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BIOMETRY AND DIGESTIVE TRACT MORPHOLOGY OF ANTEATER (TAMANDUA TETRADACTYLA: LINNAEUS, 1758)

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RESUMO

Lesser anteaters are insectivorous animals, feeding ants and termites and have low basal metabolic rate. When we analyze anatomical differences between species, we can observe phylogenetic adaptations to different diets. In this way, size, anato-morphological constitution and organs of gastrointestinal tract physiology are modulated by eating habits, being a tool for identifying their food adaptation, helping nutritionists to prepare diets for these animals when under human care. The objective is estimate relative size and body weight and gastrointestinal tract organs on lesser anteater. An adult male of T. tetradactyla was run over and sent to Wild Animal Medicine and Research Center (CEMPAS). However, he didn't resist his injuries and died. The animal was weighed and its total length, head+tail length and tail length were measured. Subsequently, necropsy was performed, in which salivary glands, liver, spleen, pancreas, stomach, small intestine (duodenum, jejunum and ileum) and large intestine weights were obtained. Small intestine and large intestine were also measured for their total length. Animal total size was 104,0 cm. Its head+tail length was 59.0 cm, with a relative size of 56.7%. Its tail measured 47.0 cm, which corresponds to 45.2% of total size of the animal. Intestine total length corresponds to 268.3% of its body size (269.0 cm). Small intestine constitutes largest portion of the intestine with 178.0 cm (171.2% of total body length and 66.2% of total intestine length) and large intestine measured 91 cm (39.4% of total body length and 33.8% of total intestine length). Regarding weights obtained, animal total weight was 5.1 kg. Salivary glands weighed 0.064 kg, corresponding to 1.3% of their body weight. Spleen corresponds to 0.3% of body weight (0.016 kg), pancreas to 0.1% of total weight (0.006 kg). Liver and stomach, together with intestine, were organs with greatest weight: 0.164 kg (3.2%), 0.085 kg (1.7%) and 0.149 kg (2.9%), respectively. When small and large intestine were separated, the first weighed 0.087 kg (1.7% of total body weight and 58.4% of total intestine weight), while large intestine weighed 0.062 kg (1.2% of weight body weight and 41.6% of total intestine weight). Among the organs of animal's digestive tract, intestine and liver are those that stand out most in the analysis. Intestine is the largest organ in length of the tract, with small intestine being the largest portion, as demonstrated in other studies. The liver, on the other hand, has the greatest weight relative to its body weight, presenting a greater weight than that described in literature. These relationships demonstrate the need for digest to travel a greater path for better use of

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nutrients, with greater enzymatic activity, both hepatic and intestinal, and greater contact surface for absorption. Studies on morphology and biometrics of organs of the gastrointestinal tract indicate aspects of anteater's physiology and nutrition, thus facilitating foods’ choices and feed management of these animals.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Biometry, Gastrointestinal Tract, Morphology, Xenarthra

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