

ABUNDANCE OF NON-HUMAN PRIMATES IN THE ATLANTIC FOREST OF CHAPADA DIAMANTINA, ONE OF THE LAST STRONGHOLDS FOR TWO CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES

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Deforestation and degradation of tropical forest have dire consequences for the conservation of many species. In Brazil, the Atlantic forest was at the front line of the havoc wrought by the early Europeans. The fires and destruction of this unique forest continues to the present and have had a profound effect on the non-human Primates abundance. However, data on primate abundance and the possible effects of forest type on their abundance are scarce. I conducted over 106 km of line transect survey in different types of forests near the Chapada Diamantina National Park, NE Brazil. In the area occur four primate species (*Alouatta* sp, *Callicebus barbarabrownae*, *Callithrix penicillata* and *Cebus xanthosternos*), but while censusing I never saw or heard howler monkeys. Marmosets were the most abundant and widespread specie in the surveyed area (1.13 groups/10 km), capuchins occurred a low density (0.75 groups/10 km) and titi monkeys occurred at extremely low density (0.28 groups/10 km). Forest type appears to be a key environmental factor explaining distribution of species in the area. Marmosets showed preference for gallery forests, while capuchin and titi monkey seemed to prefer areas with taller forests. The low abundance of capuchin and titi monkeys is consequence of hunting pressure and ongoing human disturbance. The long term survival of these two critically endangered species may depend on increasing conservation units and mainly on rising conservation awareness of the local human population.

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