

desmid millipedes perhaps function in mesic parts of the the CAZ. Crickets may also be minor detritivores in the two regions.

Tenebrionid beetles are the most conspicuous shared element among the detritivore faunas of the CAZ and the Namib, despite their separate evolution on the continents concerned. Tenebrionids remain significant members of the worldwide community of desert detritivores (Crawford 1981).

To summarize the essential points in this paper, we find that plant litter in the comparatively young CAZ, which is bounded on the east by the Andes and on the north by additional desert, is mainly consumed by microarthropods and tenebrionid beetles, and in places by earthworms as well. In contrast, detritus in the much older Namib, with its lower eastern escarpment and more mesic northern border, is mainly processed by termites and ants, and also by tenebrionids. These are the broad patterns we presently discern among detritivores in the Chilean Arid Zone and the Namib Desert.

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