

COPROPHAGY IN THE RABBIT, *ORYCTOLAGUS CUNICULUS* (L.), IN TASMANIA*

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Data from 84 rabbits shot on March 24, 1954, at Woodbury, Tas., showed a refection rhythm similar to that described by Myers (1955)‡ for rabbits collected at Gunbower, Vic., during April–May.

The main, and interesting, difference was the persistence of soft pellets in the stomachs of the Tasmanian sample for a considerably longer period after their ingestion had ceased (see Fig. 1).

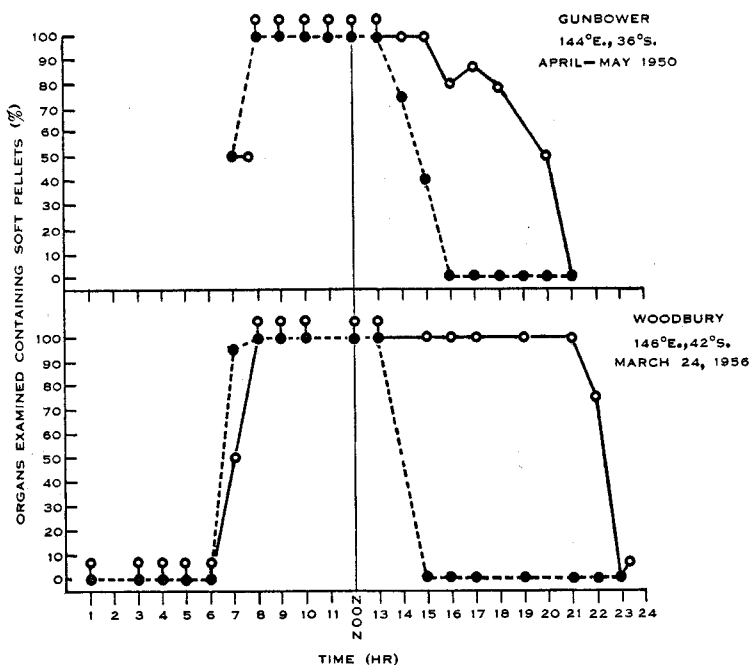


Fig. 1.—Coprophagy in the wild rabbit in autumn ●-----● Soft pellets in rectum (per cent.). ○——○ Soft pellets in stomach (per cent.).

Two factors could be responsible for this difference, namely, the pasture available and the day-length. It is possible that the dry pasture at Woodbury in March meant that the rabbit had to rely more on coprophagy. Also, when the samples were taken, sunset at Woodbury was about $\frac{3}{4}$ hr later than at Gunbower and this would result in a later start to the evening feeding period.

Further, the Woodbury sample was obtained during a single 24-hr period; the Gunbower sample was collected during a period of some weeks.

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‡ MYERS, K. (1955).—Coprophagy in the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) in Australia. *Aust. J. Zool.* 3: 336–45.