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INTEGUMENTARY HISTOLOGY OF LARVAL *ICHTHYOPHIS*
(AMPHIBIA : GYMNOPTIONA)

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The adult *Ichthyophis* is a terrestrial, burrowing form whereas the larva is aquatic. Larval biology of *Ichthyophis* is not well documented and this report deals with a study of the larval integument or skin which serves as a boundary with the surrounding environment.

The skin from different regions of the body of larvae of various ages, including the newly emerged larva, was examined using routine histological and histochemical procedures.

The larval skin although thinner (104-260 μm in cross sections) resembles the adult skin in its basic organisation. The thin epidermis (3-4 cells thick, 28-68 μm in cross sections) is unciliated and has a row of small unicellular glands. The secretion of the glands is periodate reactive and alcianophilic which reactions are indicative of acid mucosubstances. These glands are absent in the adult epidermis. Dermal glands, both mucous (alveolar) and poison (granular), which are characteristic of the adult amphibian integument, are present in the larval integument even at hatching. Calcified dermal scales, visualised in the adult by the Alizarin Red S and von Kossa techniques, were not seen in the larval stages examined. The scales apparently appear later on in development.

The secretion of the epidermal glands is presumably important in larval life which is not totally aquatic, the larvae living both in water and buried in the soil, especially at later stages of development.