Virtual poster n°29 - Hilário Lima

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Title: "Cache behavior in army ant species Eciton hamatum (Formicidae: Dorylinae)"

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Abstract: "The cache is a point where some animals pile-up of food. Caches can be founded in foraging trails of some species of ants like leaf-cutter ants and can occur at points where obstacles on the trail, causing workers to stop for a while and accidentally dropping leaves, which accumulate and form the cache. In army ants, the cache behavior never was studied. Our research was carried in a fragment of the Amazonian primary rainforest in Bragança, Brazil (-1.036958, -46.764066). Our goal was to perform the first characterization of cache behavior for an army ant species. Eleven caches of E. hamatum (1) had the environments described, (2) the caches were recorded in a video for 5 minutes to measure the flow of workers carrying one prey, multiples prey or without preys and (3) six caches were collected and prey was identified and measure. Most caches occurred in areas where obstacles can increasing the number of workers on the trail. A small part of the worker's carrying one prey stop in the cache, and other, carrying multiples preys or without prey follow a normal flow. We found 697 prey of ants species in caches (Formicinae, Dolichoderinae, and Myrmicinae), ranged from 0.5 mm to 5.5 mm, however, only 5 prey was larger than 4 mm. Move on the Amazon rainforest soil can be costly because has a lot of debris. E. burchellii builds bridges over obstacles using the worker's bodies, facilitating the flow of workers along the trail, however, E. hamatum did not show this behavior, can deal with obstacles using caches, where only a small part of the workers who carry smaller prey stop at the caches, while those who carry more prey at once or larger prey can go straight to the bivouac, keeping the flux of worker constant."