

Cytotaxonomic diagnoses of two Neotropical swift species: *Streptoprocne biscutata* and *Streptoprocne zonaris* (Aves: Apodidae)

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Abstract

Specimens of *Streptoprocne biscutata* and *Streptoprocne zonaris* were studied cytogenetically in order to identify the features of their karyotypes and to increase our knowledge of the karyotypical constitutions of family Apodidae in the Neotropical region. Analysis of *Streptoprocne biscutata* revealed $2n=64$ (22 macrochromosomes + 42 microchromosomes) whereas *Streptoprocne zonaris* is characterized by $2n=66$ (18 macrochromosomes + 48 microchromosomes). It was not possible to recognize chromosomes related to sex determination in either species. We make available chromosome data that will prove useful to a global biological characterization of Apodidae, contributing to a reconnaissance of study of avian diversity in the Neotropics.

Key words: Chromosomes, *Streptoprocne biscutata*, *S. zonaris*, Apodidae, avian, cytogenetics

Introduction

South America is often described as “the avian continent” because more than 2920 species of birds live there (Sick 1997). Of the countries in South America, Brazil has one of the largest avian faunas in the world sheltering 1590 of a total of 9020 recognized species (Rocha et al. 1996).

The family Apodidae belongs to the order Apodiformes (comprising swifts and related birds) and is widely distributed with representatives on almost all continents (Pichorim 2002), however the great majority of them are in the Tropical region. According to Chantler and Driessens (1995), of the 92 living species of swifts known from the tropics, 23 exist in South America. Most of the South American species are included in the sub-