

Fish assemblages in morichal (*Mauritia flexuosa*) habitats of a neotropical Stream

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Morichales, habitat types dominated by the moriche palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*), are important habitat for aquatic organisms in Neotropical freshwaters. We described fish assemblage composition of morichales in Cano La Guardia during two months of the dry season (February and March 2005) to document the extent to which organisms utilize this habitat type. Small-bodied fishes, characterized by diverse trophic and life history strategies (< 100 mm), were abundant. Fish assemblages of morichales differed significantly from those sampled on sandy beaches or rocky habitats in the river. We discuss how particular characteristics of morichales, especially their high degree of habitat heterogeneity, contribute their value as habitat, and suggest that these habitats warrants further study in Neotropical freshwaters.