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RESÚMENES DE TESIS

RICHNESS AND ABUNDANCE OF RODENTS (RODENTIA, MAMMALIA) IN OWL PELLETS OF KARST REGION OF CENTRAL MINAS GERAIS, BRAZIL

Magister dissertation (127 pp.) in Animal Biology defended on **May 25, 2012** by **NATÁLIA LIMA BORONI MARTINS** <natalia_boroni@hotmail.com>. Place: Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Viçosa, Brasil. Advisor: Gisele Lessa. Co-advisors: Ulyses F. J. Pardiñas and Renato Feio. Committee members: Adriano Paglia, Pedro Romano and Jorge Dergam.

Brazil is the country with the greatest diversity of mammals in the world, and the order Rodentia is the most representative. Despite the significance of rodents, little is known about the taxonomy, systematics, distribution and natural history of this order. The Lagoa Santa Karst and its surroundings are considered the region with the better known mammal fauna, living and extinct, all over the country, as a result to the works of Peter Lund in the nineteenth century. Despite the pioneering work of Lund in the region, few recent studies on the fauna of rodents were conducted and there are still many gaps in knowledge of the group. Currently, the region is under strong human influence; therefore, it is necessary to carry out surveys to evaluate the current status of rodents in the region. Thus, the aim of this study was to inventory the current fauna of small rodents in the region and compare with the fauna described by Lund and Winge, nearly two hundred years ago. We

analyzed owl pellets (recent and stratified) collected in limestone caves in the region of Cordisburgo, Lagoa Santa, Pedro Leopoldo and Sete Lagoas. Thirteen genera and 16 species (NISP = 7941 and MNI = 2664) were identified. We found a high richness in the region, the largest ever reported for studies with pellets in Cerrado and Atlantic Forest. However, there was a moderate diversity since there was a great predominance of *Calomys tener* and *C. expulsus* (30-80% of the sample). The geographical distribution of *Oligoryzomys fomesi* was expanded to the east of Minas Gerais and we registered sympatry between *Oligoryzomys nigripes* and *O. fomesi* in the region. Some species, described by Lund and Winge as living and common in the region, were not found nowadays, four Echimyidae (*Carterodon sulcidens*, *Phyllomys brasiliensis*, *Trinomys setosus* and *Clyomys laticeps*) and five Cricetidae (*Thaptomys nigrita*, *Bibimys labiosus*, *Kunsia tomentosus*, *Hyaleamys laticeps* and *Oxymycterus roberti*). We also observed that the current fauna presents values of relative abundance different from those found reported in the past centuries by Lund (with *Necomys lasiurus* representing 80% of the species in pellets). It is likely that these differences in the community are due to changes in habitat over the past two hundred years, especially the destruction of natural vegetation caused by anthropogenic activities. The results presented here suggest changes in rodent community in the region over the past two hundred years and future studies should be conducted to better understand these changes.