Documented record by Pearson's Tuco-tuco (*Ctenomys pearsoni)* in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

Antonio Silveira Ribeiro dos Santos
Programa Ambiental: A Última Arca de Noé,
arca@aultimaarcadenoe.com.br

Resumo. O autor apresenta registro documentado de *Ctenomys pearsoni*, or Pearson's Tuco-tuco em Punta del Este, Uruguai, feb, 2011. Espécie endemica e ameaçada do Uruguai.

According the consulter modern uruguayan literature about mammals, Pearson's Tuco-tuco (*Ctenomys pearsoni* Lessa & Langguth, 1983) is a small rodent (Rodentia family), endemic in Uruguay, with distribution restricted in the sands of platense and atlantic shores of the country, and considered locally very vulnerable species (Gonzalez & Martinez, 2010). It's considered threatened worldwide, but with reference of occurrences in Argentina (IUCN, 2010). It's also referenced by another author (Nowak, 1991), but this information is maybe outdated because the modern revision of the genus mentioned by early authors.

Ctenomys pearsoni is herbivorous and feeds on plants that grow near the exits from its burrows. It lives virtually all his life into tunnels in the sand dunes. His burrow is formed by a main gallery from 5 to 17 meters long with 50 to 20 "holes" *(first authores cit.)*

On February, 19, 25 and 26, 2011, we had the opportunity to observe behavioral patterns of some of these animals in the dunes in Praia (beach) Mansa, Punta del Este, Maldonado Department, Uruguay (34 ° 57'00 .87 "S/54 ° 56'26 .19" W), with some records in photos (bottom page) and video taken with digital camera, Sony DSC-H55, 14Mega pixels. Video available on <www.aultimaarcadenoe.com.br>, "Fauna of Brazil Videos" section in ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM: THE LAST'S ARK (PROGRAMA AMBIENTAL: A ÚLTIMA ARCA DE NOÉ,2011).

As observed, regarding the literature, this gracious rodent lives in huge tunnels, especially when compared to its small size (24-28 cm). We saw that each individual has a tunnel, which has several exits, which are always kept open. We noted that they make the various exits to reach different places to feed. Frequently, we saw their bodies reaching out about 20 cm above the hole to eat small grass leaves. We also observed that the main tunnel has a burrow permanently open, while the others are "covered" after feeding. Another indication that there're are side tunnels with several burrows to feed is flagged because we saw some signs of old unused exits, with the sand flat and hardened with little grass around. The exists that are in use, except the main one, are covered with soft sand that have been pushed from the inside out with his nose and left well hidden, but it is easily used again for food or, perhaps, as a place of escape.

The observations were made mostly in the afternoon, at sunset, when we noticed increased activity in the area, that is about 200 meters long by 50 meters wide, where we calculate that about 20 individuals live in place.

Due the degradation, the endemism, the threats, and the behavior we observed, we believe that disclosure of our documented record of this species, in this simple note, can add some more data on this graceful animal, and help your population studies.

Translation: Antonio Silveira in collaboration with Tommaso Roversi.

References

GONZÁLES,EM & JA MARTÍNEZ,2010. *Mamíferos do Uruguay. Guia de campo e introducción a su estúdio y observación.* Banda Oriental, Vida Selvestre & MNHN. Montevideo.

IUCN. Bidau,C.,Lessa,E.&Ojeda,R. 2008. *Ctenomys pearsoni*. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/5819/0, consulted 4.3.2011

NOWAK,R.M. 1991. Walkers. *Mammals of the world*. volII.5ªed. The Johns Hopkins University Press, pg 939-941.

PROGRAMA AMBIENTAL: A ÚLTIMA ARCA DE NOÉ. 2011. *Fauna do Brasil vídeos* e *Sons da Natureza*, availables <www.aultimaarcadenoe.com.br>

Photos (by the author)