

WHAT ARE AXOLOTLS?

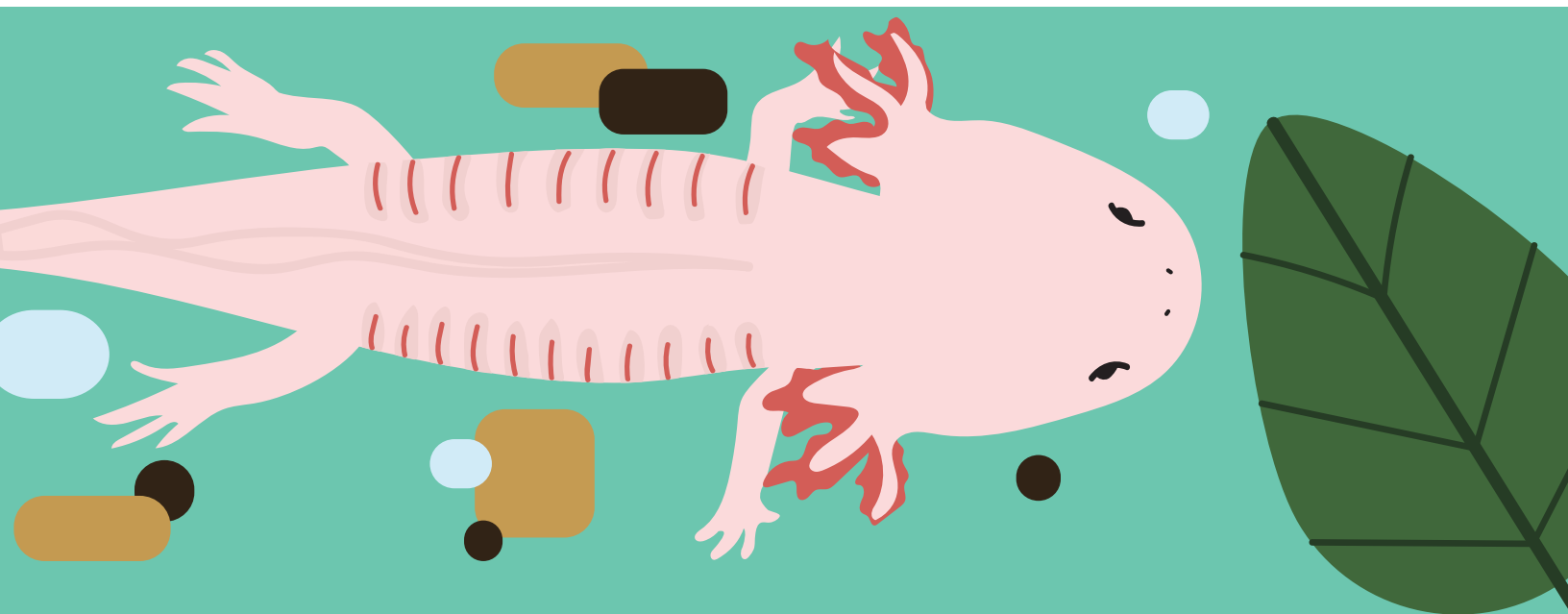
Axolotls are Amphibians and belong to the group containing salamanders and newts, called Caudata. In total there are around 8,000 species of amphibians, the majority occurring in tropical areas. Amphibians have permeable skins, and most have a larval stage, often called a tadpole, that derives from eggs laid in water.

The Axolotl used to inhabit several lakes across Mexico Valley, however many of its habitats dried up and were exposed to pollution. Axolotls are now limited to Lake Xochimilco and its wetlands. Leading causes of Amphibian decline are human development, wastewater disposal, loss of habitat and climate change.

Despite their prevalence in the aquarium trade, these species are critically endangered in the wild. These charismatic creatures have endured sustained habitat loss such that they now occupy a small fraction of their original range.



As a result of climate change, these species will continue to experience decreases in suitable natural habitats due to droughts, which have already eliminated one of their original habitats, Lake Texaco, now in the middle of Mexico City with buildings covering the original site. Lake Xochimilco is one of the last suitable habitats for the Axolotl, but with changing climate there is no guarantee how long it will last.



FEATURED AMPHIBIANS

Great crested newts are widely distributed throughout lowland Great Britain, and absent from Ireland. In the last century great crested newts have declines across Europe, mainly as a result of pond loss and deterioration.



Threatened by habitat loss, the natterjack toad has declined in the last century. As a result, the natterjack toad is strictly protected by British and European law.



CONSERVATION

Over 40% of Amphibian species are currently threatened with extinction. Amphibians are at particular risk versus other animals because of their habitat requirements, complex life cycles, and because their permeable skins make them especially vulnerable to weather extremes, contaminants and pathogens.

Why should we care? Amphibians play important roles in regulating ecosystem processes and are important in our cultures – featuring in books, films, art, music, religion and folklore. Amphibians also drive research into tissue regeneration and medical advancement, for example in anti-viral drugs and painkillers.

How can we help? Help raise awareness of amphibian decline and protect areas where amphibians live from threats such as construction, mining and pollution. Use your votes to improve laws and policies that will protect amphibians from introduction of pathogens and invasive species. Support research to find solutions to key issues such as amphibian reintroduction, climate change responses, disease mitigation and habitat creation.

To learn more about how you can help visit arc-trust.org or earthday.org/conservation-and-biodiversity