

PALESTRA
EXTRAORDINÁRIA

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WHAT CAN THE LUSITANIAN TOADFISH TELL US ABOUT THE ROLE OF ACOUSTIC COMMUNICATION IN FISH REPRODUCTION?

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Acoustic signals are sexual ornaments with an established role on mate choice in several taxa, but not in fish. Recent studies have suggested that fish vocal activity may signal male quality and influence male's reproductive success but experimental evidence is lacking. We have tested the hypothesis that vocal activity is essential for male breeding success in a highly vocal fish, the Lusitanian toadfish. We compared the reproduction success between muted and vocal males. We also related male reproduction success with their acoustic activity and several features of male quality using different experimental designs. As a proxy for reproductive success we tallied both total number and number of sired eggs. Muting experiments showed that successful mating was dependent on vocalising, namely on male's maximum calling rate. The remaining experiments yielded different results suggesting that a combination of factors, including vocal activity, influence reproductive success in this highly vocal species.



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