

Predation of *Ara ararauna* and *Amazona aestiva* (Psittaciformes, Psittacidae) by *Chrysocyon brachyurus* (Carnivora, Canidae) in the Cerrado, Brazil

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RESUMO. Predação de *Ara ararauna* e *Amazona aestiva* (Psittaciformes, Psittacidae) por *Chrysocyon brachyurus* (Carnivora, Canidae) no Cerrado, Brasil. Algumas espécies de psitacídeos foram observadas pousando, forrageando ou nidificando próximo ao chão em áreas de cerrado no Brasil central. Nessas áreas também observamos algumas vezes o Lobo-guará (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*) explorando ou forrageando em buracos ou cupinzeiros, sobre os quais também demarcava seu território. Após análises de amostras de fezes de Lobo-guará, encontramos restos de penas de *Ara ararauna* e um fragmento do bico de *Amazona aestiva* em duas amostras diferentes. Acreditamos que esses eventos de predação possam ser explicados por encontros casuais entre presas potenciais (psitacídeos) e predadores (Lobo-guará), em pontos comuns de forrageamento para os dois grupos, durante certos períodos do ano. Além disso, a predação também poderia estar associada à vulnerabilidade das aves quando estas nidificam próximo ao chão.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Predação, *Ara ararauna*, *Amazona aestiva*, *Chrysocyon brachyurus*, Cerrado.

KEY WORDS: Predation, *Ara ararauna*, *Amazona aestiva*, *Chrysocyon brachyurus*, Cerrado.

Psittacines forage mainly on fruits, seeds, flowers and plant shoots (Forshaw 1978, Galetti and Pedroni 1996, Sick 1997). Animal prey items are also occasionally used (Roth 1984, Sazima 1989), a fact that can be due to a dietary protein deficiency (Roth 1984). Parrots and macaws may feed in the forest canopy as well as in low shrubs or on the ground (Yamashita 1987, Guedes 1993, Sick 1997). Nesting sites are generally associated with cavities in trees and cliffs (Forshaw 1978, Sick 1997) and termite mounds (Antas and Cavalcanti 1988), and can occur in a variety of heights within a given habitat. However, the availability of nesting sites can limit reproduction (Beissinger and Snyder 1992).

The Maned-wolf (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*) is a large South-American canid (Nowak 1991) distributed in central Brazil, southeastern Bolivia, Paraguay and northeastern Argentina (Dietz 1984). It exhibits solitary habits and marks its territory with feces and urine over rocks, termite mounds, trails and roads (Carvalho 1976, Dietz 1984). In the Cerrado biome, the Maned-wolf occurs in many vegetation forms, from grasslands to forest edges, and frequently explores shrubs and holes searching for food, as done by other predators (carnivores and large lizards). Its diet consists of small mammals, birds and insects, and a large variety of fruits, especially *Solanum lycocarpum* (Solanaceae) (Carvalho 1976, Dietz 1984, Motta-Júnior *et al.* 1996). Some of these fruits, for example *Anacardium humile* (Anacardiaceae) and *Pouteria ramiflora* (Sapota-

cea), are consumed by the Maned-wolf (Juarez 1997, Motta-Júnior *et al.* 1996) as well as by psittacids (C. A. B. and M. A. B. pers. obs.).

The psittacids' behavior of feeding and/or nesting near the ground may be associated with predator attacks. We verified this after analyzing a total of 71 samples of Maned-wolf scats collected in two Cerrado areas. In one sample, collected at Estação Ecológica de Águas Emendadas, Federal District, (15°25'S; 48°15'W) in October 1994, we found a beak fragment of a Blue-fronted Amazon (*Amazona aestiva*). In another sample, collected at Fazenda Rio Pratudão, Bahia State, (14°14'S; 45°56'W) in September 1995, we found feathers of a Blue-and-yellow Macaw (*Ara ararauna*). Both remains were compared with correspondent parts (beak and feathers) of specimens from the Zoology Department Museum at the University of Brasília to ensure the identification. There are also records of psittacid predation by tegu lizards (*Tupinambis* sp.) (Schmidt 1957 *apud* Presch 1983).

The availability of food resources throughout the year is determined by many factors, such as plant phenology (Terborgh 1986). Thus, it is possible that different animals overlap in their consumption of the same resource in some seasons of the year, resulting in casual encounters between potential prey and predators at common gathering points. Alternatively, the exploring behavior of the Maned-wolves and the records of parrot nests near the ground can also explain parrot predation. In conclusion, we believe the

exploratory and opportunistic behavior of the Maned-wolf, associated with the birds' vulnerability when perching or nesting near the ground, may result in occasional predation events.

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