

PRESENCE OF MYXOSPORIDEA (MYXOZOA: MYXOSPOREA) OF THE GENUS
HENNEGUYA THELOHAN, 1892 IN *Pygocentrus nattereri* FROM SOUTH PANTANAL,
BRAZIL

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The Brazilian Pantanal is a 138,000 km² seasonal flood plain found within the Upper Paraguay River Basin, bordering both Bolivia and Paraguay, located in the center of South America. The Pantanal freshwater biodiversity is poorly known, especially with regard to invertebrates. These ecosystems, being situated in the tropics and not presenting atypical or extreme conditions (such as saline, alkaline, or extremely acidic waters), constitute, in their great majority, habitats favorable to the development of species-rich communities. The class Myxosporea of the phylum Myxozoa contains numerous species, some of which are pathogens, parasitizing different fish organs and tissues. Among the myxosporean, the genus *Henneguya* Thélohan, 1892, which includes at least, 126 species, is one of the most important pathogens freshwater fishes. Thirty piranhas (*Pygocentrus nattereri*), were collected for necropsy. Mucus of body surface and pieces of organs were collected and examined macroscopically and these presenting cysts examined for parasites in wet mounts or stained smears. Fifteen (50%) fishes presented cysts. The smears examination showed the presence of several spores in the secondary lamellae of the gill filaments, identified as *Henneguya* spp (Myxozoa: Myxobolidae). The myxozoan is normally present on fishes, in nature or on captivity, without cause any problem if there is equilibrium between host and environment. When any kind of stress, handling, poor water quality or crowd, is present to the fish, the parasites take place and several kinds of diseases show up. More intensive studies will be necessary to evaluate the importance of *Henneguya* spp infection in the Pantanal fishes.