

Dr Tatiana Boza Espinoza

Institute for Nature, Earth, and Energy (INTE), Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

Online seminar
May 19th, 3pm CET (Paris Time)

LIA FORESTIA 2023

High Andean Forests: challenges and opportunities

High Andean forests are biodiversity hotspots that play an important role in the provisioning of vital ecosystem services such as regulation of the water cycle, formation and conservation of soils, support of biodiversity, among others. *Polylepis* is the dominant genus in the high Andean forest vegetation and they have a crucial ecological role. *Polylepis* forests harbor unique biodiversity, including several highly specialized, often range-restricted and threatened bird species. However, these forests are highly endangered by climate change, habitat fragmentation and anthropogenic disturbances, and many of their biological aspects are still unknown. It has been estimated that over 90% of *Polylepis* forests have already been lost in Peru and Bolivia. The high Andes are expected to undergo severe changes in the coming decades because of on-going land-use change and climatic change likely threatening *Polylepis* forests even more. *Polylepis* forests have a low ability to colonize dense grasslands and low seed dispersal ability, severely limiting the ability of the forest to spread and to track climatic conditions. As a result of all the above, *Polylepis* forests have been listed as one of the most endangered woodlands ecosystems in the world and the conservation of the remaining forests stands has given high priority. Taking a critical look at the limitations of current knowledge of the biological aspects of *Polylepis* forests and proposing a research agenda to fill the knowledge gaps will help to the conservation action of these forests.



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Tatiana Boza Espinoza is a research associate at the Ecosystem Science Lab from the Institute for Nature, Earth, and Energy (INTE), Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP). She is part of the Team for the *Polylepis* Forest Conservation Plan development within the Acción Andina initiative led by ECOAN. She is a member of the National Commission for Biological Diversity - Ministry of the Environment.

She studies the ecology of the *Polylepis* high Andean forests and has published the Monograph of the genus *Polylepis* in which 11 new species were found. The wide scope of her research achievements can be summarized as an ecosystem scientist and botanist, who tries to understand the functioning and interactions of ecosystems, especially in the tropics and with a fascination for high Andean forests.



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