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Name: Eric Johnson

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Organization: Amphibian Refuge

Opt-in: Opt-in

Comment: Amphibian populations are declining worldwide, and amphibians are experiencing high extinction rates due to habitat loss, chytrid fungus, pollutants, pesticides, and climate change. Amphibians are the most threatened class of vertebrates and merit special attention in the SEIS for Near-term Colorado River Operations. The Colorado River is the most important waterway in the southwestern United States and is a key resource for amphibians.

Thank you for giving attention to common amphibians (canyon tree frog, red-spotted toad, and Woodhouse's toad) in the Glen Canyon Dam to Lake Meade reach (SEIS page 3-170). In the SEIS, please provide protective measures for special status amphibian species including Couch's spadefoot, foothills yellow-legged frog, lowland burrowing treefrog, northern leopard frog, relict leopard frog, Sinoloan narrow-mouthed toad, Sonoran green toad, and western spadefoot (SEIS page 3-178). Protective measure should include delineation of potential habitat areas and amphibian population monitoring. The reach from Hoover Dam to the Southern International Boundary appears to be the most important part of the Lower Colorado River basin for amphibian protection since amphibian diversity appears to be higher in this area.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

References:

Catenazzi, A. 2015. State of the World's Amphibians. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 40: 91-119.

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Kolbert, E. 2014. The Sixth Extinction, an Unnatural History, Chapter 1. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

McCallum, M.L. 2007. Amphibian Decline or Extinction? Current Declines Dwarf Background Extinction Rate. Journal of Herpetology, Volume 41, Number 3, pp. 483-491.

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