

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF THE LOCALLY THREATENED ANDEAN HAIRY ARMADILLO (CHAETOPHRACTUS VELLEROSUS)

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RESUMO

The indigenous people of the high Andes of Chile consider the locally threatened Andean hairy armadillo (*Chaetophractus vellerosus*) a sacred species. Due to the ecosystem services it provides, the species plays a key role in this harsh environment and therefore needs to be protected. Our main objective was to learn about the knowledge and use of the Andean hairy armadillo throughout indigenous communities. We interviewed a total of 58 people, 43 corresponding to the Aymara community (74.14%) and 15 to Quechuas (25.86%) in a six days period. Our results suggest that the species is primarily used in cultural rituals. Also, people are familiar with their cultural use but not with their role within the ecosystem. The level of education displayed amongst those interviewed, showed significant statistical value ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) in regards to the knowledge of the species, meaning, higher level of education corresponded to a higher knowledge. Education efforts and an interdisciplinary approach in high Andean communities should be increased in order to achieve effective conservation actions.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Armadillo, *Chaetophractus vellerosus*, Chile, Indigenous knowledge

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