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Amphibian Decline Serves As Global Warning

Nearly one in three species of frogs and toads in the world is under threat of extinction, according to the most comprehensive global study of amphibians ever conducted. The report shows that 122 amphibian species have disappeared since 1980. The discovery, reported in the journal *Science*, is seen by researchers as an early warning of imminent environmental disaster.

Amphibians act like "natural barometers" since their highly permeable skin makes them very sensitive to the effects of climate change and pollution. Any drastic change in the natural world is likely to affect them first. Over the past three years, scientists analysed the distribution and conservation status of all 5,743 known amphibian species. Of these, 1,856 -32 per cent- were threatened with extinction. In comparison, only 12 per cent of bird species and 23 per cent of all mammal species are considered to be endangered. The president of Conservation International, who co-led the research, said: "Amphibians are one of nature's best indicators of overall environmental health. Their catastrophic decline serves as a warning that we are in a period of significant environmental degradation."

Amphibians were the first terrestrial vertebrates to colonise the land successfully about 350 million years ago. They have developed a remarkable diversity by adapting to many different aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Amphibians are present today in every continent except Antarctica, and can be found in almost all habitat types from dry, inhospitable deserts to lush tropical rainforests and temperate climates such as Britain's.

Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE? Copy the evidence from the text. No marks are given for only TRUE or FALSE.

✓ Researchers consider that the disappearance of amphibians is a sign of ecological catastrophe in the near future

✗ The number of endangered birds is greater than that of amphibians

Explicación: Para la primera afirmación el parrafo relevante es:

"The discovery, reported in the journal "Science", is seen by researchers as an early warning of imminent environmental disaster"

La respuesta es verdadera puesto que el texto nos dice que este descubrimiento (la desaparición de anfibios) es visto como aviso de un inminente desastre ecológico (*warning of environmental disaster*), lo que se corresponde con la afirmación (*an early warning of ecological catastrophe in the near future*).

Mientras que para la segunda es:

"Of these, 1,856 - 32 per cent - were threatened with extinction. In comparison, only 12 per cent of bird species and 23 per cent of all mammal species are considered to be endangered"

La respuesta es falsa teniendo en cuenta los porcentajes: 32% de los anfibios están en extinción, frente a un 12% de pájaros que están en extinción. Por lo tanto, el número de pájaros en extinción es menor que el de anfibios.