

New record of *Rhagomys rufescens* (Thomas 1886) (Rodentia: Muridae: Sigmodontinae) in the Atlantic forest of southeastern Brazil

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Abstract

Rhagomys rufescens is a threatened Sigmodontinae rodent from the Atlantic forest of southeastern Brazil, known by a few specimens deposited in scientific collections. This work presents a new record of this species, collected in Parque Estadual da Serra do Mar – Núcleo Picinguaba (Ubatuba, SP) in April 2002, and some biological data. This finding reinforces the urgency of improving collecting efforts in Atlantic forest, in order to know and preserve its biodiversity.

Key words: Rodentia, Muridae, *Rhagomys*, Atlantic forest, Brazil, threatened species

INTRODUCTION

Rhagomys rufescens (Thomas 1886) is a small to medium-sized Sigmodontinae (Muridae) rodent considered endemic to the Atlantic forest of southeastern Brazil. The description of the genus and the species was based on two specimens collected more than a century ago and deposited in the Natural History Museum (London). Until recently this species was known only by these two exemplars, one from Rio de Janeiro (without precise collecting locality) and another without any locality data. Recently, Percequillo *et al.* (in press) registered two other specimens, one from Mata do Paraíso, Viçosa (MG) and the other without precise locality.

The taxonomic position of *Rhagomys* remains uncertain. According to Thomas (1917), it resembles *Oecomys*; Tate (1932) classified *Rhagomys* among oryzomyine genera, while a number of authors (Reig 1984; Musser & Carleton 1993; McKenna & Bell 1997 *apud* Luna & Patterson 2003) included it in a species group named *incertae sedis*,