PARASITOLOGICAL PARAMETERS *Lecithochirium microstomum* (DIGENEA: HEMIUROIDEA) PARASITE OF *Euthynnus alletteratus* (SCOMBRIDAE) ON THE COAST OF THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

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Abstract

The superfamily Hemiuroidea Looss, 1899 consists of parasites predominantly found in marine teleosts. Among the taxa within Hemiuroidea, the family Hemiuridae Looss, 1899 is the second most diverse, with numerous species associated with various hosts. *Euthynnus alletteratus* (Rafinesque, 1810), commonly known as little tunny, is a scombrid fish with a significant economic importance and exhibits predatory feeding habits. This fish feeds on crustaceans, small fishes, mollusks and polychaetes, which serve as intermediate or paratenic hosts for several helminth species, resulting in parasitism. The family Hemiuridae stands out among the parasites infecting scombrids. The aim of the present study is to report the parasitological parameters of *Lecithochirium microstomum* parasites in *E. alletteratus* off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The hosts were obtained directly from fishmongers along the coast of Rio de Janeiro. The specimens were transported in styrofoam box containing ice to the “Laboratório de Helmintos Parasitos de Peixes (LHPP), Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz”, where they were necropsied, and the helminths recovered were processed and identified according to the appropriate methodology for the group. To date, 32 specimens of *E. alletteratus* have been examined and four specimens were parasitized by *Lecithochirium microstomum* Chandler, 1935. A total of 142 specimens of were recovered from the intestine of *E. alletteratus* (P= 12.5%; MI= 35.5±10.8; MA= 4.43±12.8; AR= 30–53). The preliminary results underscore the importance of further studies on the diversity of Trematoda parasites of marine fishes in Brazil, expanding the knowledge of host-parasite relationships, the biogeography of parasitic species, and the environmental parameters that influence the abundance and density of these organisms.

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