

Cities of the Delta, Part II: Mendes: Preliminary Report on the 1979 and 1980 Seasons (Reports)



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Description of an abnormal skull of *Caluromys philander* (Didelphidae: Caluromyinae)

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Abstract: An abnormal skull of *Caluromys philander* (Didelphidae: Caluromyinae) is described. UFMG 4232 is an adult specimen, based on the dental eruption pattern, and was examined and compared with six adult normal specimens of *C. philander*. The specimen has a shortening and right lateral curvature of the rostrum. There is no tooth agenesis, and dental occlusion is, for the most part, preserved. The posterior portion of the skull was not affected. The reported deformities appear to be congenital, and represent one of the few reports of this kind of pathology in Didelphidae.

Key-Words: Deformity; Marsupial; Osteology.

Resumo: Descrição de deformidade craniana em *Caluromys philander* (Didelphidae: Caluromyinae). É relatado um crânio anômalo de *Caluromys philander* (Didelphidae: Caluromyinae). UFMG 4232 é um espécime adulto, baseado no padrão de erupção dentária, e foi examinado e comparado a seis indivíduos adultos normais de *C. philander*. O espécime apresenta o rostrum encurtado e curvado lateralmente para a direita. Não há agenesia dentária e a oclusão é em grande parte mantida. A porção posterior do crânio não foi afetada. As deformidades relatadas parecem ser congênitas, e constituem um dos poucos relatos deste tipo de patologia para Didelphidae.

Palavras-Chave: Deformidade; Marsupial; Osteologia.

INTRODUCTION

Cranial anomalies in wild mammals are reported infrequently (Trail & Tumlison, 1984; Jenks *et al.*, 1986; Sone *et al.*, 2004), and very few data are available on its occurrence in Neotropical species. It is expected the prevalence of such deformities in the wild to be relatively low, due to the resulting implications for the cranial structure which, in turn, could heavily impair the capacity of the organism to apprehend and manipulate food, eventually leading to the death of the individual. However, reports do occasionally appear in the literature, but usually limited in taxonomic and geographic scope.

Caluromys philander (Linnaeus, 1758) (Didelphidae, Caluromyinae) is a widespread South American marsupial (Gardner, 2007; Flores *et al.*, 2010). It is an arboreal, solitary and nocturnal species, feeding on fruit, nectar, invertebrates, and small vertebrates (Gardner, 2007). Despite detailed descriptions of the skull of didelphids, including *C. philander* (Wible, 2003; Flores *et al.*, 2010), reports of cranial abnormalities are rare for marsupials. Herein we report an abnormal skull of *C. philander* (UFMG 4232) deposited at the Coleção de Mamíferos do Centro de Coleções Taxonômicas of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (CCT-UFMG).

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

The specimen UFMG 4232 was collected at the Brumal district of the Santa Bárbara municipality, Minas Gerais, Brazil (19°57'34"S, 43°24'55"W), in April 25, 2009. UFMG 4232 was examined directly and under a stereoscopic microscope, and compared with six adult normal specimens of *C. philander* deposited at the CCT-UFMG (UFMG 1159, 3782, 3850, 4102, 4103 and 4224). Fourteen linear measurements were taken of all skulls with a caliper with scale resolution of 0.05 mm, based on those proposed by Flores *et al.* (2010): Total Length of the Skull (LT), Length of Palate (PAL), Breadth of Palate (BP), Length of Upper Postcanine Row (UP), Length of Nasals (LN), Zygomatic Breadth (BZ), Breadth of Braincase (BB), Length of Orbit (LO), Height of Muzzle (HM), Height of Occipital Plate (HO), Length of Mandible (LD), Length of Lower Postcanine Row (LP), Height of Mandibular Body (HD), Length of Coronoid Process (LC). All cranial alterations were described, recorded and compared with the condition found in normal specimens.

RESULTS

When compared to normal specimens of *C. philander*, UFMG 4232 show, in dorsal view, a shortening and

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