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THE INSELBERGS IMPORTANCE IN THE CAATINGA FOR THE BIRDS OF PREY CONSERVATION IN PETROLINA, PE

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Birds of prey are one of the main groups of species that indicate environmental quality and are among the most endangered species. The inselbergs are features of residual relief that have weathered the processes of weathering and typical of the semi-arid. The objective of the research was to verify the occurrence of birds of prey species in areas of inselbergs in the Petrolina Caatinga. Twenty points of inselbergs were visited from September 2016 to March 2017. The birds of prey considered here are those belonging to the orders Cathartiformes, Falconiformes and Strigiformes. In Petrolina there were 17 species of birds of prey, of which, 14 were recorded in the areas of the inselbergs. This species richness corresponds to 35% of the birds of prey registered in the entire Caatinga biome. The species with the highest frequency of occurrence was *Coragyps atratus*, followed by *Cathartes aura* and *Rupornis magnirostris*. An important record for the region is that of *Sarcoramphus papa*, present in the list of endangered species of IUCN (2016), within the category "least concern", however it is a species with restricted ecological requirements and its presence indicates a certain conservation level. As *S. papa*, *Geranospiza caerulescens*, *Geranoaetus melanoleucus* and *Buteo albonotatus* are considered with medium sensitivity to habitat alteration. Also, environmental quality indicator species are suggested to monitor the impact of agrochemical: *Falco femoralis* and *Glaucidium brasilianum*. The presence of these species in the Inselbergs reinforces their importance as refuges for biodiversity. Monitoring and knowledge of the ecological requirements of birds of prey are fundamental, since the conservation of these species entails the maintenance of the whole ecosystem. In addition, Caatinga has undergone intense degradation and more recently the installation of wind farms has taken place, which can impact the conservation of this guild.

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