Origin, Evolution, and Biodiversity of the Neotropical Herpetofauna

Patterns and Processes of the World's Richest and Most Threatened Biota

Reptiles and amphibians (the herpetofauna), occupy a wide range of habitats and niches, making them key organisms to understanding the origins of Neotropical biodiversity. The main contributions of this thesis indicate that geography and environment affect the distribution of reptiles and amphibians in different ways, resulting in distinct patterns of regionalization. Narrowly distributed snake diversity is concentrated in areas of high topographical complexity. In these areas, both anciently and recently diverged snake species co-occur. By describing diversity patterns of the Neotropical herpetofauna, I hope to contribute to the understanding of critical biogeographical patterns and processes underlying the world's richest biota.

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