

# Diet and Chemical Defenses of the Sonoran Desert Toads

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**Added by:** Marina Luccioni | Researcher

**Project Contact:** Marina Luccioni | luccioni.marina@gmail.com

## Contributors:

## Project Description:

Scientific Publication Accepted by PLOS One.

Abstract: The Sonoran Desert Toad (*Incilius alvarius*) is the only animal known to secrete the psychedelic compound 5-MeO-DMT as a chemical defense, but the source of 5-MeO-DMT in *I. alvarius* remains unknown. Some amphibians endogenously produce chemical defenses while others acquire them from specialized diets. In this study we analyzed toxin gland secretions and diet profiles from wild *I. alvarius* and sympatric anurans from native and urban habitats around Tucson, Arizona to explore possible links between diet and 5-MeO-DMT production. All *I. alvarius* secreted high concentrations of 5-MeO-DMT, whereas other sympatric toads did not. The diet of *I. alvarius* was similar to that of sympatric anurans, indicating that *I. alvarius* does not exhibit relative dietary specialization. Slight dietary differences between *I. alvarius* in native and urbanized habitats were observed. Taken together, these lines of evidence suggest that diet is not directly linked to 5-MeO-DMT production, and support the alternative hypotheses that Sonoran Desert toads synthesize 5-MeO-DMT endogenously or via a microbial symbiont.

## GenBank Accession Numbers:

SUB15425330 1\_a PV892399

SUB15425330 1\_b PV892400

SUB15425330 1\_c PV892401

SUB15425330 1\_d PV892402

SUB15425330 1\_e PV892403

SUB15425330 1\_g PV892404

SUB15425330 3\_a PV892405

SUB15425330 3\_d PV892406

SUB15425330 3\_e PV892407

SUB15425330 3\_g PV892408

SUB15425330 3\_h PV892409

SUB15425330 7\_a PV892410

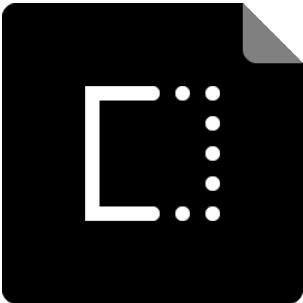
SUB15425330 10\_a PV892411

SUB15425330 11\_a PV892412  
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SUB15425330 46\_f PV892433

## **Project Links**

- <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2023.10.06.561297v1>

## **Project Notices**



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