

## The karyotype of *Blarinomys breviceps* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Cricetidae) with comments on its morphology and some ecological notes

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### Abstract

The geographic distribution of *Blarinomys breviceps* (Winge) includes few localities in forested areas in the Atlantic Rainforest from Bahia state in Brazil up to Misiones province in Argentina. Here we add 14 new records for the species in the region of southeastern Brazil. These findings provided information on morphology, natural history and the first karyological data for the species. During two short surveys, one in Santuário da Serra da Concórdia, Valença municipality and another in Fazenda Marimbondo, Mauá municipality, Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil, six specimens were collected in pit fall traps. The specimen trapped in Serra da Concórdia was a sub adult male (age class 3 according to the upper molar row wear). In Fazenda Marimbondo, four adult males and one adult female were captured. Serra da Concórdia is a secondary vegetation in a semideciduous forest type, being a small fragment of 220 ha. The second locality, Fazenda Marimbondo is a high montane forest in an evergreen forest type. Karyotype of the specimen collected in the first locality presented a diploid number of 28 chromosomes and an autosomal number of 50. The specimen collected in Serra da Concórdia was kept alive for seven days. During this period it was fed with live arthropods, what confirms their insectivorous feeding habit, consistent with the molar teeth morphology.

**Key words:** Karyotype, new records, feeding habits, Atlantic rainforest small mammal

### Introduction

*Blarinomys breviceps* (Winge, 1887) is a small-sized fossorial rodent of the tribe Akodontini poorly known due to the reduced number of the sampled specimens. According to Silva *et al.* (2003), its geographic distribution includes forested areas in the Atlantic Forest from Bahia State in Brazil southwards to its southernmost known locality of occurrence in Misiones, Argentina. Most records are from mountainous habitats (Abravaya & Matson 1975), except for the altitudinal distribution data given by Reis *et al.* (1996) who record some specimens at sea level.

*Blarinomys breviceps*, when described by Winge (1887), was first allocated in the genus *Oxymycterus* as a result of comparison of the anterior portion of only one skull of a fossil specimen. The description of *Blarinomys* was later made by Thomas (1896) according to the morphology of extant specimens and considered in the Akodontini tribe by Reig (1986), Musser and Carleton (1993) and Smith and Patton (1999). A phylogenetic position among the Sigmodontinae and the Akodontini was recently proposed by D'Elía (2003) in a study