

Mateus Melo-Dias

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Affiliations: Laboratory of Conservation Biology (LaBiC), Center for Biodiversity Dynamics and Climate Change (CBioClima), Department of Biodiversity, Institute of Biosciences, São Paulo State University (UNESP), Rio Claro, 13506-900, São Paulo, Brazil

Current Position

Ph.D. student in Ecology, Evolution, and Biodiversity (2024–2028)

São Paulo State University (UNESP), Institute of Bioscience, Rio Claro, SP, Brazil

Thesis: *Re-Wilding the Neotropics: Prioritization approaches to reverse defaunation in megadiverse ecosystems*

Advisor: Dr. Mauro Galetti

Guest Ph.D. student in Center for Ecological Dynamics in a Novel Biosphere – ECONOVO (2025-2026)

Aarhus University, Department of Biology, Ecoinformatics and Biodiversity, Aarhus, Denmark

Project: Setting priorities for trophic rewilding in the Neotropics: a large-scale framework for species and area selection

Supervisor: Jens-Christian Svenning

Education

- **M.Sc. in Applied Ecology (2019–2021)**

Federal University of Lavras (UFLA), Lavras, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Thesis: *Andean bear - environment interaction in a region of conflict in the Peruvian Central Andes: implications for management and conservation of high-Andean biodiversity*

International Internship: National University of Central Peru, Huancayo, Junín, Peru

Advisor: Dr. Marcelo Passamani | **Co-advisor:** Dr. Marco Arizapana-Almonacid

- **B.Sc. in Biological Sciences (2013–2018)**

Federal University of Lavras (UFLA), Lavras, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Thesis: *Environmental effects on paca occupancy in Protected Areas in the Mantiqueira Mountains, Brazil*

Advisor: Dr. Marcelo Passamani

Undergraduate Teaching Experience

- Teaching Fellowship: **Biogeography**, UNESP, Rio Claro, Brazil (2024)
- Teaching Internship: **Human Ecology**, UNESP, Rio Claro, Brazil (2024)
- Voluntary Teaching: **Population Biology**, UFLA, Lavras, Brazil (2019)

Professional Scientific Experience

- **Expert Assessor for Brazilian Ungulates (2025)**
Chico Mendes National Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMbio), Brazil
Project: Ungulate Extinction Risk Assessment for Brazilian Species Redlist
Coordinator: National Center for Research and Conservation of Carnivore Mammals
- **Road Ecologist (2022–2024)**
Concremat Ambiental & Arteris Road Concessionaire, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Project: Wildlife Crossing Monitoring Programme of Road BR-101/RJ
Coordinators: Dr. Marcelo Guerreiro & Dr. Helio Secco
- **Field Biologist (2022–2023)**
Wild Animal Conservation Institute (ICAS), Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil
Project: Giant Armadillo Conservation Program
Coordinator: Dr. Arnaud Desbiez

Peer-review publications

1. Ribeiro, L. G., **Melo-Dias, M.**, Saraiva, B. M. P., Villar, N., & Galetti, M. (2025). Belowground effects of ground-dwelling large herbivores in forest ecosystems. *Journal of Animal Ecology*.
2. **Melo-Dias, M.**, Ribeiro, L. G., Queiroz, J. F., Penhacek, M., Custódio, R. J., Rodrigues, D. D. J., & Rosa, C. (2025). Surviving in the Amazon Arc of Deforestation: richness and defaunation of mammals in priority Protected Areas of the Brazilian Midwest. *Austral Ecology*, 50(7), e70088.
3. **Melo-Dias, M.**, Huatuco, J.F., Arizapana-Almonacid, M.A., Castañeda-Tinco, M.I., Chanamé, F., & Passamani, M. (2024) Lighting up mountain coexistence: Understanding the effects of environment and livestock on habitat use by Andean bear in a conflict zone in Peruvian Andes. *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 81, 126677.
4. **Melo-Dias, M.**, Pedroso, R.F., Rosa, C., Massara, R. L., Ribeiro, L.G., & Passamani, M. (2024) The effects of keystone resources and landscape of fear in modulating the spatiotemporal use of paca (*Cuniculus paca*) in Brazilian Atlantic Forest. *Mammalian Biology*, 104(5), 475-488.
5. Castro, A.B., **Melo-Dias, M.**, Santos, P., Custódio, J., Rodrigues, D., & Rosa, C. (2024) Lost in Amazon: Evidencing the southern extension of the geographic distribution of Linné's two-toed sloth (*Choloepus didactylus*). *Biotropica*, 56(4), e13353.
6. Desbiez, A. L., Massocato, G. F., **Melo-Dias, M.**, Yogui, D. R., Silva, K. F. M. D., Gestich, C. C., & Galetti Jr, P. M. (2024). Molecular and camera trap data confirm the occurrence of *Dasypus septemcinctus* (Linnaeus, 1758) in Mato Grosso do Sul State, Brazil. *Biota Neotropica*, 24(4), e20241628.
7. **Melo-Dias, M.**, Rocha, M.F., Dalfior, I.C., Bissa, L., Marcial, T., Secco, H., Passamani, M., & Rosa, C. (2023). Translocation and long-term monitoring of threatened thin-spined porcupines (*Chaetomys subspinosus*) on the Brazilian coast. *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 74, 126434.

8. **Melo-Dias, M.**, Souza-Cruz, P.G., Moreira, I.G., Curi, N.H.A., Carvalho, N.S., Freitas, M.A., & Rosa, C. (2023) Invasive amphibians and reptiles living in Brazil. *South American Journal of Herpetology*, 29(1), 38-65.
9. Santana, D., Attias, N., Massocato, G., **Melo-Dias, M.**, & Desbiez, A.L. (2023) Interactions of four teiid lizards with giant armadillo burrows and range extension for two endemic Cerrado species. *Revista Latinoamericana de Herpetología*, 6(3), e709-121.
10. Secco, H., Gessulli, R.D., **Melo-Dias, M.**, Machado, T.D.O., & Guerreiro, M. (2022) Golden lion tamarins use artificial canopy overpass to get around: a new road for their conservation?. *Biodiversity*, 23(3-4), 156-158.
11. **Melo-Dias, M.**, Huatuco, J.F.A., Arizapana-Almonacid, M. A., Castañeda-Tinco, M.I., Chanamé, F., Ninahuamán, J.U., & Passamani, M. (2022) Living at the top of the forest line: medium and large mammals in a high-mountain ecotone in Peruvian Central Andes. *Biota Neotropica*, 22(2), e20211307.
12. Rosa, C.A., ..., **Melo-Dias, M.**, ... & Ribeiro, M.C. (2020). Neotropical Alien Mammals: a data set of occurrence and abundance of alien mammals in the Neotropics. *Ecology*, 101(11), e03115.
13. Nagy-Reis, M., ..., **Melo-Dias, M.**, ... & Ribeiro, M.C. (2020). Neotropical Carnivores: a data set on carnivore distribution in the Neotropics. *Ecology*, 101(11), e03128.
14. **Melo-Dias, M.**, & Passamani, M. (2018). Mamíferos de médio e grande porte no campus da Universidade Federal de Lavras, sul do estado de Minas Gerais, Brasil. *Oecologia Australis*, 22(3).

Publications in Review

1. Ribeiro, L.G., Villar, N., **Melo-Dias, M.**, Nazareth, S., & Galetti, M. Mammals change litter and soil zoogeochemistry in a tropical rainforest. Submitted to *Ecological Monographs*.

Publications in Preparation

1. *Book chapter*: **Melo-Dias, M.**, Genes, L., Rheingantz, M., Donadio, E., Di Martino, S., & Galetti, M. Practicalities of trophic rewilding - South American case studies. In: I.J. Gordon & A.D. Manning (Eds.). *Trophic rewilding: research, policy & practice*. In preparation for publication by Elsevier Books.
2. *Review*: **Melo-Dias, M.**, Ribeiro, L.G., Forti, R.M., Veloso, M.E., Paccas, B., & Galetti, M. *Dicotyles tajacu* (Cetartiodactyla: Tayassuidae). In preparation for submission to *Mammalian Species*.

Conference Presentations

- **12th Brazilian Congress of Mammalogy**, Búzios, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2024)
Poster: Lighting up mountain coexistence: Understanding the effects of environment and livestock on habitat use by Andean bear in a conflict zone in Peruvian Andes
- **5th Latin American Congress of Mammalogy**, Lima, Peru (2021)
Oral presentation: The effects of environmental and anthropic characteristics on habitat use by Andean bear in a conflict region in the Central Peruvian Andes
Oral presentation: Medium and large mammals in the high-Andean zone of Pampa Hermosa National Sanctuary, Peru
- **18th Brazilian Congress of Primatology**, Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2019)
Poster: Invasive primates in Brazil

Scientific Works in International Media

- **Mongabay** (2023)
Translocation is a viable option for Brazil's threatened porcupines: Study
[Website News](#)