

Endangered Species and Spaces

5.0 Amphibians and Reptiles

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Eighteen species of amphibians occur naturally in British Columbia. World-wide, amphibian populations have been in decline. Many cases are directly explicable through habitat loss caused by human activities. Many declines, however, have occurred in areas remote from humans and are not easily explained. In any case, amphibians are not usually part of our every-day consciousness; and if they are, it is often in terms of fear and loathing! Forests are cut, swamps are drained and wetlands are filled, and little attention is given to impacts on amphibian populations and diversity. Amongst amphibians, the habitat generalists such as the western toad, *Bufo boreas* are the most abundant and widespread. Others have very restricted ranges that require very specific environmental conditions. In British Columbia, there are 8 species of amphibians that are considered at risk and have been placed on the **RED** and **BLUE** lists. Three such species are found in the Columbia Basin (see **Table 6**).

It may be a generalization, but the reptilian fauna of British Columbia are probably faring as poorly as the amphibians, and for similar reasons. Reptiles are often thought of as pests and evoke strong negative emotions. Snakes, in particular seem to suffer from this reputation. Others, such as turtles and lizards, are sought after as part of the pet trade. Still others may be exploited as exotic food or for their attractive and durable leather. Of the 16 reptiles native to British Columbia, 10 species are considered at risk and currently placed on the **RED** and **BLUE** lists - 3 in the Columbia Basin (see **Table 6**). See also the Canadian Amphibians and Reptiles Conservation Network website at <http://www.eman-rese.ca/>

Amphibian Images in this section by Char Corkran, in *Amphibians of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia - A Field Identification guide*. Courtesy of Char Corkran, Portland, Oregon, USA.

Charles H. Douglas illustrations of reptiles in this section from *Introduction to Canadian Amphibians and Reptiles* used Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa.

**Table 6: Amphibians and Reptiles at Risk in the Columbia Basin
Chapter 5: Amphibians and Reptiles**

Common Name	Latin name	Global (G) Prov. (S) Rank	Provincial Listing
AMPHIBIANS			
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Ascaphus truei</i>	G5,S1	Red
Tailed Frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	G4T?,S1	Red
Coeur d'Alene Salamander	<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>	G3Q,S1	Red
REPTILES			
Rubber Boa	<i>Charina bottae</i>	G5,S3S4	Blue
Painted Turtle	<i>Chrysemys picta</i>	G5,S3S4	Blue
Western Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus viridis</i>	G5,S3	Blue

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