



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE PERNAMBUCO
DEPARTAMENTO DE ZOOLOGIA

Dr Diogo Loretto
Dr Nathalie Olifiers
Editors, *Oecologia australis*

Dear Drs.,

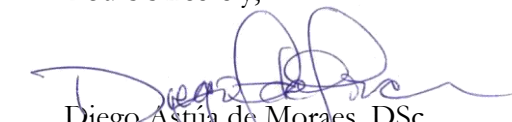
Please find enclosed our manuscript entitled "Cranial morphometric analyses of the cryptic rodent species *Akodon cursor* and *Akodon montensis* (Rodentia, Sigmodontinae)", by D. Astúa, I. Bandeira and L. Geise, to be submitted for publication in *Oecologia australis*, in the special issue "Mamíferos da região leste do Brasil: um tributo à carreira do Dr. Rui Cerqueira".

The sigmodontine rodents *Akodon cursor* and *Akodon montensis* are cryptic species indistinguishable by external characters. In order to assess whether they can be separated in size and shape of the skull and mandible, we undertook a morphometric analysis of these structures in a set of specimens that had all been previously identified based on their karyotypes, using a geometric morphometrics approach. We found that the two species can be distinguished in size and shape for almost all views analyzed, and that these shape differences are mostly allometric. Because of the presence of these two species in many small mammal communities in eastern Brazil, and because first and last authors were former students of Dr. Cerqueira, we felt that this would be a good contribution for this long deserved special issue. All three authors agree with the submission and publication of this work. We hereby declare that the present work has not been published nor is it simultaneously being submitted elsewhere.

We suggest the following names as potential referees for this work:

- Dr. Erika Hingst Zaher (Instituto Butantan) – hingstz@gmail.com
- Dr. Rodrigo Fornel (Univ. Reg. Integr. do Alto Uruguai e das Missões) - rodrigofoanel@hotmail.com
- Dr. Pablo Gonçalves (UFRJ) - hotprg@gmail.com
- Dr. Guillermo D'Elia (Universidad Austral de Chile) - guille.delia@gmail.com
- Dr. James Patton (UC Berkeley) - patton@berkeley.edu

Yours sincerely,



Diego Astúa de Moraes, DSc
Associate Professor & Curator of Mammals
Department of Zoology, UFPE



Isabella Bandeira



Lena Geise