

Seasonal variation of the spermatogenic activity in *Bolomys lasiurus* (Lund, 1841) (Rodentia, Cricetidae), from Southeastern Brazil

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Summary. – The seasonal variation of the spermatogenic activity was quantitatively studied in wild rodents of the species *Bolomys lasiurus* (Lund, 1841) (Cricetidae), caught at Belo Horizonte (lat. 19°55' S : long. 43°56' W), State of Minas Gerais, Southeastern Brazil. Twenty animals were used and the following parameters were analysed : topographical position of the gonads ; weight of the testes and epididymes ; diameter of the seminiferous tubules ; spermatogenic index and sperm content of the epididymis tail. Data obtained were indicative that the gametogenic activity of male *Bolomys lasiurus* is significantly increased at the rainy season (January-March) as compared to that observed at the dry season (July-September).

Résumé. – La variation saisonnière de l'activité spermatogénique a été étudiée quantitativement chez des rongeurs sauvages de l'espèce *Bolomys lasiurus* (Lund, 1841) (Cricetidae), capturés à Belo Horizonte (lat. 19°55' S : long. 43°56' W), Etat de Minas Gerais, sud-est du Brésil. Vingt animaux ont été utilisés et les paramètres suivants ont été analysés : position topographique des testicules, poids testiculaire et épидидymaire, diamètre des tubes séminifères, épaisseur de l'épithélium séminifère, population cellulaire des tubes séminifères, index spermatogénique et contenu spermatique de la queue de l'épididyme. Les résultats ont montré que l'activité gamétogénique des *Bolomys lasiurus* mâles est significativement augmentée pendant la saison pluvieuse (janvier-mars) comparativement à celle observée durant la saison sèche (juillet-septembre).

INTRODUCTION

Bolomys lasiurus (= *Zygodontomys lasiurus*) (Lund, 1841) is a vole-like cricetid rodent commonly found in large areas of Northeastern, Central and Southeastern Brazil (Karimi *et al.* 1976 ; Streilein 1982 ; Valle *et al.* 1982 ; Borchert and Hansen 1983 ; Dietz 1983 ; Nitikman and Mares 1983 ; Alho and Pereira 1985 ; Macedo and Mares 1987 ; Henriques and Alho 1991). In spite of the broad geographical distribution of this species and its potential use as a laboratory animal in biomedical research (Mello and Cavalcanti 1982), the few available data on its male reproductive biology are those arising from the external observation of the topographical position of the gonads (Mello 1980 ; Streilen 1982 ; Dietz 1983 ; Alho and Pereira 1985). Regarding the spermatoge-