

AN ACT TO ADOPT THE MARBLED SALAMANDER (*Ambystoma opacum*) AS
THE OFFICIAL STATE SALAMANDER FOR THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

PART I. JUSTIFICATION FOR AN AMPHIBIAN.

WHEREAS, North Carolina leads the nation and world in salamander diversity, most notably in our Appalachian Mountains;

WHEREAS, amphibians are part of North Carolina's natural history from mountains to sea;

WHEREAS, 12 families and approximately 90 species of amphibians call North Carolina home;

WHEREAS, amphibians play important roles in the natural systems of the state and serve as indicators of environmental health;

WHEREAS, public awareness continues to grow regarding the well-documented global decline in amphibians;

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina does not have an official State Amphibian; and

**PART II. MARBLED SALAMANDER (*Ambystoma opacum*) AS STATE
SALAMANDER**

WHEREAS, Marbled Salamander is identified as a priority species for population monitoring and conservation in the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission's *North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan* (2005);

WHEREAS, Marbled Salamander is distributed in all physiographic regions (Sandhills, Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountains) across the state of North Carolina;

WHEREAS, Marbled Salamander is unique in that it is a charismatic, striking, chunky-bodied, fossorial amphibian, of which no two are exactly alike in color pattern;

WHEREAS, Marbled Salamander is unique in its life stages and habitat requirements;

WHEREAS, Marbled Salamander presents opportunities for conservation education and outreach to students and the general public regarding the plight of amphibians locally and globally;

WHEREAS, Marbled Salamander represents North Carolina's distinction as the world's leader in salamander diversity;

WHEREAS, Marbled Salamander received a majority of votes (1214 out of 2931 or 41%) cast for salamanders in a choice for State Amphibian in online polling of North Carolina's citizens, young and old alike, conducted by the North Carolina Herpetological Society; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts: