DOES THE FIDDLER CRAB *Minuca rapax* PREDATOR SHOW A PREFERENCE FOR ONE SEX OF FIDDLER CRAB PREY *Leptuca leptodactyla*?

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Predator-prey have several effects in shaping the co-evolutionary characteristics of species. The choice of a prey by a predator is related to the availability of prey and the energy profitability of the prey. Fiddler crabs show marked sexual dimorphism, in which males are hypertrophied, used as a defensive weapon and in reproductive displays, while the claws feature two small, symmetrical claws. The females of these crabs are more preyed on birds. In previous studies, the fiddler crab *Minuca rapax* has been observed preying on other fiddler crab species, and it is hypothesized that it may show a preference for females due to its vulnerability. Here we are evaluating the choice preference of *M. rapax* for prey of one sex of the species *Leptuca leptodactyla*; the latter a sympatric species of *M. rapax* in intertidal environments of the Southwest Atlantic. To assess predator preference, we developed four treatments composed of two groups of males each: T[1]: 3 males and 3 females; T2: 3 males and 3 males; T[3]: 3 females and 3 females; and T4: 3 females and 3 males. To identify each group of crabs, we painted their abs with permanent pen. The predator went through 48 hours before we offered up prey. The prey remained with the predator for 12 hours and 25 were performed per treatment. Our results showed that there was no difference between similar treatment means of choice ≈ 5, where that of the treatment values was 0.48 of the VA treatments: F=0.07978; MS=0.07978;. Thus, the crab *M. rapax* is not distinguished by sex, presenting itself as a generalist predator capable of capturing its prey according to the availability in the environment, regardless of sex.

Keywords: Predator-prey, foraging, predation, fiddler crab

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