

BIDDER'S ORGAN OF *Bufo fustiger* (Amphibia: Anura)

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There are eleven species of endemic toads (*Bufo*) on the West Indies and they are distributed in the Greater Antilles. It's remarkable that seven of them are present in Cuba. *Bufo fustiger* only lives in the East part of Cuba and is one the biggest Cuban's toads. The Bidder's organ is an undeveloped ovary located anterior to the testis in male true toads (Bufonidae). If the testes are removed this organ can develop into a functional ovary, maybe representing a morphological strategy for the reproduction of the species. Information on the Bidder's organ of Bufonidae amphibians remains scarce and this doesn't exist from Cuban's species. The main goal of this work is to obtain a better understanding of the morphological structure of the Bidder's organ. The Bidder's organ of *B. fustiger* was examined by light microscopy. Four male and four female toads were collected on October 2003 in Pinar del Rio Province. The samples were anaesthetized and dissection was carried out. The gonads were observed in situ, fixed in Bouin's liquid and they underwent the microscopic techniques. The histological cuts were stained with Hematoxilin-Eosin and Mallory. The images were digitalized and the diameter of the oocytes was measured using the Motic Images System.

Specimens of *B. fustiger* have one pair of Bidder organs in cranialis portion of the testicles. Each Bidder's organ has a connective tissue capsule and presented a typical ovarian morphology, being composed of a cortex and a medulla. Bidderian follicles in different stages of development were visualized in the cortex, where they are better developed. The germ cells exhibit a large oocyte with a round-shaped nucleus. The Bidderian follicles are supported by a loose net of fibers. In the medullar region, collagen fibers were immersed in the matrix rich in blood vessels. The part of the gonad corresponding to testicle was in spermatogenesis condition. It was found that ovarian and bidderian oocytes were morphologically identical.

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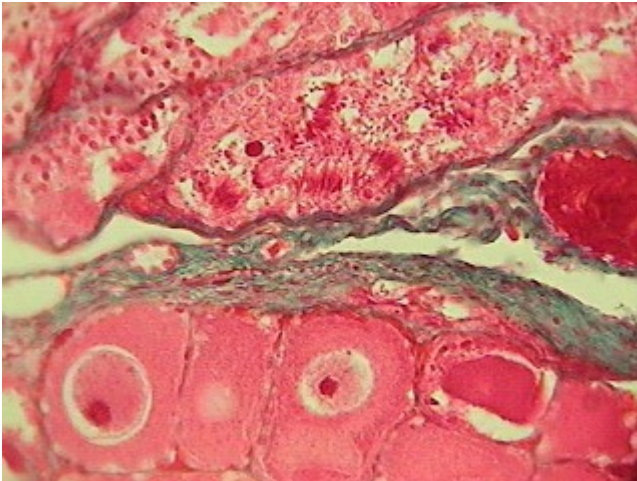


Figure 1. Gonad of male *Bufo fustiger* showing Bidder's organ (400x)