Protection Of The Atlantic Forest

Atlantic forest

Atlantic Forest South-East Reserves with its rich biodiversity is selected as a world heritage site according to the UNESCO list of historically important sites. This protected area is biologically wealth with rare species and many biomes are considered threatened. Although a lot of species faced extinction due to a natural process, the human effect has increased it and is considered a real threat. Thus, it has been selected as a world heritage site to be legally protected. In this essay, I will discuss the Atlantic Forest heritage importance and explain its characteristics.

Atlantic Forest South-East Reserves is located in the Brazilian state of Paraná and São Paulo. It is largely known for having the rarest and unique biomes in a large area, which lead it to be the richest rainforest in terms of biodiversity and an endangered habitus as well. The protected area is extremely rich and varied even though more than half of the original area has been deforested. This region doesn't only have rare species, but it is considered as a tourism site for its beautiful nature such as waterfalls, mountains, and the varied trees and plants.

"The site is part of the Serra do Mar domain and extends across the adjacent coastal plain, which includes the estuarine complex of Iguape-Cananéia-Paranaguá". Importantly, the region is divided into three different sites. The first is named as Criterion (vii), which represents the area connected with the coastal ecosystem. This land varies from mountain forest to coastal islands. This rich site has marvelous beauty with more than 300 caves while having the highest at 215 meters high. Along with the covered area of mangroves and marine biodiversity.

Next part is the historically isolated Criterion (ix). This site has developed into a complex biome which includes about 39% of mammals, 85% of primates and 70% of tree species. This site specifically, is an example of a sustainable region for its biomes, marines and coastal ecosystem. Lastly, is the recognizably rich and diverse Criterion (x). This place is one of the most diverse places in the world as the visitor can see more than 450 species per hectare. Its biodiversity contains 120 mammal species to be the largest in Brazil, and many other species such as jaguar, ocelot and the bush dog, primates and the endangered woolly spider monkey.

The climate of the region differs noticeably between the seasons. It usually has a humid sub-tropical oceanic climate impacted by the warm trade winds of the south Atlantic and cold winds from the Patagonian anti-cyclone. The average temperatures range from 40 to 12 Celsius. As known, the precipitation increases on the higher altitudes such as the mountains, while the average precipitation is usually around 1,400-1.500mm. And lastly, the relative humidity averages between 80 and 85%.

The Atlantic forest is one of the richest forests for tree species as it has more than 20,000 species of plants. However, it contains the most number of endangered species in the world. Moreover, due to the poor soils, steep slopes and extreme humidity the region does have the remaining spread of coastal rainforest. On the other hand, the major vegetation types are "tall montane and lower mountain Atlantic rainforest, four-layer vegetation with emergent trees 30m high". Also, "Emergent and canopy layers are rich in trees of the Leguminosae, Sapotaceae,

and Lauraceae, and in epiphytes, lianas, bromeliads, and terrestrial orchids”.

According to IUCN, there is a huge concern over the conservation status of the site. Even though there was an establishment of protected areas, there is still some illegal actions taken. Another disturbing reason is human actions such as ranching, agriculture, infrastructure development, plantation forestry, and mining. Knowing how the forest gives shelter to many species, it is very likely to cause severe damages in the near future if nothing changes to the remaining biomes.