Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet
Roughskin Newt
(*Taricha granulosa*)

The following short article is from the *Oregon Coast 101 Species* collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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Rough Skinned Newt Anyone!

tourism.oregonstate.edu/rough-skinned-newt-anyone/

By phillmil August 28, 2020

What do think of when you say the word Newt?
Maybe you thought they were just a mythical made-up creature!

Rough-skinned Newt (Taricha granulosa)

Well in fact the Oregon coast is home to this very interesting creature the Rough Skinned Newt!

Rough-skinned newts were named for their dry granular skin—most other salamander species have moist, smooth skin. A terrestrial adult newt has a brown head and back with a bright orange belly. They can grow to almost eight inches long.

Where Found

Through the non-breeding season, terrestrial adults live in forested areas along the coast and through to the eastern Cascade foothills. They find protection in or under soft logs.

For their size, newts migrate relatively long distances between breeding and non-breeding habitat. You may see them traveling during spring and fall as they migrate.

Toxic

An interesting study from Standford University reveals Rough-skinned newts harbor the same deadly toxin found in blowfish in their skin. A newt must be ingested to be toxic.

The newt emits an acrid smell that probably discourages most predators from tasting it. Except for Garter snakes which dine on the newts and have evolved resistance to the toxin.

Researchers report that in some areas, the snakes have somehow spurred greater toxicity in the newts through natural selection. Through this process the newts have increased their levels of resistance far beyond what the newts are capable of.