

BILL ANALYSIS

H.C.R. 30
By: Bonnen
Culture, Recreation, & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The State of Texas has customarily recognized a variety of official symbols as tangible representations of its heritage and history. Among the most extraordinary of the state's indigenous fauna is the Texas blind salamander, found in the Edwards Aquifer around San Marcos. It appeared on the endangered species list in 1967. The Texas blind salamander is considered highly adaptable and lives in complete darkness, sporting only two black dots as vestigial eyes. The Texas blind salamander is about five inches long at maturity and has a flat head, frail arms and legs, a long tail, and a fringe of red external gills. Its internal organs are visible through its translucent skin. It is the top predator in its habitat range, keeps in still waters, and is able to hunt by sensing water-pressure waves.

The Texas blind salamander was discovered in 1895, when a well was sunk into a cavern to supply water to the Federal Fish Hatchery in San Marcos. Leonhard Stejneger provided the original scientific description of the animal as *Typhlomolge rathbuni* and *Eurycea rathbuni*. Serious collection of the Texas blind salamander began in the 1970s and continues today. Salamanders that are captured are turned over to the San Marcos National Fish Hatchery and Technology Center.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This HCR does not provide rulemaking authority.

ANALYSIS

H.C.R. 30 declares the Texas blind salamander as the official State Amphibian of Texas.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon adoption by the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas