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Forests , steppes and grasslands in Morocco : diversity , ecological importance and socio-economic role

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Key words : Morocco , flora , forest , steppes , grasslands , diversity .

Abstract Forests , steppes and grassland in Morocco : Diversity , ecological importance and socio-economic role . With its geographical situation (crossroads between Europe and Africa , Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean) , with the diversity of its climate and habitats , Morocco shelters a particularly varied natural vegetation by its structure and aspect , as well as by the diversity of the species . The floristic richness of the country is related to the biotopes heterogeneity . From the desert to the high mountains and the littoral to the most continental borders , Morocco offers very varied ecological conditions which allowed installation of various stocks species .

The main vegetal formations are forests , matorrals , steppes , lawns and grasslands . Forests cover approximately 5 million hectares , followed by steppes of *Stipa tenacissima* , with nearly 3 millions hectares .



Forest



Steppe



Grassland

Moroccan vascular flora counts about 4 500 species and subspecies distributed among 930 genera and 130 families . Rare , threatened and/or endemic flora represents a significant part : 951 are endemics , 463 rares , 1284 threatened and 36 vulnerable .

Biogeographic analysis shows that the Moroccan flora is mainly mediterranean , enriched by taxa from the North (holarctic elements) , the South (tropical or Saharan elements) , the East (irano-touranian elements) or the West (macaronesian elements) .