

For the Students of BSc Part I

Fasciola hepatica (Part 1)

(The Sheep liver fluke)

Introduction → The Sheep liver fluke is a trematode parasite found in liver and bile duct of vertebrates like cattle, sheep, goat, rabbit, pig, dog and man.

They are commonly called as flatworms or flukes due to their flat leaf like forms.

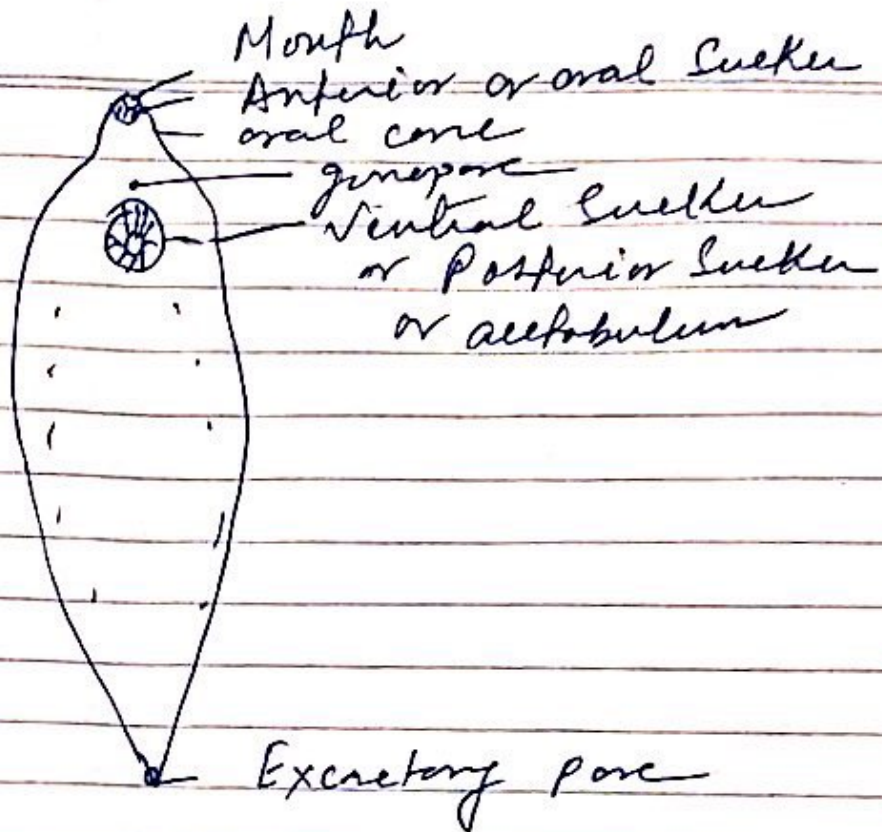
Fasciola hepatica is the most common liver fluke of sheep a very familiar species in India.

Systematic Position -

Phylum - Platyhelminthes
class - Trematoda
order - Digenea
family - Fasciolidae
Genus - *Fasciola*
species - *hepatica*

Habits and Habitat - *Fasciola hepatica* is an endoparasite which completes its life cycle in two hosts. The most common primary host is sheep but it may also occur in other vertebrates like goat, horse etc. ~~It requires~~ *Fasciola hepatica* spends a part of life in secondary or intermediate host a fresh water mollusc *Planorbis* or *Bulinus*.

- (2) Anterior end is somewhat broad and rounded while posterior end is pointed.
- (3) It has a transparent usually pinkish body in which the brownish vitelline glands and the alimentary canal is clearly visible.
- (4) Anterior end of body have a prominent conical projection called oral cone bearing at its tip an aperture called mouth.
- (5) Body contains two small suckers anterior and ventral the anterior sucker is situated at the centre having a cup shaped muscular organ with a diameter of 1 mm it acts as an organ for adhesion and ingestion, while the ventral sucker is about 3 to 4 mm behind the oral sucker, situated mid ventrally, also called acetabulum.
- (6) In addition to mouth there are two more permanent apertures a small gonopore or genital aperture situated in front of acetabulum.
A single excretory pore lies at the posterior end, towards the ventral surface.
- (7) The body wall of liver fluke is called tegument as the ~~lack~~ (character of skin absent) and it acts as a surface for absorption of digested food from the host.
- (8) There is no anus as the parasite have incomplete alimentary canal.



Fasciola hepatica: External features.

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