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A VERTICAL FOREST WITHIN THE FOREST: MILLENARY TREES FROM THE VALDIVIAN RAINFOREST AS BIODIVERSITY HUBS

Camila F. Tejo and Francisco E. Fontúrbel

Study Description

In this study, we used camera traps to assess the biodiversity of the canopy of elder alerce (*Fitzroya cupressoides*) trees, the second longest-lived tree in the world after *Pinus longaeva*.

Our results show over 10 species of animals (including birds, rodents, marsupials, lizards, spiders, and several non-identifiable insects) that occur at 15 and 20 m above the ground, pointing to deep interactions that we are starting to explore in the upper canopies of Chilean temperate rainforests.

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Photo 1: Emergent old-growth alerce tree at Alerce Costero National Park, southern Chile (picture taken at 20 m of height; photo credit: Camila Tejo.



Photo 2: The living-fossil *Dromiciops gliroides*, the most common species in alerce's canopy. Photo credit: Alejandra Ponce.



Photo 3: Canopy mats of bryophytes and vascular epiphytes covering the main trunk and branches 18 m and above of a large old-growth alerce tree (Valdivian Coastal Reserve, Southern Chile). Photo credit Camila Tejo.



Photo 4: *Dromciops gliroides* is the most important seed disperser of the Valdivian rainforest. Photo credit: Francisco Fontúrbel.

These photographs illustrate the article "A vertical forest within the forest: millenary trees from the Valdivian rainforest as biodiversity hubs" by Camila F. Tejo and Francisco E. Fontúrbel published in *Ecology*. https://doi.org/10.1002/ecy.2584