

Free-living ticks in a Cerrado fragment, state of Mato Grosso do Sul

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Fatal cases of spotted fever that have been reported in some Brazilian municipalities are generally associated with the presence of ticks and capybaras (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*). The urban forest fragments where this rodent is present are of great concern. We investigated the diversity of free ticks and the occurrence of ticks infected by *Rickettsia* in one of these fragments, in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul. From winter 2012 until the autumn of 2015, using CO₂ traps, 1219 ticks were collected, of which 1045 belonged to the species *Amblyomma sculptum* and 174 belonged to *Amblyomma dubitatum*. In general, both species were more abundant in spring and summer. Rickettsial DNA was not detected in any of the specimens collected; however, one of the species found, *A. sculptum* is considered the main vector of Brazilian spotted fever, thus deserving constant vigilance by the public health organs.

Key words: *Amblyomma dubitatum*, *Amblyomma sculptum*, Brazilian spotted fever.

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