

Amphibians of the Jordan River

compiled by Dan Potts, local naturalist, revised 2011

SALAMANDERS (AMBYSTOMIDAE)

Arizona tiger salamander *Ambystoma tigrinum nebulosum* rare

SPADEFoot TOADS (PELOBATIDAE)

Great Basin spadefoot (toad) *Spaa 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

Most amphibians are no longer as common on the Jordan River, nor around the world as they once were. There have been major declines in many species. For example, where vast numbers of leopard frogs could be found on the banks of the Jordan only twenty years ago, I have been unable to find even a single individual for years! On the other hand, populations of introduced exotic species like the bull frog are apparently expanding. A few like the striped chorus frog seem to be holding their own. Cars, and predators like foxes and domestic and introduced exotics like cats and raccoons have all played a part in some of these declines. Some species may be especially sensitive to chemicals like the herbicide Roundup, the depletion of earth's protective ozone layer, and a disease called kitrid which have all been implicated in the demise of many species worldwide. Only three natives and the one exotic (see above) are currently common in the river's corridor. One species is endangered, others are threatened as amphibians in general appear to be the veritable Canary in the mine for predicting the ecological demise of many ground-based vertebrates, unless we clean up our act and start caring for 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.