

## Chinese Giant Salamander

By IASToppers | 2023-12-07 15:20:00



### Chinese Giant Salamander

The Chinese Giant Salamander, the largest living amphibian, has recently garnered attention due to a viral video.



[Ref: Wikipedia]

### **About Chinese Giant Salamander:**

- The **Chinese Giant Salamander** (*Andrias davidianus*) is among the **largest salamanders** and amphibians in the world, **endemic** to central China's **Yangtze River basin**.
- It is known for its size and unique cry, this species is now **critically endangered**.
- The species is facing **critical endangerment**, this species is considered a **"living fossil"**.

### **Physical Characteristics**

- **Description:** Large head, small eyes, dark wrinkled skin, mottled/speckled colouration.
- **Size:** Adults average **25-30 kg**, **1.15 m** long; can reach up to **50 kg** and **1.8 m** in length.
- **Vocalization:** Known for cries resembling a young human child, earning the moniker **"infant fish"** in Chinese??.

### **Diet and Sensory Capabilities**

- Diet includes **insects, millipedes, amphibians, crabs, shrimp, fish, and occasionally other salamanders**.
- Relies on sensory nodes for detecting vibrations due to poor eyesight, most active in the early evening to night.
- Stops feeding at water temperatures above **20 °C**; and temperatures above **35 °C** are lethal??.

### **Reproduction and Lifecycle**

- **Territorial behaviour**; males and females maintain separate territories.
- Breeding occurs between **July and September**; females lay **400-500 eggs**.
- Larvae hatch after **50-60 days**, reaching maturity at **5-6 years**.

- Lifespan in captivity is at least **60 years**; undocumented claims of **200-year lifespans??**.

### Habitat and Distribution

- Native to rocky mountain **streams and lakes**; prefers clear water, living in crevices along banks.
- Found at altitudes between **100 and 1,500 meters**; habitat now highly fragmented??.

### Captive Breeding and Zoological Presence

- Extensive farming in **China**, with most breeding **stock wild-caught** or **first-generation captive-bred**.
- Over **2.6 million** in farms in Shaanxi province alone as of **2011**.
- Presence in international zoos, including the **London Zoo and Prague Zoo??**.

### Conservation Status and Efforts:

- Decline due to habitat **destruction, pollution, overhunting, and use of traditional Chinese medicine**.
- **Critical endangerment**, with wild population declining by over **80% since the 1950s**.
- Conservation measures include **nature reserves, modifications to dams, and farming in mesocosms????**.