

7<sup>th</sup> European Dry Grassland Meeting

# *Succession, management and restoration of dry grasslands*

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while mosses and lichens were treated as groups. The total number of tussocks of the target species *Koeleria glauca* was counted. Beetles were sampled using pit-fall traps, counted and classified at species level. We showed that deep perturbation was successful in restoring the low nutrient levels and a high pH. Six red-listed beetle species associated with open, dry grasslands were found. Apart from the occurrence of the threatened species *Koeleria glauca*, the vegetation has yet to show significant response to the treatment. Seeding could be a suitable method of increasing the rate of succession, the alternative being to wait many years or even decades for the establishment of desirable flora.

## Plant traits adapted in species rich grasslands

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Due to combination of many environmental factors, species rich grasslands originated in many places throughout the Europe but some of them are outstandingly species rich. The White Carpathian grasslands from the alliance of *Cirsio-Brachypodium* may serve as an example. They host nearly 130 species in a plot size of 100 m<sup>2</sup> and surpass species richness of similar grasslands in adjacent Moravian area about 40-60 species. Their species composition is adapted to ecological conditions with embodied special combination of plant traits. How do the plant traits differ in variously species rich grasslands remains unknown. Our comparison brought differences in proportion of some traits. Species richer grasslands show higher proportion of species reproducing both vegetatively and by seeds, lower proportion of species with c-life strategy and pollination by wind.

## Conservation of the most valuable steppe territories of the Crimea (Ukraine)

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In Ukraine a row of quite big steppe territories have remained. A big part of them has a place in borders of the Crimea. However, in present the Crimea is the region with highly developed agriculture and, at the same time, it's a very important recreation centre. In view of it the biggest and the most valuable steppe plots have

remained in the remotest and the driest Crimean corners, in particular, at the east – Kerch Peninsula and at the west – Tarkhankut Peninsula.

Located at north of Kerch Peninsula Karalara and Osovyny steppe massifs (with a general area of more than 11 000 hectares) represents one of the biggest enclaves of entire feather-grass steppe in Europe. Here populations of dozens of species of rare flora and fauna have preserved. A considerable constituent of these steppes is breeding areas of the rare steppe birds (e.g. here last breeding areas of the little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) in Ukraine are present).

Not disturbed and disturbed in different level steppe complexes of Tarkhankut Peninsula (with a total area up to 20 000 hectares) have a high value as well. Here there are big fragments of feather-grass steppes (up to 10 % of the Tarkhankut Peninsula area), petrophilic steppes and unique flora of eroded coastal rocks. As well this territory is a site of growing of a row of endemic plant species.

Conservation of the biodiversity of both territories requires firstly giving them a status of reserved territories with a “strong” status to prevent their recreation building up. Taking into account that in current conditions to agree a creation of natural reserves here (that would be optimal) is not possible, then a creation of national parks is the only exit. Under pressure of community part of steppe territories of Tarkhankut Peninsula has been received status of National Park (area 10 900 hectares). And at the part of the territory of Karalara steppe a Regional Landscape Park was created (area 6 806 hectares). Despite to undoubted positivity of these facts it's necessary to mark that practical functioning and, that is the most important, practical realization of biodiversity protection in these parks will depend on their territory arrangement. Specifically, a basis for conservation of flora and fauna of these steppe complexes may compile only determination of the biggest part of their areas as completely reserved zones; e.g. that will mean a complete silence during season of bird breeding; and a reduction of recreational pressure. The other important aspect is necessity of their expanding with including adjacent a little destroyed and capable to restore steppe biotopes, and in case with Karalara steppe – increasing of the status up to National Park. Realization of these measures in present depends not only on efforts of Ukrainian nature conservation society but on the support of the world community.