

HAND-REARING AND WEANING OF A BRADYPUS VARIEGATUS CUB – CASE REPORT

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RESUMO

In the first days of life, *Bradypus variegatus* cubs already consume leaves and buds offered by the mother, concomitantly with breastfeeding. After 30 days, they start weaning and initiate a strictly folivorous diet. The objective of this work was to report the nutritional management throughout the hand-rearing of a *B. variegatus* cub from 1 week up to 6 months in captivity. A cub of *B. variegatus* was kept in a home environment for two days and was fed with cow's milk. The patient was referred to the Veterinary Hospital - Wild Animals Sector (HVSAS) - of the Federal University of Pará (UFPA). The animal was clinically healthy, with good hydration levels and weighing 274 g. Goat milk powder was established as a diet (20% of body weight or 54.8g of milk diluted in 100ml of filtered water, made daily and heated, before each feeding, in a water bath for 5 minutes until reaching 25 ° C). 4 ml of goat milk solution was administered every 3 hours for each feeding (total of 32 ml ingested / day). In addition, hibiscus flowers and leaves (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*), embaúba leaves (*Cecropia* sp.) and cocoa (*Theobroma* sp.) were available ad libitum. Following three days, an 8- hour night interval was established posterior to the last feeding at 10 pm. The animal reached a weight of 320g two months later. Milk started to be offered for the patient by diluting goat milk powder 10% of the animal body weight as a basis (32g of milk diluted in 50ml of filtered water), and administered every 3 hours during the day, which represented an average of 3 ml / feeding (intake of 15 ml / day). The quantity and variety of regional leaves were increased (always available in the enclosure). 3 months later, the animal weighed 445 g. Since then, milk (10% of body weight / 50 ml of filtered water) was offered twice daily in a volume of 4 ml / feed (totaling 8 ml / day of ingestion) and leaves and flowers always available ad libitum. To monitor the animal's development, biometrics were performed every 15 days and daily weighings at the beginning and end of each day. To monitor gastroenteric gas accumulations, abdominal circumference was measured before and after each feeding and defecation. When the abdomen presented dilation greater than 5 cm from the standard (23 cm average) for more than 24 hours, even after defecation, 0.03 ml of simethicone in 75 mg / ml oral emulsion was administered. The animal always defecated in a grassy area, and the feces had normal appearance. At the end of 6 months, with the puppy weighing 565g, the milk supply was completely suspended and the feeding became exclusively of leaves, flowers and buds. Thus, it was possible to establish a weaning and transition protocol for exclusively folivorous feeding, with weight gain proportional to the patient's body development. This protocol may guide new cases of care for orphaned cubs of *Bradypus variegatus*.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Feeding, Orphan wild mammal, Three fingers sloth.

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