



## Book review

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# Book review



STUDER, A., L. NUSBAUMER & R. SPICHIGER (ed.) (2018). *Biodiversité de la Réserve Biologique de Pedra Talhada, Alagoas, Pernambuco – Brésil*. Nordesta & Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques, Genève, 826 pp. ISBN 978-2-8399-2310-1

About 74 researchers closely collaborating with more than 200 colleagues have successfully achieved a thorough inventory of the Pedra Talhada Biological Reserve, an extensive area located in the biogeographically interesting Brazilian *Nordeste* and partially occupying the states of Alagoas and Pernambuco. Pioneering ornithology research dating back to 1980 already highlighted the importance to protect this natural region, in the past subject to heavy human-induced destruction. At that time the Nordesta Association led by the restless efforts of Anita Studer put all necessary forces to undertake the complex legal procedure towards the proposal of a Biological Reserve. By 1989 the 4500 hectares were officially declared as such and the protection of the area is now somehow guaranteed for future generations, as long as private and government funding further support the current conservation strategies.

This book describes in an exemplary manner the Natural History of the Pedra Talhada Biological Reserve and joins from now on the most important contributions published on Neotropical ecology. It is composed by an introductory chapter on the representative natural ecosystems in Brazil and an in-depth description of the main abiotic factors shaping the unique biodiversity of the Biological Reserve. The main body of the book, extremely richly illustrated, comprises 25 chapters describing in detail the different living organisms identified in the reserve, the largest dedicated to the plants. A team of 8 botanists aimed to undertake a thorough floristic inventory of the area and the result is a solid compilation of floristic data and high quality pictures of a large majority of the plants gathered in the field and for which herbarium specimens are now stored in Brazilian and International repositories.

With more than 32,000 species of Angiosperms Brazil ranks among the most biodiversity countries on earth. The Brazilian Flora 2020 project has joined efforts of researchers from Brazil and all other the world in order to meet the main goals of the Global Strategy of Plant Conservation [GSPC], among others a proper understanding of plant diversity, so that it can be effectively conserved and used in a sustainable manner. The Pedra Talhada Biological Reserve host more than 2100 species, 850 of them classified in different plant groups; however, the inventory is far to be completely achieved as many plant specimens have been only identified as morpho-species and new fertile specimens are required for an accurate identification. The plant inventories proposed in this book successfully contribute to the wide scope of the Brazilian Flora 2020 project, whereas the holistic approach including all abiotic factors and different living organisms provides a powerful contribution towards our understanding of Neotropical ecology.

This book can without any doubt be identified as a major contribution to the knowledge of the Natural History of the Brazilian *Nordeste* and therefore called to become an important source of inspiration for other management plans of preserved areas in the country. The present French contribution represents a slightly reviewed and expanded version of the original Portuguese one published in *Boissieria* 68 (2015).

*Biodiversité de la Réserve Biologique de Pedra Talhada* represents a must for every naturalist directly or indirectly working in the Neotropics.

**Fred Stauffer**

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