

Cover letter

To whom it may concern

Understanding how the process of colonization by taxa in different types of habitat takes place is necessary to preserve their diversity. Habitats shaped by macrophytes play an important role in maintenance of aquatic biodiversity because they frequently constitute diversified, productive and heterogeneous compartments of water bodies. This study was conducted in a wetland shaped by macrophytes and we evaluated macroinvertebrate biodiversity associated with their roots, and the process of colonization by macroinvertebrates on an artificial substrate with morphology similar to that of the roots of aquatic macrophytes *Ricciocarpus natans* and *Spirodela intermedia*. It is important to disseminate the knowledge acquired by this research, because it can contribute for the understanding how and when physical habitat heterogeneity controls the structure and function of macroinvertebrate communities. Also, it can contribute for the maintenance and preservation of macroinvertebrate assemblies that plays an important role in aquatic ecosystems.

The goals of our study were: 1) to analyze the colonization process by macroinvertebrates of an artificial substrate morphologically similar to the roots of aquatic macrophytes *R. natans* and *S. intermedia* (natural substrates) found in the environment in a pre-determined period, and 2) to compare the density, richness and composition of macroinvertebrates on artificial and natural substrates.

This research aims to contribute to the scientific knowledge of the dynamic of macroinvertebrate colonization on an artificial substrate, as well as the association of macroinvertebrates with small-size aquatic macrophytes. Most papers in the literature refer to the relationships of macroinvertebrates with large-size macrophytes. The analysis of the fauna structure of macroinvertebrates that inhabit aquatic plants with reduced root systems may shed light on the role that these macrophytes play in the aquatic environment as food sources and alimentation and shelter sites in the development of the fauna and on their eventual contribution to the spatial heterogeneity of habitat.

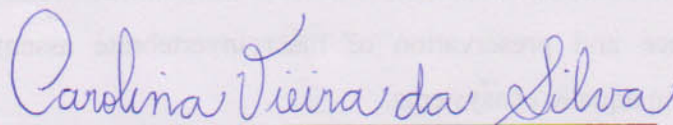
This research includes aspects of wetlands biology and ecology communities. Furthermore the study area is a floodplain marginal to the Guareí River located on a stretch within a preserved forest area (Angatuba Ecological Station, southeast São Paulo State, Brazil). The Middle Guareí River is part of the Jurumirim reservoir watershed that is located about 45 km far from the confluence zone with the reservoir. Studies in this type of wetland are scarce and rare.

Professor Raoul Henry and I are in agreement with the publication and it is not already published elsewhere. Also the publication is not simultaneously submitted in other journal.

Below we suggest five independent referees with e-mail and institutional address:

- Alaíde Fonseca-Gessner (gessner@ufscar.br) – UFSCar
- Janet Higuti (higuti@nupelia.uem.br) -- UEM
- Marcos Callisto (callistom@ufmg.br) – UFMG
- Paulo Augusto Zaitune Pamplin (paulo.pamplin@gmail.com) – UNIFAL
- Virgínia Sanches Uieda (vsuieda@ibb.unesp.br) – UNESP

We acknowledge the authorship of the manuscript and agree with the rules presented here.



Carolina Vieira da Silva



Raoul Henry