

## Newts

### **Sword-tailed newt / *Cynops ensicauda* / Shiriken-imori / シリケンイモリ**

Both the Japanese and English names of this rare amphibian refer to the shape of its tail. The sword-tailed newt is endemic, found only in the central Ryukyu Islands, where it lives near slowly moving streams in forests and other wetlands. It is fairly large, with males reaching a length of 14 centimeters and females growing to 18 centimeters. Its body is black or dark brown with a bright-red abdomen. Mucus secreted by the newt's body contains the powerful poison tetrodotoxin (similar to that found in pufferfish), so it has few natural predators and is believed to have a lifespan of 20 years in the wild. Although that has prevented an alarming decline in numbers, the sword-tailed newt is now designated a near-threatened species, a situation most likely caused by deforestation and the illegal pet trade.

### **Anderson's crocodile newt / *Echinotriton andersoni* / Ibo-imori / イボイモリ**

This endemic amphibian is the most primitive of the newts on Amami-Oshima, and is sometimes called a “living fossil.” It dwells on the floor of Amami-Oshima's broadleaf forests and grows up to 20 centimeters, making it the largest of its family. The black or dark-brown body is broad and flat, and the head is triangular. Its ribs protrude from the back and both sides of the body, giving it a primeval look that sometimes causes it to be mistaken for a reptile. When threatened, it spreads its rib cage to appear larger. The adults are terrestrial, and lay their eggs on land near water sources. The crocodile newt population has declined due to road construction and deforestation, and it is now designated an endangered species.