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Endemism Potential of Turkish Forests

Alper UZUN[1], Seyran PALABAŞ UZUN[1], İnci TORAMAN[1]
[1]Department of Forest Botany, Faculty of Forestry, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Kahramanmaraş, Turkey
auzun@ksu.edu.tr

Aim of the study: Endemic species are the names given to species that are unique to a particular region, country, continent, or island. These species are threatened and are facing the risk of extinction in the future. Endemic species can be found on steep rocky slopes, which are difficult to reach, and they can survive even in easily reachable wide spreading areas. In this respect, life strategies of endemic species are also directly related to the living environments. Forests are a type of habitat that shelters a wide variety of endemic life forms.

Material and Methods: There is no comprehensive study of which endemic species are preferred by which habitat types of forest in Turkey. This study will share the statistical data, derived from Turkish flora and other pertinent works with the conservation point of view, of the endemic plant species hosted by the Turkish forests.

Results: As a result of first assessments, 891 endemic plant taxa (24,12%), almost a quarter of total endemics (3693 plant taxa) in Turkey, were found as related to forest habitats. The families that are richest in terms of endemic plant taxonomy are as follows. *Scrophulariaceae* family has the most endemic plant taxa (123 endemics, 13.8%) among 55 plant families (38% of 144 total plant families of Turkey) living in Turkish forests. *Asteraceae* family is in the second rank having 119 endemic plants (13.4%). *Lamiaceae* is in the third rank having 96 endemic plants (10.8%). In the assessment of IUCN threat categories, *Scrophulariaceae* is the only family with the highest number of taxa in three threat categories "EN, VU and LC", while, *Asteraceae* is the leading family with the highest taxa numbers in CR, NT and DD. According to 891 endemic plant taxa in Turkish forests, 53 of which (6%) are in CR, 185 of which (21%) are in EN, 170 of which (19%) are in VU, 213 of which (24%) are in NT, 231 of which (26%) are in LC, 29 of which (3%) are in DD and also the status of 10 plant taxa (1%) are unknown.

Keywords: Forest endemics, plant, endemism, IUCN threat categories, Turkey.