

OCCURRENCE OF HELMINTHS IN BRISTLE-SPINED PORCUPINE (*Chaetomys subspinosus*) (OLFERS, 1818), SALVADOR, BRAZIL

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Parasites, which are considered a subclass of predators, are important controllers of host species density (Primack & Rodrigues, 2001). In Brazil, although data on parasites of domestic mammals are quite common (Nichol *et al.*, 1981; Farias *et al.*, 1995; Pimentel Neto & Fonseca, 2002; Serra *et al.*, 2003), studies about helminth parasites preying on arboreal rodents are rare due to the general lack of specific research on host-parasite relationships (Summa, *pers. comm.*). In view of this lack, the purpose of this study is to identify the helminths found in the stomach and intestinal contents of two specimens of bristle-spined porcupine (*Chaetomys subspinosus*) were collected in forest fragments in the central-eastern part of the city of Salvador, BA, Brazil, in the Atlantic Forest domain (12° 55' 20" S/38° 23' 20" W).

The specimens of *Chaetomys subspinosus* were captured during a fauna monitoring campaign by a JGP team and were sent to a Wild Animal Rehabilitation Center to be cared for and subsequently transferred to a permanent preservation reserve. Since most of the specimens died soon after being captured, we were able to investigate the stomach and intestine contents. Parasites were frozen and fixed in 70% alcohol and the species were identified with the help of a stereoscopic glass. The parasites were sent to the Laboratory of Parasitology of at the Pio Décimo College in the state of Sergipe.

Two species of helminthic parasites were identified: *Hymenolepis diminuta* and *Trichuris opaca*.

The occurrence of *H. diminuta* in synanthropic rodents is known (Fowler, 1978; Sukhdeo & Mettrick, 1984; Mafiana *et al.*, 1997; Abu-Madi *et al.*, 2001) to be transmitted by food containing

infected eggs of flour beetles (*Tribolium* sp, *Tenebrio* sp). These invertebrates are intermediate hosts of *H. diminuta* (Pappas & Wardrop, 1997) and the migration to host organs is a still a controversial issue (Cho, 1985).

T. opaca is also found in rodents and lagomorphs (Wallach & Boever, 1983). The worm's eggs are eliminated through the feces and the adults survive for years in the hosts' intestines. Severe infestation causes anemia, diarrhea and weight loss, but mild infestations are usually asymptomatic (Fortes, 1997).

Other helminthic parasites have been recorded in porcupine, such as *Coendou prehensilis* (Hugot, 1982) and *Erethizon dorsatum* (Choquette *et al.*, 1973; Medway *et al.*, 1989; Hamir & Rupprecht, 2000). However, the present study is the first record of the occurrence of *H. diminuta* and *T. opaca* in *C. subspinosus*.

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