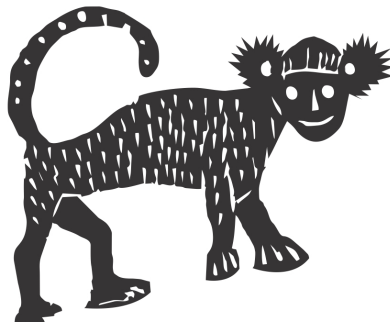


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6.60 - FRAGMENT SIZE INFLUENCES THE DIET OF ALOUATTA GUARIBA CLAMITANS IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL.

Modalidade: ORAL

Tema: Conservação

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Habitat loss and fragmentation can significantly reduce food availability for frugivorous primates. Populations inhabiting small forest fragments may cope with these ecological limitations by adapting their diet. In this study, we compare the feeding behavior of six wild groups of the folivorous-frugivorous brown howler monkey (*Alouatta guariba clamitans*) inhabiting three small (100 ha) forest fragments in Porto Alegre and Viamão, RS, Brazil. Specifically, we compare the (1) diet species richness, (2) number of top food species (i.e., those together contributing >80% of the total feeding records, TFR) and (3) the contribution of major items. Feeding accounted for 21% (n=4,750) of the 22,700 instantaneous scan records collected from September/2011 to October/2012. Howlers used 67 plant species (34 families) as food sources in small fragments, but 57 species (29 families) in large fragments. The diet was more diverse in small than in large fragments (mean \pm SD = 44 ± 5 vs. 33 ± 3 species, respectively), but the number of top food species was similar in both environments (12 ± 2 vs. 10 ± 1 , respectively). Fruit of *Ficus cestrifolia* was the most important resource for all groups, accounting for 17% to 33% TFR. Mature fruit was the major food item in both small and large fragments (36% and 37% TFR, respectively), followed by mature (27% and 28% TFR) and immature (13% and 10% TFR) leaves. The consumption of flower buds, on the other hand, was higher in small (3%) than in large (0.3%) fragments. In sum, habitat restriction appears to impose howlers the need to diversify the species in their menu for coping with a likely decrease in the availability of preferred resources in small fragments.