



The Biology of Alpine Habitats (Biology of Habitats Series)

By Laszlo Nagy, Georg Grabberr

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This book is unique in providing a global overview of alpine (high mountain) habitats that occur above the natural (cold-limited) tree line, describing the factors that have shaped them over both ecological and evolutionary timescales. The broad geographic coverage helps synthesize common features whilst revealing differences in the world's major alpine systems from the Arctic to the Tropics. The words "barren" and "wasteland" have often been applied to describe landscapes beyond the tree line. However, a closer look reveals a large diversity of habitats, assemblages and individual taxa in the alpine zone, largely connected to topographic diversity within individual alpine regions.

The book considers habitat-forming factors (landforms, energy and climate, hydrology, soils, and vegetation) individually, as well as their composite impacts on habitat characteristics. Evolution and population processes are examined in the context of the responsiveness/resilience of alpine habitats to global change. Finally, a critical assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, atmospheric pollutants and land use is made and related to the management and conservation options available for these unique habitats.

Interest in mountains continues to grow as their resource importance is increasingly recognized. This accessible text is suitable for both senior undergraduate and graduate students taking courses in ecology and environmental sciences as well as the many professional ecologists and conservation biologists requiring a concise, authoritative overview of the topic.

Each of the books in the Oxford *Biology of Habitats Series* introduces a different habitat, and gives an integrated overview of the design, physiology, ecology, and behaviour of the organisms found there. The practical aspects of working within each habitat, the sorts of studies that are possible, and habitat biodiversity and conservation status are all explored.

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Editorial Review

Review

"[The book's] strength lies in how it synthesizes the major driving variables, which include elevation gradients, energy and climate, landforms, and hydrology and soils, while also examining the responses of community types and assemblages, including their biogeography, adaptation, and evolution. The paperback will appeal to students interested in or taking courses involving alpine habitats as well as to professionals looking for an introduction to this environment."--*Bioscience*

"The Biology of Alpine Habitats is unique in providing a global overview of alpine habitats, describing the factors that have shaped these habitats over both ecological and evolutionary time scales."--*Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research*

"A very attractive work with many clear line drawings, tables, and photographs. Its supporting materials are impressive: almost 45 pages of references to basic research contributions, a good table of contents, and a fine index. In all, a volume that this reviewer will consult and suggest to others."--*Choice*

About the Author

Laszlo Nagy obtained his first degree in Hungary before moving to the University of Stirling, Scotland, where he obtained his Ph.D. and went on to work as a Post-doctoral research fellow. He is currently an independent researcher at EcoScience Scotland and is affiliated with the Department of Conservation Biology, University of Vienna. He is editor of *Plant Ecology and Diversity*, the journal of the Botanical Society of Scotland.

Georg Grabherr studied at the University of Innsbruck where he stayed on to become assistant professor. In 1986 he moved to the University of Vienna as a Professor of Vegetation Ecology and Conservation Biology. He has over 150 publications and sits on numerous Advisory Boards and Committees.

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