

**DISTRIBUTION AND CONTACT ZONE OF TWO FORMS  
OF THE GREEN TOAD FROM THE *BUFOTES VIRIDIS* COMPLEX (ANURA, AMPHIBIA),  
DIFFERING IN GENOME SIZE, IN THE VOLGA REGION**

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In the Volga region and adjacent territories, 263 specimens of green toads from 63 localities were studied. Genome size analysis by means of flow DNA cytometry allowed the specimens from 16 localities to be identified as the “western” (= *viridis*) form and the green toads from 20 localities as the “eastern” form (= *variabilis* or *sitibundus*). In the other localities studied, specimens with an intermediate genome size predominated. The western form was usually observed to the west of the Volga and Kama rivers, whilst the eastern form was distributed to the east of these rivers. Specimens with an intermediate nuclear DNA content were common in the Volga river floodplain and the basins of some of its tributaries. The presence of such toads gives evidence of gene exchange between both the forms. The contact zone passes through Republic of Kalmykia, the Astrakhan, Volgograd, Saratov and Samara regions, as well as across Republic of Tatarstan. Its total length is above 1,230 km. The width changes along the Volga river from the narrower one in the Middle Volga region to the wider one in the Volga river delta. The minimum geographical distance between the populations related to the western form and the eastern form is about 60 km. In the whole, the contact zone can be classified as a narrow hybrid zone, which is quite typical for closely related parapatric species with incomplete reproductive isolation. The evolutionary status of both the forms of green toads is discussed.

**Key words:** Bufonidae, flow DNA cytometry, nuclear DNA content, speciation, hybridization zone, Volga region.

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