

Project Update: March 2024

The research team has already completed one frugivorous butterfly sampling campaign and is about to finish the second by the end of February 2024. A campaign consists of a complete round on all 12 selected sites within Atlantic Forest municipal protected areas, from north to south of Santa Catarina Island. We are now using our recently purchased set of new butterfly traps to guarantee quality, standard and consistency on the data collected. Also the new traps allow us to sample simultaneously on all sites of the same region at the same week, optimising our available time considering the butterfly flight season.

Eight butterfly traps are installed in each site - four in the interior and four on the edge of the forest. All traps remain in place for 6 days and are checked every 2 days for specimens and bait replacement. The bait is prepared with banana and sugar cane 48 hours in advance so that it is fermented when placed on the trap during fieldwork. We also place a small equipment called a datalogger near the traps in order to register environmental temperature.

So far we were able to count more than 70 frugivorous butterfly specimens and identify around 20 species in areas that have never been surveyed for butterflies before. All specimens will later be mounted and incorporated on the university's entomological collection after confirmation of identification by specialists.

So far we counted on the participation of four undergraduate students and one postdoc student as volunteers on field trips along with three selected field assistants.

Weather permitting, by the end of May 2024 we hope to have completed 15 fieldwork weeks, corresponding to five campaigns. We will then start characterising the vegetation surrounding the areas sampled together with other environmental variables which will be used in ecological analysis. Also, mounted specimens will be photographed in order to illustrate the guide which will be elaborated as part of the environmental education material to be used in the protected areas.



Butterfly caught on trap being measured and stored during fieldwork.



Butterfly caught from trap, identified and registered.



Morpho butterfly observed during fieldwork.