

Ectoparasites of the wild rodent *Holochilus sciureus* from the Maranhão state, Brazil

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Wild rodents are widely used in scientific research because of their relevance as dispersants of different bioagents. In this sense, rodents such as the species *Holochilus sciureus* have already been reported as being able to act as reservoirs of the parasite *Schistosoma mansoni*. Although well documented the performance of *H. sciureus* as potential reservoir of this helminth, the zoonotic and sanitary importance in relation to its ectoparasites is not yet elucidated. Thus, the objective of this study was to identify the ectoparasitofauna of the rodent *H. sciureus* in order to describe the relationship between these parasites, the host and the environment. For this, these animals were captured in the city of São Bento, Maranhão state. We used fine-toothed combs and metal tweezers for collecting the ectoparasites that were preserved in ethanol (70%) and identified with taxonomic keys. Abundance, prevalence, maximum and average intensity of each identified group was calculated. The occurrence of mixed infestations was also investigated. Statistical tests were performed for correlation between host biological variables, abundance of ectoparasites and abiotic factors of the region. A total of 104 rodents (67 males and 37 females) were captured and 5109 ectoparasites were counted and classified into four genera, as follows: *Prolistophorus* spp. (59.13%), *Laelaps* sp. (34.9%), *Hoplopleura* sp. (5.83%), larvae of *Metacuterebra* sp. (0.03%). In general, *Prolistophorus* spp. presented higher values in relation to all the ecoepidemiological parameters. The predominant infestation was triple (57.74%), formed by the association between *Laelaps* sp., *Prolistophorus* spp. and *Hoplopleura* sp. Only the total length of male rodents affected negatively and significantly the occurrence of *Laelaps* sp. ($p < 0.05$). In Brazil, there is still no evidence that the ectoparasites identified in this study can act as disease vectors. We made here the first records of the mite *Prolistophorus* spp., the lice *Hoplopleura* sp. and the dipteran *Metacuterebra* sp. larvae for Maranhão state.

Keywords: arthropod parasites. wild mammal. Maranhão.