Manuscript Number:HESS-2024-76， “Soil salinity patterns reveal changes in the water cycle of inland river basins in arid zones” by Meng et al.

General comments:

The manuscript has been reviewed by two experts in the previous round, and the author substantially revised the manuscript based on the comments from reviewers and editor. I think the manuscript has been improved in quality and logic after the revision. I only has some minor comment on this manuscript.Overall, the authors have invested considerable effort in writing and revising this article. I recommend that the article be accepted with minor revisions.

Minors:

(1) Lines 251-256: The subplot labels in Figure 5 are not clear enough, and the legend position needs adjustment.

(2) Line 281: The font size of the y-axis title in Figure 6 is too small.

(3) Line 407: The irrigation district numbers in Figure 10 are too small and difficult to identify.

(4) Line 101: "Xiyang River" should be "Xiying River".

(5) Line 241: "especially in the downstream" should be "especially in the downstream area".

(6) Line 298: "altered evaporation process" is not accurately expressed.

(7) Line 444: "small variations" is not precise enough in wording.

(8) Line 490: Abu Hammad citation format is incorrect, should be "Abu Hammad and Tumeizi".

(9) Verify the references in the text. Since papers on the relationship between saline-alkali land and hydrology are relatively limited, although such research is very important, it is recommended to add some books or research reports as references. For example:

Saline-alkali Soil Science and Comprehensive Utilization (Hu et al., 2025); Practical Q&A and Case Analysis of Saline-alkali Land Improvement Technology (Liang et al., 2018).