

Submitted Abstract

ID IMC22-FSAbstr- 829

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Country	Germany
Region	Western Europe
Title	Towards A Tropical Andes Biodiversity Observatory With Essential Biodiversity Variables.
Keywords	Tropical Andes, Monitoring, Essential Biodiversity Variables, Ebv, Latin America
Type	List Of Focus Session
Focus Session ID	48

Abstract

Effective and timely conservation and sustainable development policy relies upon high-quality biodiversity information. However, the capacity to generate, integrate, and deliver biodiversity data is a particular challenge, especially in biodiversity hotspots such as the Tropical Andes. Existing efforts suffer from taxonomic, spatial, and temporal biases, inadequate integration, and often remain within the academic context, limiting their access and relevance to stakeholders and policymakers. One approach is through the establishment of a biodiversity observation network (BON) to not only improve the capacity to detect change, but also inform effective conservation and policy. BONs are built on the Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) framework, which allow for the integration of biodiversity data to rapidly quantify the magnitude of biodiversity change across space and time. Using an EBV approach can help identify existing biases and further prioritize data mobilization and modeling efforts. Here, we engaged local partners to help design a Tropical Andes Observatory and identify key spatial, temporal, and thematic gaps to create EBVs that can advance information that meets user needs in the region. By developing a sustained, user-driven, locally operated, harmonized, and scalable regional BON in the Tropical Andes we can bridge the gap between the scientific communities that produce biodiversity information and the stakeholders that utilize this information.