

Natural history and conservation of plant-animal mutualisms in the temperate forest of southern South America Historia natural y conservación de los mutualismos planta-animal del bosque templado de Sudamérica austral

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The temperate forest of southern South America (TFSSA) has a highly endemic biota with a flora that exhibits one of the highest incidences of biotic pollination (particularly ornithophily) and animal dispersal (particularly endozoochory) found in any temperate biome worldwide. Much knowledge has been gained in the last few years on the nature of these mutualisms. In this study, we review (1) the group of animals that participate in these relationships and their relative importance, (2) the community structure of these interactions, and (3) their degree of spatial consistency on a geographical scale based on studies conducted in two or more localities at both sides of the Andes. We also compare the plant-animal mutualisms of the TFSSA with those occurring in other biomes. Last, we present evidence showing how deforestation, fragmentation, and other forms of human disturbance are affecting these mutualisms. This work supports the hypothesis that the many plant species pollinated and disp