

Book review

POR, F.D., IMPERATRIZ-FONSECA, V.L. & F. LENCIONI NETO: *Biomes of Brazil: An Illustrated Natural History*. PENSOFT Publishers, Sofia-Moscow. First published: 2005, 207 pp. English and Portuguese, ISBN 954-642-237-1; 39.50 Euro.

Purpose of the book:

The purpose of the book is primarily didactic and popular-science. The amount of information and the way of presenting it to the reader makes it a very valuable textbook for interested laymen, students and scientists. The text is written in English and Portuguese, thus making the information accessible also for Brazilian and other Portuguese and Spanish speaking readers.

Contents:

After an introduction, the book describes in eight chapters the following biomes: Atlantic rain forest, Araucaria forests, Cerrado Savannas, Pantanal of Mato Grosso, Campos Rupestres and Tepuis, Caatingas Dry Forests, Amazonia, and the Mangrove Forests.

The chapters present a general overview of the major aspects of the biomes, such as extension, geography, geology, soil cover, recent climate and paleoclimate, floristic physiognomy, floristic diversity, animals and animal diversity (invertebrates, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals), types of water bodies and the hydrochemical conditions, aquatic flora and fauna therein. Some paragraphs deal with specific driving forces in the different biomes, e.g., fire in the cerrado, floods and droughts in the Pantanal, and tides in the mangrove forests. Several paragraphs are devoted to the use of the different biomes by man. Case studies show the potential and threats of different management methods and efforts of protection.

The book is nicely illustrated. All figures are didactically well conceived drawings and schemes of high artistic value. A short list of selected references provides additional information for the interested reader. The paper, binding and printing quality of this hard-cover book are high. The monograph is an excellent synthesis of knowledge of the eight most important biomes of Brazil and can be recommended to anyone interested in the natural history and ecology of South America in general and of the country in particular.

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