

Amphibians of the Jordan River

compiled by Dan Potts, local naturalist, revised 2008

SALAMANDERS (AMBYSTOMIDAE)

Arizona tiger salamander *Ambystoma tigrinum nebulosum* rare

SPADEFoot TOADS (PELOBATIDAE)

Great Basin spadefoot (toad) *Spea intermontana* uncommon

TRUE TOADS (BUFONIDAE)

Boreal (Western) toad *Bufo boreas boreas* common

Western Woodhouses toad *Bufo woodhousei woodhousei* common

TREE TOADS (HYLIDAE)

Boreal (Striped) chorus frog *Pseudacris triseriata maculata* common

TRUE FROGS (RANIDAE)

Northern leopard frog *Rana pipiens brachycephala* rare

Spotted frog *Rana pretiosa pretiosa* rare, endangered species

Bullfrog *Rana catesbeiana* common, exotic, nuisance species

Green frog *Rana clamitans* rare, exotic

Ecology

Amphibians do not have the ecological importance that they once had on the Jordan River, nor around the world. There have been major declines in many of the species. On the Jordan where vast numbers of leopard frogs could be found only twenty years ago, I have not seen a single one in years! On the other hand, populations of introduced exotic species like the bull frog are expanding. A few like the chorus frogs seem to be holding their own. Cars and roads, cats and dogs, and introduced exotic predators like foxes and raccoons have all played a part in some of these declines, but some species may be especially sensitive to chemical pollution. The chemical herbicide Roundup and the planet's ozone depletion have been implicated in the demise of numerous amphibians.

With only the two natives (Western boreal toad and boreal striped chorus frog) and the one exotic (bullfrog) common along the river, there is virtually no affect by amphibians along the Jordan. Rather, these species appear to a be the veritable "canary in the mine" for predicting the ecological demise ahead for all of us, unless we clean up our act and start caring about them.

References:

Western Reptiles and Amphibians, Peterson Field Guides, Robert C. Stebbins, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, NY, 1985, 336 pp.

Inventory of the Vertebrates of the Jordan River State Park, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Report, 2003, 19 pp.