

GESTATION PERIOD, YOUNG, AND MAXIMUM WEIGHT OF THE ISTHMIAN CAPYBARA, *HYDROCHOERUS ISTHMIUS* GOLDMAN

There is apparently no published information on either the gestation period or the newborn young of the isthmian capybara, *Hydrochoerus isthmius* Goldman. Asdell (Patterns of Mammalian Reproduction, Comstock Pub. Co., Ithaca, 1946) records 119-126 days to be the gestation period for *Hydrochoerus hydrochoeris* L. of South America, but gives no further information about the rodents of the family Hydrochoeridae.

For some years the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory has kept specimens of *H. isthmius* in captivity in connection with studies of equine trypanosomiasis to which the species is particularly susceptible. The animals take well to captivity, become docile, and feed well. They are permitted to graze at will during the day on the grass lawn of the laboratory grounds. At night they readily enter a large outdoor cage where they are locked up. In addition to the grass they secure by grazing, their diet is supplemented by generous supplies of fresh vegetables and fruits.

A young adult female capybara, weighing 33 pounds at the time of its receipt, July 20 1937, from El Real, Darien, Panama, came in heat during the last week of February, 1938, and was bred to a male. The last time she was observed to take the male was on March 1, 1938. She gave birth to three young on June 12, 1938. The gestation period thus is between 104 and 111 days, somewhat less than the 119-126 days recorded by Asdell for *H. hydrochoeris*. The mother and young were weighed on June 17, 1938, when the following weights were recorded: Mother, 45 lbs.; young (female), 2 lbs., 4 ozs.; young (female), 2 lbs., 11½ ozs.; young (female), 2 lbs., 15½ ozs.

This is the only instance of a birth of this species recorded at the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory. A female killed in Darien on August 27, 1930, weighed 62 pounds, and was apparently almost at full term; she had four unborn young (3 males and 1 female) with an average weight of 2 pounds.

Of some twenty capybaras received at the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory, the largest male weighed 58 pounds, largest female, 62 pounds.—HAROLD TRAPIDO, *Gorgas Memorial Laboratory, Apartado 1252, Panamá, R. de P. Received March 12, 1949.*