

Food preferences of the crested porcupine *Hystrix cristata* L. 1758 (Mammalia, Rodentia) in Southern-Eastern Tunisia

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Abstract

The present work is focused on the study of the diet of the crested porcupine *Hystrix cristata* in Southern-Eastern Tunisia. Feeding habits of this species were assessed throughout faecal analysis in both cold and warm months. 105 samples of faecal pallets of porcupine were collected during the two seasons. It was revealed from analysis that wild species, were the staple of the diet of this large rodent in both cold and warm months, represented by 15 species of which the most frequently observed are: *Stipa lagascae* (20.54%), *Hedysarum carnosum* (10.26%) and *Hordium marinum* (9.69%). Contrary to cultivated species, they specially characterize the summer diet which include potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), barley (*Hordium vulgare*) and fig (*Ficus carica*), of which barley is the most common species.

Key words: *Hystrix cristata*, feeding habits, faecal analysis, Southern-Eastern Tunisia, species.