Long-toedSalamader

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Amphibians and managed forests

Introduction

Amphibians are among the most ancient vertebrate fauna on earth. They occur on all continents, except Antarctica, and display a dazzling array of shapes, sizes and adaptations to local conditions. There are 32 species of Amphibians found in Oregon and Washington. Many are strongly associated with freshwater habitats, such as rivers, streams, wetlands and artificial ponds. While most amphibians spend at least part of their life-cycle in water, some species are fully terrestrial, spending their entire life-cycle on land or in the ground, generally utilizing moist areas within forests.

Amphibian Habitats

Amphibians are of great ecological importance and can be found in all forest age classes. Many amphibian species utilize both aquatic and upland habitats throughout their-life cycle; therefore, they are considered good indicators of habitat quality (e.g. habitat diversity, habitat connectivity, water quality). Amphibians also play a key role in food webs and nutrient cycling, as they are both prey and predators.

Upland habitat

The majority of Oregon and Washington amphibians spend only a few weeks at their breeding wetlands or streams before migrating back to their upland habitats. Forests are often the preferred upland habitat for migrating amphibians because forested canopies provide an abundance of shade, moisture and cool temperatures that amphibians need to thrive. Forests are also rich in water features such as forested wetlands and streams, which help keep amphibians moist while moving through the landscape.

Threats to Amphibians on managed forests

Pacific Treefrog

Habitat loss and fragmentation are the greatest threats to amphibian populations. Effects of habitat loss and fragmentation include reduced availability of food and resources, reduced availability of water and cover, reduced ability to move from one habitat to another. Amphibian habitats may suffer significant degradation from land management decisions that can change local hydrology increasing run off and sedimentation to streams and wetlands.

Did you know?

Frogs can see forwards, sideways and upwards all at the same time. They never close their eyes, even when they sleep!

Instead of drinking water, frogs soak water into their body through their skin.

The largest Salamander in the world is the Chinese Giant Salamander; it can grow to a length of 5 feet or more and weight in at over 100 pounds.