XIII Congresso de ECOLOGIA
III International Symposium of Ecology and Evolution
Múltiplas ecologias: evolução e diversidade
08 a 12 de outubro de 2017 • UFV - VIÇOSA | MG

TEMPORAL SEGREGATION BETWEEN MESOPREDATORS (MAMMALIA: CARNIVORA) IN A CERRADO FRAGMENT

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Tema/Meio de apresentação: Ecologia Comportamental/Pôster

Ecological relationships between vertebrate species can determine the structure of biological communities. The outcomes include the influence on local diversity patterns, population dynamics, individual or group behavior and/or niche partitioning. In the study area, southern Goiás state, two mammal species play important ecological roles as the most abundant mesopredators in a set of Cerrado patches, which comprises *stricto sensu* and *cerradão* physiognomies, central coordinates: 19° 2'23.01"S, 50°45'15.96"O. We selected data from a 6-months long camera *trap* survey (4 units) in 2016 with no food baits, in the main wildlife natural footpath that crosses the largest Cerrado fragment (450 ha). We hypothesized that behavioral differences in activity patterns may facilitate the coexistence between Crab-eating Fox, *Cerdocyon thous*, and South American Coati, *Nasua nasua*. We ran PAST program to analyze the data through Rayleigh's R test and Watson-Williams U test. Despite *C. thous* were found active all day and night long, the species exhibited preference for a short period to be active (R=0,62; p=0,001). *N. nasua* were recorded during crepuscular (dawning and sunset) and all daylight period, but also preferred a short period (R=0,65; p=0,006). The bootstrapped 95% confidence interval on the mean time of activity indicates a higher frequency of occurrence concentrated between 19:30 and 00:00 for *C. thous* familiar group records (n=16) and between 10:30 and 15:00 for *N. nasua* social groups (n=12). Finally, there was significant temporal segregation between two species (U=35,77; p<0,001). The competition by interference between mesopredators may led them to avoid encounters that could be potentially dangerous to their physical integrity.