellied racer, Dry Gulch, WA, Rebecca Watkins

Third row: 1: Great Basin gopher snake, Swakane Valley, WA, Nick Watkins 2: Columbia spotted frog, H&H reservoir, WA, Nick Watkins 3: Skilton's skink, Manson, WA, Nick Watkins

Bottom: Beehive reservoir, WA, Nick Watkins

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