
The diversity of general laws in ecology and evolution and why it matters

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Résumé

There have been many debates about the existence and nature of general laws in ecology and evolution. Variability, diversity of mechanisms and contingency would preclude the existence of general laws. Contrary to this common view, we argue that in ecology and evolution, exists a rich diversity of laws, but that this richness has been underestimated because of the misconception that general laws should be exceptionless and make precise quantitative predictions. We therefore propose that in ecology and evolution there is a gradient between highly general laws and less general laws.

Mots-Clés: history of ecology, epistemology, laws

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