

Remnants of sclerophyllous forest in the mediterranean zone of central Chile: Characterization and distribution of fragments

Remanentes del bosque esclerófilo en la zona mediterránea de Chile central: Caracterización y distribución de fragmentos

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© 2018 Interciencia Association. All rights reserved. This study was performed in two regions of central Chile: Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins y del Maule, to locate and characterize the remnants of sclerophyllous forests. This ecosystem has been subject of an intense and prolonged anthropic pressure resulting in notorious cover reduction and fragmentation. Despite its important biodiversity and endemism, these forests are ill represented in the Chilean system of environmental protection. We located the forest patches using satellite imagery and GIS followed by field verification. The patches were classified on the basis of forest structure and physiognomy into three situations: open, semi-dense and dense, and referred them to the municipality within each of the two regions. These municipalities were ordered by the size their forest cover, and a fragmentation analysis was performed in the top 14 units, using landscape indices. Results showed a very fragmented ecosystem, with great vari