

ANAXYRUS AMERICANUS (American Toad). **NECROPHILIA**. Necrophilia, the attempt to mate with the corpse of conspecifics, has been reported in diverse lineages of anurans, including bombinatorids (*Bombina variegata*, Sinovas 2009 Herpetol. Rev. 40:199), ranids (*Rana boylei*, Bettaso et al. 2008 Herpetol. Rev. 39:462; and *R. cascadae*, Garwood and Anderson 2010. Herpetol. Rev. 41:204), hylids (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*, Meshaka 1996. Florida Scientist 59:74–75), and bufonids (*Anaxyrus terrestris*, Meshaka 1996, *op. cit.*; *A. woodhousii*, Jennier and Hardy 2015. Herpetol. Rev. 46:73; *Bufo bufo*, Ayres 2010 Herpetol. Rev. 41:192–193; *Duttaphrynus melanostictus*, Patel et al. 2016. IRCF Reptiles & Amphibians 23:32-33; *Incillius nebulifer*, Oyerviddes and Zaidan 2013. Herpetol. Rev. 44:655–656; *Rhinella marina*, Lewis, 1989. Cane Toads: An Unnatural History. Doubleday. New York, New York. 98 pp.; and *R. proboscidea*, Izzo et al. 2012. Journal of Natural History 46:2961–2967). Male *R. proboscidea* apparently can extract and fertilize oocytes from dead females, suggesting a possible evolutionary benefit of engaging in amplexus with a gravid female corpse (Izzo et al. 2012 *op. cit.*). Although apparently widespread among bufonids, necrophilia has not been reported previously in the American Toad (*A. americanus*).

On 25 March 2017 at approximately 1100 h, I found an amplexed pair of American Toads floating near the surface of a small garden pond in southern Cannon County, Tennessee, USA. The female was dead, bloated, and beginning to decay, but the male appeared healthy. The male did not relinquish his grip on the female when I removed the amplexed pair from the pond and placed them on the ground for photography (Fig. 1); rather, the male visibly tightened his grip and uttered a release call when touched. Rather than removing the male from the carcass, I returned the toads to the pond and checked them periodically to determine when the male would abandon the carcass. I last observed the male amplexed to the carcass at 0400 h on 27 March. At that time, the female was bloated and floating with the male still positioned on top of her while they floated at the surface. By 1530 h of that same day, the male had abandoned the carcass, which had apparently burst and had sunk to the bottom of the pond. I do not know when amplexus began, but from the time of discovery, the male was amplexed with the carcass for at least 41 h. The known duration of necrophilia reported here is similar to that reported for *A. woodhouseii* (Jennier and Hardy 2015, *op. cit.*).

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Fig. 1. A male American Toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*) engaged in amplexus with the corpse of a conspecific female on 25 March 2017 in southern Cannon County, Tennessee, USA.