
Reference

Superina, M. 2000. Biologie und Haltung von Gürteltieren (Dasypodidae). Doctoral thesis, Institut Für Zoo-, Heim- und Wildtiere, Universität Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland. 250pp.

Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) Beehive Foraging at Emas National Park, Brazil

The largest species of anteater in the world, *Myrmecophaga tridactyla*, is widely dispersed throughout Central and South America, living in varied habitats, including forests and open grassland. The Emas National Park (ENP), about 133,000 ha and mostly savanna, is one of the most important reserves of the Cerrado, and is located in the southwest of the state of Goiás, bordering the states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul.

In the late afternoon of 1 February, 2003, we were following two giant anteaters to capture one of them to attach a radio-transmitter (the other was already equipped) in a grassland area of the ENP. Following the capture and near the capture site, we observed and photographed marks produced by an anteater's claws, alongside a nearly circular burrow (20 cm diameter) in a termite mound about 1.5 m high. Inside this burrow, were found bees, honey, beehive wall, and the remains of a recently destroyed small *Apis mellifera* colony.

We found a bee in the fur of the captured anteater and a small swarm hovered around it, suggesting that this animal may have attacked the beehive to eat the insects and/or the honey or other items. Anteaters have rarely been recorded attacking bees' nests (Cabrera and Yepes, 1940). Bee products are rich in nutrients and the association of a beehive with the termite mound, commonly foraged by anteaters, could facilitate the encounter, resulting in the consumption of bees and their products. In spite of similar problems associated with ants and termites (low nutritional value of the prey, small prey size and forms of defense relying on the sociality of the prey) (Redford and Dorea, 1984), bees

may be a suitable food source for giant anteaters (Redford, 1986).

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Guilherme Henrique Braga de Miranda, Instituto Nacional de Criminalística / Departamento de Polícia Federal and Programa de Pós-graduação em Ecologia, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade de Brasília, 70.910-900 Brasília, DF, Brazil. E-mail: <guihbm@unb.br>.

Flávio Henrique Guimarães Rodrigues, Associação para Conservação dos Carnívoros Neotropicais – Pró-Carnívoros and Departamento de Zoologia, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade de Brasília, 70.910-900 Brasília, DF, Brazil. E-mail: <rodrigues@procarnivoros.org.br>.

Ísis Meri Medri, Fundação Pantanal Com-Ciência, Av. Rio Branco 1270, Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul, 79304-020 Corumbá, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. E-mail: <isis@cpap.embrapa.br>.

Fernanda Vinci dos Santos, SHIN QI 7, Conjunto 12, Casa 18, 71515-120 Brasília, DF, Brazil. E-mail: <fervincivet@hotmail.com>.

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