**LICHEN DIVERSITY IN THE GRAN CHACO ARGENTINO: A PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW**

Andrea Michlig1,2,3\*; Ma. Pía Rodríguez2,3; Nicolás Niveiro1,2,3; Viviana Solís Neffa1,2,3; Lidia Ferraro2

1 Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales y Agrimensura, UNNE, Argentina; 2 Instituto de Botánica del Nordeste, Argentina; 3 Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas, Argentina; \*E-mail: andrea.michlig@yahoo.com

The Gran Chaco Americano constitutes an extensive plain of exceptional biodiversity, which covers more than 1.000.000 km2 along tropical and subtropical regions of Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, and a small area of Brazil. The 60% of its surface is located within Argentinean territory and constitutes the Gran Chaco Argentino (GCA), which is the main wooded area of the country. Across its extension, a large diversity of natural landscapes can be observed, varying from grasslands, wetlands, savannahs, and rivers, with a large extension of forests and shrublands. It is considered one of the three ecoregions with the highest biodiversity of Argentina, together with the “Selva Paranaense” and “Yungas”. The GCA is currently in need of urgent conservation actions as it is considered among the most threatened ecosystems in the world. In spite of this, knowledge of its biodiversity, including lichens, is still limited. Throughout the history of lichenology in Argentina, extensive areas within GCA were poorly studied, being information available scarce and disperse, thus making difficult to consider these organisms when delineating conservation strategies. This research aims to contribute to the knowledge of lichens diversity of the GCA, gathering all information available about foliose, fruticulose, and squamulose lichens recorded so far in this ecoregion as a starting point for future studies tending to implement conservation strategies. For this, an extensive bibliography review was made, consulting about 50 articles published since 1970. As a result, a database with all records for the GCA was generated, which includes approximately 1600 records of about 260 species, 27 genera, and 17 families, being Parmeliaceae the most studied family in the region with almost half of species recorded so far.