



Western New York Herpetological Society

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Common Name: Paddle Tail Newt

Latin Name: *Pachytriton brevipes*, *Pachytriton labiatus*

Native to: central and southern China

Size: Average adult length (nose to tail) for both species of paddle tail newts is 6 - 7 inches

General appearance: Paddle tail newts are stout aquatic newts with smooth skin. These newts have large flat heads and short legs and toes with broad tails that are rounded at the end. Paddle tail newts also have large lips which make them look a little bit like fish. Like many other newts, they breathe with both their lungs and through their skin.

Pachytriton brevipes is a medium sized, smooth skinned brown newt with black spots on the body. The underside is not as colorful than *P. labiatus*. This species of paddle tail newt has an underside that ranges from spotted to pale yellow or orange patches mixed in with brown. Adult males will often have white tail spots, but they are not as prominent and less bold than those of *P. labiatus*. *P. brevipes* is more common in the European pet trade, although some occasionally show up in the American pet trade.

Pachytriton labiatus is the newt most commonly sold as a "Paddle Tail Newt" in the pet trade. The body is generally dark brown, although it can also be a lighter brown. The underside ranges from brown and red spots, to a assortment of brown, red, orange, and white. Adult males develop bright white spots on their tails during breeding season. Both male and female paddle tail newts sometime show a row of red spots or stripes along their sides and tails.

Housing requirements:

Enclosure: A fully aquatic setup is recommended. A 20-gallon aquarium is adequate for a pair of paddle tail newts. Care should be taken to provide adequate filtration for the aquarium. Paddle tail newts can be maintained in a totally aquatic set-up, provided they have a few floating islands to allow them to occasionally climb out of the water.

Temperature: Paddle tail newts like cool water. Temperatures below 65° - 68°F are best, but they can tolerate 70° - 73°F for short periods of time.

Heat/Light: Generally, no additional heat source is needed for the aquarium since paddle tail newts prefer cooler water. No specialized lighting is required either, though a standard aquarium hood can be used to provide an eight to twelve hour photo-period.

Substrate: If substrate is used, it should fine sand or gravel that is larger than what the paddle tail newt can swallow. If too small a size of gravel is used then it could accidentally be ingested and could cause serious medical issues.



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Environment: All species of paddle tail newt are adapted to life in clear, swiftly flowing streams. Paddle tail newts are typically hearty and can tolerate poor conditions for short periods of time. However, extended periods of poor conditions can cause health issues. At least one hiding spot should be provided for each newt, though additional hiding spots can help reduce fighting among tank-mates. Common items used for hiding spots can be sections of PVC pipe, standard aquarium decorations, clay flower pots, or flat rocks. A cover should be provided for the aquarium to prevent these newts from jumping out of the tank

Diet: Paddle tail newts are avid eaters. Worms, insects, beef heart, fish, dry food pellets and frozen bloodworms are all eagerly taken. The food offered should be small enough to be easily swallowed. Larger food pieces will often be fought over. Uneaten food should be promptly removed from the tank to prevent poor water quality.

Maintenance: A partial water change of 10% - 20% is recommended weekly. Filter cartridges should be checked regularly and replaced as needed. If substrate is used, take care to clean it using a gravel washer and syphon.

Other references or recommended reading:

Reilly, Paris, "*Pachytriton* - Paddletail," 2005, Caudata Culture, Retrieved 2008-01-10
<http://www.caudata.org/cc/species/Pachytriton/Pachytriton.shtml>

"Paddle-tailed Newt (*Pachytriton labiatus*) Care Sheet," Pollywog, Retrieved 2008-01-10
<http://www.pollywog.co.uk/spotlessstoutnewtcaresheet.html>

Miller, Jessica, "*Pachytriton* (Boulenger, 1878) Paddle Tail Newts," Living Underworld, Retrieved 2008-01-10 <http://www.livingunderworld.org/caudata/database/salamandridae/pachytriton/>