

The fate of *Attalea phalerata* (Palmae) seeds dispersed to a tapir latrine

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At the Beni Biological Station, Bolivia, we compared the fate of seeds of the palm *Attalea phalerata* dispersed by tapirs to a latrine with that of non-dispersed seeds. Survival of seeds that had passed through tapir guts did not differ significantly from that of unconsumed seeds, demonstrating that tapirs are legitimate seed dispersers of *A. phalerata*. Experimental and observational studies showed that tapir dispersal can contribute to escape from seed predation by bruchid beetles such as *Pachymerus cardo*. Nevertheless, the major contribution of the dispersal process may simply be the mechanical barrier to bruchid attack represented by the fecal material covering seeds. Furthermore, total absence of seedlings and adults from the tapir latrine studied suggests that seasonally flooded tapir latrines are not safe sites for *A. phalerata*.