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A LEUCISTIC NORTHERN DUSKY SALAMANDER (*DESMOGNATHUS FUSCUS*) FROM VIRGINIA -- Albinism and its leucistic variation (individuals lacking integumentary pigment with normal eyes; Dyrkacz, 1981) have been reported for six species of amphibians in Virginia (Mitchell & Church, 2002, and references therein). Albino or leucistic salamanders reported from the Commonwealth include Northern Gray-cheeked Salamander (*Plethodon montanus*; originally reported as *P. jordani*), Peaks of Otter Salamander (*Plethodon hubrichti*), and Marbled Salamanders (*Ambystoma opacum*) (Hensley, 1959; Hayslett et al., 1998; Mitchell & Church, 2002). Albino and leucistic Northern Dusky Salamanders

(*Desmognathus fuscus*) have been reported from Maryland (Harris, 1970), Massachusetts (Tyning, 1977), and West Virginia (Channell & Valentine, 1972). This short communication reports an instance of the leucistic form of albinism in *D. fuscus* from Virginia.

On 14 April 2002, a leucistic adult Northern Dusky Salamander was found in leaf litter under a rock in a small, wet ditch in Posey Hollow, Conservation Research Center (Smithsonian Institution), Warren County, Virginia. The rock was in shallow water and imbedded about 2 cm in the substrate. The adult salamander was 56 mm SVL, 48 mm tail length, and weighed 3.48 g. The dorsum and sides of the head, body, and tail were golden tan in color with sparse, irregular, tiny dark brown flecking. The closest color match in Smithe (1975) is salmon to cream, depending on the lighting. The middorsal field where there would normally be an irregular light stripe was light to medium apricot with scalloped edges formed by small dark brown flecks. The first 17 mm of the dorsum of the tail was apricot where there would normally be reddish pigment. For 13 mm posterior to this field there was an abundance of tiny black flecks. The last 10 mm of the tail was dark brown. The venter was translucent; internal organs were darkly pigmented and visible. The ventral side of the body and tail were uniform golden tan. The chin was uniform golden tan except for 6 dark brown flecks, and the venter had only a small amount of scattered dark brown ventrolateral flecking. The head had a moderate number of dark brown flecks and was a darker golden tan than the body. The irises of the eyes were black. The light eye-jaw stripe characteristic of *Desmognathus* was not visible. All of the feet were orange-tan dorsally and rose ventrally. The toes were tipped in dark brown.

The salamander was kept alive for photographs and then returned to the point of capture on the same day. Other salamanders found on the same date in Posey Hollow were *Desmognathus monticola*, *Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*, *Hemidactylium scutatum*, *Notophthalmus viridescens*, *Plethodon cinereus*, *P. cylindraceus*, and *Pseudotriton ruber*. All individuals captured, including other *D. fuscus*, had normal color and patterns.

The *D. fuscus* from Massachusetts was described as raw sienna or tawny ochraceous (Tyning, 1977). The illustration of this salamander in Bechtel (1995) shows it to be orange to orange-yellow (Smithe, 1975) without dark flecking but with dark irises. The one described above for Virginia differed primarily by having the tiny, scattered dark brown flecking and dark tail tip. The leucistic form of albinism apparently occurs rarely in *D. fuscus*, as this report is the fourth published for this plethodontid. It is the first documentation of a

leucistic phenotype in Virginia.

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Fig. 1. Leucistic *Desmognathus fuscus* from Warren County, Virginia.