

ontogenetically?

On 22 July 1998, the specimen had a litter that contained 33 neonates (19 males:14 females). All neonates had normal pigmentation and scutellation. It is possible, however, that

nubbins in neonates are too small to observe at low magnifications (~50×). The female and neonates were released at the site of capture following data collection. Sections of the female's shed skin are in my personal collection (BG 054).

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### Captive Longevity and Size Records for the Peninsula Newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens piaropicola*) and Striped Newt (*Notophthalmus perstriatus*)

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#### Abstract

Herein, we report longevity and size records for the eastern newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*) and a longevity record for the striped newt (*Notophthalmus perstriatus*), based on observations of wild-captured specimens kept in captivity.

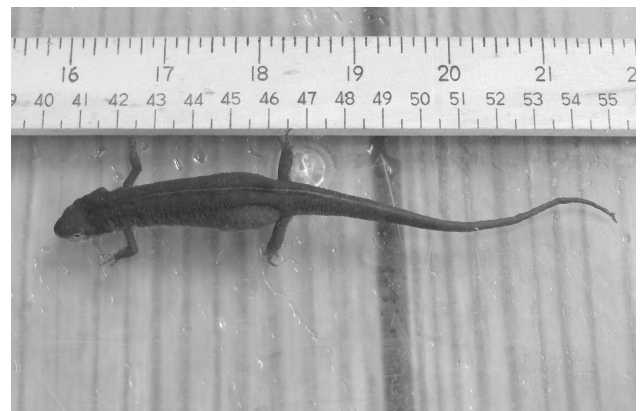
On 20 June 1991, the senior author (MPW) captured an adult female (paedomorph at time of collection) peninsula newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens piaropicola*) 26.7 km south of Lake Cypress on State Road 523 (just south of St. Cloud), Osceola County, Florida, USA. The newt was dip-netted from a vegetation-choked, semipermanent roadside ditch. As of 1 August 2009 this specimen was still alive in the personal collection of MPW. We measured this newt on 1 August 2009 by holding it upside down, then aligning and gently extending it beneath a transparent ruler. We recorded the following: snout-vent length ([SVL], to the posterior tip of the vent) = 73 mm; total length (TL) = 154 mm (Figure 1).

This *N. v. piaropicola* has now lived in captivity for 18 yr, 1 mo. This specimen has been maintained in an aquarium at room temperature (21 °C) and fed Reptomin<sup>®</sup> floating food sticks and flake fish food. Assuming this animal was ca. 1 year old when collected (see Harris, 1987), it is now 19+ years old. Maximum ages reported for wild *N. viridescens* vary from 9 to 15 years (Caetano and LeClair, 1996; Forester and Lykens, 1991; Gill, 1978, 1985 [note: all of these studies address *N. v. viridescens*]). Gill (1978, 1985) reported maximum longevity of 15 and 12 years for male and female *N. v. viridescens*, respectively, for his Virginia, USA study population.

Remarkably, the size attained in captivity by this *N. v. piaropicola* exceeds not only the maximum size documented for this subspecies (105 mm TL [Conant and Collins, 1991]) but also the maximum size reported for the largest of the eastern newt subspecies, *N. v. viridescens* (54 mm SVL [Petranka, 1998]; 140

mm TL [Conant and Collins, 1991]).

On 26 August 1991, LVL captured a larval male striped newt (*Notophthalmus perstriatus*) at an isolated depressional wetland in Putnam County, Florida, USA. At the time of capture, this newt measured 25 mm SVL and 58.7 mm TL. The collection site, designated Recess Pond, was 4.8 km south of State Road 26 at Melrose, Florida, and 0.4 km east of State Road 21 (LaClaire, 1995). The newt (a metamorphic adult ca. 32 mm SVL and 63 mm TL at time of death) was maintained in captivity in the personal collection of LVL. It died on 20 May 2008 at an age of 17+ years, and was subsequently deposited in the



**Figure 1.** Record-sized peninsula newt, *Notophthalmus viridescens piaropicola*, (adult female, SVL 73 mm; TL 154 mm) captured June 1991 in Osceola County, Florida, USA, and still alive in the personal collection of the senior author. Photographed 1 August 2009 by Mark P. Wallace, Sr.

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University of Florida Museum of Natural History herpetology collection (UF 155817), Gainesville, Florida, USA. This *N. perstriatus* specimen significantly exceeds the maximum captive longevity reported for the species, 11 yr, 2 mo. (Grogan and Bystrak, 1973; note: Dodd et al. [2005] questioned the veracity of the Grogan and Bystrak record because of the large size [105 mm TL] of the specimen and the fact it was purchased in Maryland).

Long lifespans of North American newt species, including *Notophthalmus* spp., may safeguard populations from unfavor-

able environmental conditions and other factors that adversely affect reproduction. Due to stochastic events (e.g., drought), breeding pond characteristics, and populations of prey species as well as predators/competitors, production of juveniles at many newt breeding sites is highly episodic (Dodd, 1993, Semlitsch et al., 1996).

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## Can You Really Tell the Age of a Turtle from its Growth Rings?

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This last spring I found another of the marked turtles. By her shell notches I knew she was number 86. I weighed and measured her, counted the growth rings on one of the plastral scutes, and then photographed and released her. Several days later I compared the information recorded against the original data sheet. Since she was first caught and marked in 1975 this box turtle had been recaptured 5 times, each time within 50–100

yards of where I first found her. She showed no growth. In the 1970s she had 23 growth rings, last spring she still had 23 rings. How old was this turtle? She was already full grown in 1975 so clearly the growth rings provided no clue then or now. Like many of the previously marked adult turtles I recaptured minimally she was probably in her 50s, but she could be much older. The funny part was that none of these individuals looked partic-