

Granivory in the Chilean matorral: extending the information on arid zones of South America

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Comparative studies of granivory intensity across different arid and semi-arid regions of the world have assumed homogeneity of conditions over large geographical areas, despite the existence of evident heterogeneities at local and regional scales. For South America, previous evidence from the Monte desert, Argentina, showed that granivory intensity is low compared with other continents and that seed removal rates by taxon (granivore ranking) are in decreasing order: ants > birds = small mammals. In this work, we examined the assumed generality of this pattern for another South American region, the Chilean matorral. We studied the differences between sparse and dense habitats of the matorral in granivory intensity throughout the year. Although total seed removal did not differ between habitats, differences among granivores did occur. Ants were the most important seed removers in both habitats, although they did not differ from birds in the sparse habitat. Further, ants were the most important