

# FSC US CONTROLLED WOOD REGIONAL MEETINGS PATCH-NOSED SALAMANDER

## FSC REGION Southeast

**HCVS IN FSC** A High Conservation Value (HCV) is a biological, ecological, social or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. FSC is working to ensure that our system helps to maintain and enhance the special places that support these values. For more information on HCVs, see the Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values.<sup>1</sup>

**WHY ARE PATCH-NOSED SALAMANDERS CONSIDERED AN HCV?** The Patch-nosed salamander is considered an HCV because it is a rare species population with very limited distribution. The species was identified through an analysis of the NatureServe dataset, considering criteria including level of imperilment (both global and state scales), taxa (e.g., vertebrate species), forest habitat dependency, and recency of confirmed occurrences.



## SUMMARY OF PATCH-NOSED SALAMANDERS

This species is the smallest known salamander in North America – typically around 5 cm in length, half of which is the tail. The known range of the Patch-nosed salamander includes a limited number of small, first order stream located at the foot of the Blue Ridge escarpment in Stephens and Habersham counties (near Lake Tugaloo) of Georgia, within the Chattahoochee National Forest. There is one additional population known in Oconee County, South Carolina.

Identified individuals of this species have all been found in leaf litter or under rocks in the above water streambeds or banks of first-order streams. It is not yet known whether adjacent

hardwood forests also provide habitat. This species is not listed at either the federal or state level.

**IDENTIFIED THREATS TO PATCH-NOSED SALAMANDERS** Little is known about this species and specific threats have not yet been documented. **The species depends on riparian habitat, so any factor that would disrupt water flow, canopy cover, or the leaf-litter layer would likely impact the species.** All of these can potentially be affected by forest management.

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, E., N. Dudley, A. Lindhe, D.R. Muhtaman, C. Stewart, and T. Synnott (eds.). 2013 (October). Common guidance for the identification of High Conservation Values. HCV Resource Network.

## WHAT ARE MITIGATION ACTIONS AND WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO ACHIEVE?

Companies that mix FSC-certified forest materials and non-certified materials to make products with an 'FSC Mix' claim/logo are required to address certain risks before using the non-certified forest materials. One of these is the risk that their forest materials come from areas where HCVs are threatened by forest management activities. FSC has completed a US National Risk Assessment to identify where this risk is greater than 'low' and the Patch-nosed salamander's range is one of these places - specifically, Stephens and Habersham Counties, GA and Oconee County, SC. Companies that wish to use non-certified materials from the identified places are required to either avoid sourcing from specific sites where the threats are occurring, or to implement mitigation actions that reduce the risk of sourcing from those sites. For this rare species, any mitigation actions will need to address the threats identified above in **bold**.

The FSC US National Risk Assessment also introduces the concept of holding regional meetings to bring stakeholders together to collaboratively identify effective and practical mitigation actions. We are asking participants to consider landscape-scale mitigation actions, that will help to reduce risks across the landscape in which the companies source forest materials. An effective way to do this may be to build on existing programs and projects that are already tackling these issues. The companies implementing mitigation actions are required to select one or more from the options identified at the regional meetings.

**Please help us to determine what these mitigation actions should be, by visiting [engage.fsc.us.org](https://engage.fsc.us.org) and joining the virtual discussion, or attending a regional meeting.**

## INFORMATION SOURCES THAT MAY HELP GENERATE MITIGATION IDEAS

- [NatureServe Explorer](#)
- [Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division](#)
- [International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources](#)