

Interspecific mating: Is the frequency of the potential partners relevant?

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Studies on the mechanisms of speciation and maintenance of lineages have paid great attention to hybridization between species. Currently, molecular markers have provided detailed information of hybridization in natural populations. We studied two closely related *Tupinambis* lizards which can hybridize reciprocally in the overlapping zone of their distributions. The proportion of Individuals of each species could be one factor affecting hybridization. Therefore, to analyse the frequency and the directionality of hybridization, we performed a molecular analysis using a mitochondrial and a nuclear DNA segments from parental and hybrid individuals. We related our results with the species ratio in each locality in the overlapping area, estimated from a three-year sampling. We found that the hybridization process is not homogeneous throughout the entire overlapping area. In general, the mitochondrial haplotype of hybrids belongs to the scarce species in each area, suggesting that female lizards are likely to mate with males of the most frequent species. The directionality of hybridization would depend on the species ratio in each locality.