

SHORT COMMUNICATION

MILLIPEDES OF A FOREST AT SÃO JOSÉ FARM, RIO CLARO TO ARARAS, SÃO PAULO STATE, BRAZIL

LILIAN BOCCARDO¹, CARLOS H. SILVA PENTEADO² & JOACHIM ADIS³

¹Departamento de Ciências Biológicas – UESB, Jequié – BA, Brasil

²Centro de Estudos Ambientais – UNESP – SP, Brasil

³Max-Planck-Institut for Limnology- Ploen – Alemanha

Knowledge of terrestrial fauna of residual Brazilian forests is very topical as support to studies on soil dynamics and nature conservation. This holds true for millipedes as an integral part of soil fauna of a forest fragment located at São José Farm, between Rio Claro and Araras, SP. Brazil. As many as 11 large species of millipede which belongs to 3 different orders and families, have been revealed: *Helicogonus princeps*, *Gymnostreptus olivaceus*, *Gymnostreptus* sp., *Plusioporus setiger* and *Urostreptus* sp. (Spirostreptida, Spirostreptidae), *Rhinocricus padbergi*, *R. varians* (?) and *Rhinocricus* sp. (Spirobolida, Rhinocricidae), *Sandalodesmus gasparae*, *Leptodesmus dentellus* and *Leptodesmus* sp. (Polydesmida, Chelodesmidae) and Polyxenida gen. sp.. All these millipedes were collected between February and October 1997, under tree trunks and stones, and in litter along a transect of 1,500 meters in the forest. The bulk of the species were taken in March and April. The nearly complete absence of millipedes in the following months is apparently due to the dry season, when the millipedes "hibernate" until the beginning of spring. Millipedes perform important roles in the decomposition of organic matter, stimulating microbial activity and influencing the energy flow and nutrient cycle in the soil.

Key words: Diplopoda, occurrence, Brazilian Forest fragment.

Correspondence to : Lilian Boccardo – Email: boccardo@uesb.br

Univ. Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia – Campus de Jequié

Avenida José Moreira Sobrinho, s/n, Jequiézinho

Jequié, BA, Brazil - 45200-000

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