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REVIEW

Amazonia Through Time: Andean Uplift, Climate Change, Landscape Evolution, and Biodiversity

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The Amazonian rainforest is arguably the most species-rich terrestrial ecosystem in the world, yet the timing of the origin and evolutionary causes of this diversity are a matter of debate. We review the geologic and phylogenetic evidence from Amazonia and compare it with uplift records from the Andes. This uplift and its effect on regional climate fundamentally changed the Amazonian landscape by reconfiguring drainage patterns and creating a vast influx of sediments into the basin. On this "Andean" substrate, a region-wide edaphic mosaic developed that became extremely rich in species, particularly in Western Amazonia. We show that Andean uplift was crucial for the evolution of Amazonian landscapes and ecosystems, and that current biodiversity patterns are rooted deep in the pre-Quaternary.

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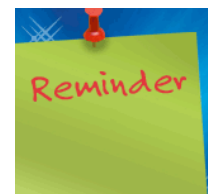
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