

Zhaohua Li

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Diversity and Ecology of Mountain Bamboos in the Shennongjia National Nature Reserve of Central China: Implications for Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation

The giant panda, a highly endangered species, depends on bamboo for its food. The diversity and ecology of many bamboo species, however, are not well understood. The study, conducted in a historical habitat of the giant panda in Central China, investigates species diversity, vegetative growth, and flowering habit of the mountain bamboos in a nature reserve where the Chinese government proposes to reintroduce the panda. The findings show that the preferred forage bamboos in this reserve could feed an effective panda population. However, given the widespread dieback of the forage bamboo species following simultaneous flowering, reintroducing the giant panda to this isolated reserve is not without risks.