

Asian Grassland Conference (AGC)

Virtual Conference, 22–24 February 2022

First Call

<https://edgg.org/AGC>

As the largest continent of the world, Asia offers great opportunities for researchers with its vast grasslands, diverse and unique environmental conditions, rich biodiversity, and varied ecological and evolutionary processes, some of which are not observed elsewhere. Simultaneously, it poses great challenges for nature conservation and sustainable livelihoods due to climatic and land use changes. Since 2008, the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG), with more than 1300 members from over 60 countries, has aimed to strengthen the exchange of scientific information and collaboration on Palaearctic grasslands in general, including the organisation of annual [Eurasian Grassland Conferences](#) (EGCs). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no EGC could be conducted in 2020 or 2021 as a live event. Therefore, we have seized the opportunity to organise an international online event specifically devoted to the grasslands of Asia. We invite researchers from all over the world to the very first Asian Grassland Conference to present or listen to studies on the flora, fauna, biodiversity, ecology, management and conservation of these precious habitats.

The conference will take place during three-half days on an online platform from 22nd to 24th February 2022. We will ensure a broad level of regional representation in the event, highlighting research from less well-known parts of the continent. Besides keynote talks, regular oral presentations and speed-talks with posters, we will offer networking events, workshops and happy hours. In conjunction with the conference, we also plan to produce Special Features in a number of international peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Participation in the Asian Grassland Conference is **free of charge**. In autumn 2021, we will launch the online registration on the conference website. Further details will be announced in forthcoming issues of [Palaearctic Grasslands](#), via the EDGG mailing list as well as on the conference website (<https://edgg.org/AGC>).

If you don't want to miss out anything, you can pre-register your interest via e-mail to edgg.agc@gmail.com.

We hope to meet many researchers interested in grassland research and conservation in Asia! Colleagues from other continents are, of course, very welcome to join us.



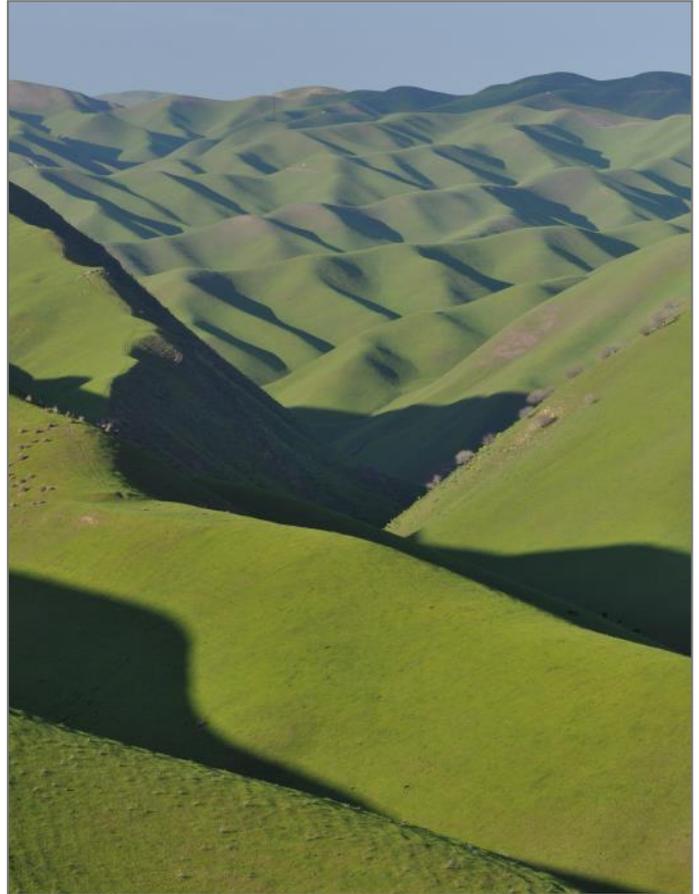
Przewalski's horses (*Equus przewalskii*) in a typical steppe in the Orenburg SNR, Russia. Photo: I. Smelansky.

Topic and sessions

We intend to cover any aspect of research and conservation in Asian natural and semi-natural grasslands. Below you can find a preliminary session list with short explanations. Presentations on other subjects of grassland research are also welcome.

1. **Biodiversity of grasslands:** patterns and drivers of a wide range of biodiversity facets
2. **Ecology and taxonomy of plant and fungi species in grasslands:** studies with a focus on individual species
3. **Ecology and taxonomy of grassland vertebrate species:** studies with a focus on individual species, including wildlife management
4. **Ecology and taxonomy of grassland invertebrate species:** studies with a focus on individual species
5. **Grassland ecosystems under global change,** including climate change, land use change, habitat destruction, biotic invasions and eutrophication
6. **Functional ecology of grasslands**
7. **Grassland conservation, management and restoration**
8. **Vegetation and habitat classification of grasslands,** at any level and with any approach
9. **Remote sensing, mapping and modelling of grasslands**
10. **Livelihoods and sustainability of pastoral communities,** including payment schemes for conservation

Full details on the sessions will be provided in the Second Call.



Pseudosteppes of the *Cryptosporo falcatae*-*Brachypodium distachyi* in Kulab district, Tajikistan. Photo: A. Nowak.



Nemoptera sinuata in Armenia. Photo: J. Dengler.

Keynotes

AGC will offer three keynote presentations, which will provide comprehensive, enlightening and inspiring information on grasslands. At the beginning of each day, a distinguished scientist will present a keynote talk. We are pleased to welcome three brilliant scientists presenting on vegetation ecology, wildlife ecology and global change.



Prof. Norbert Hölzel, Institute of Landscape Ecology, University of Münster, Münster, Germany

Prof. Hölzel's research interests in grassland ecology spans restoration, landscape ecology, land use, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning interactions, vegetation patterns, ecology of rare and endangered species, seed ecology and

the effects of global change on landscapes, habitats and species. He led or worked in several projects in Eurasia. His research group works intensively on a large-scale, long-running project in Asia: land-use change and landscape dynamics in Western Siberia and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, he is a leading scientist in a long-term biodiversity research and monitoring project in Germany, the Biodiversity Exploratories. He is a member of the editorial board of several scientific journals and scientific organizations. His talk will focus on the impact of Post-Soviet land-use change on Central Asian steppe ecosystems.

[Profile University of Münster](#)
[Google Scholar](#)
[ResearchGate](#)



Prof. Shuli Niu, Institute of Geography and Natural Resources, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

Dr. Shuli Niu's research focuses on ecosystem carbon and nitrogen cycles and their coupling in response to global change. By setting up global change manipulative experiments in grasslands, her group has

comprehensively studied biodiversity, community structure, and ecosystem functions in response to multiple global change factors. She has (co-) authored over 160 scientific articles that have been cited over 8500 times (data from Google Scholar). She is also in the chair board of AsiaFlux and serves as associate editor for the journals *Ecology Letters*, *Functional Ecology*, and *Journal of Geophysical Research-Biogeosciences*. Her keynote talk will be about the response of alpine grasslands to global change gradient.

[Profile IGSNRR](#)
[Google Scholar](#)
[ResearchGate](#)



Prof. Jiang Zhigang, Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

Prof. Jiang's research focuses on the endangered species of wild fauna, particularly the ecology, diversity, behavior and conservation of mammals. He has authored more than 300 scientific publications and 20 books on those subjects, including: *Principles of Conservation Biology*, *Field Methods for Nature Conservation*, *Principles of Animal Behavior*, *Methods of Species Conservation* and *Mammalian Diversity and Geographic Distribution* in China. He is affiliated with commissions and institutes working on red lists, wildlife and endangered species conservation and national parks.

His keynote talk will focus on the wild ungulates of the grasslands in China, their status and conservation. China is the country with the most diverse ungulate species in the world (71 species, 21% endemic), of which, more than one third (25 species) inhabit various grassland habitats. Moreover, several are endangered and flagship species. He will explore the diversity, distribution and conservation of wild ungulates and ask the question of how to achieve conservation goals on grasslands which are increasingly used for production purposes.

[Profile IOZ](#)
[Google Scholar](#)
[ResearchGate](#)



Research camp in Ladakh, Himalaya. Photo: J. Dolezal.

Side events

Apart from scientific presentations, the AGC will provide plenty of space for side events that facilitate individual exchange and networking. Below, you can find short descriptions of events already planned. Full details will be provided in the Second Call. If you would like to organise a specific side event at the AGC, please contact with the Organising Committee (see below).

During the registration, you will be able to register for these (optional) side events. This information will enable us to plan a schedule that minimizes clashes regarding the interests of registered participants. We reserve the right to cancel side-events that do not raise an adequate level of interest.

- **Happy Hour:** At the end of the daily sessions, the participants are invited to join a happy hour where they can interact with other participants freely and talk. For this purpose, we will offer a virtual event space where people can meet and talk. Guests will be able to find and talk to the persons they would like to contact or join to conversations in small groups.
- **Introducing the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG):** For newcomers we will present our organisation with its multitude of activities, such as the Eurasian Grassland Conferences, the EDGG Field Workshops (research expeditions), our diamond open access journal *Palaeartic Grasslands*, our Special Features and edited books, our vegetation-plot database GrassPlot, our website and our online tool GrassPlot Diversity Explorer. This will provide a good opportunity to get into contact with the EDGG Chairs.
- **Meet the Editors:** This interactive event aims to bring participants and editors of journals together. The participants can ask their questions about all stages of publishing a scientific article, such as submission, evaluation criteria, language issues, or how to reply to reviewers. The participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the “kitchen” of publishing. On the podium there will be several experienced editors from a wide range of international journals:
 - ◆ Jürgen Dengler (Chief Editor of *Vegetation Classification and Survey*, Guest Editor of *Journal of Vegetation Science* and *Tuexenia*, Editorial Board of *Applied Vegetation Science*)
 - ◆ Péter Török (Editor of *Restoration Ecology*, *Applied Vegetation Science*, *Flora* and *Land Degradation & Development*)
 - ◆ Orsolya Valkó (Editor of *Biological Conservation*, speciality chief editor of *Frontiers of Ecology and Evolution*, Guest Editor of *Hacquetia*)
 - ◆ Jianshuang Wu (Editor of *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution* and *Frontiers in Environmental Science*)
- **Initiation of IAVS Regional Section(s) for Asia:** EDGG is an official Working Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS; www.iavs.org). While IAVS has several well-organised Regional Sections or Working Groups for Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Africa, vegetation ecologists in the largest of all continents are currently not formally organised across borders. We will discuss whether there is sense/need to establish a network for Asian vegetation ecologists within IAVS, whether one or several Regional

Sections would make sense, what could be aims of such Regional Sections and who would like to be active within these. We intend to invite also selected vegetation ecologists from Asian countries specialised in forests, wetlands, alpine, segetal and urban habitats.

- **Workshop on the long term monitoring of grassland ecosystems:** The aim of this workshop is to exchange information and ideas to generate a multi-purpose regional time-series database of Asian grasslands. The participants will exchange information and ideas on identification of (i) a common goal, objectives and strategy for a standard monitoring across Asia, (ii) a network of important grasslands across the continent, (iii) previously studied grasslands that can be directly used for further monitoring, (iv) establishing a baseline towards standard guidelines and protocols for collecting baseline data for grassland monitoring in Asia.
- **Workshop on the vegetation typologies in Asia and their crosswalks to/overlaps with phytosociological syntaxa:** The aim of this workshop is to better understand vegetation typologies of Asia from a global point-of-view. Specifically, we would like to harmonize Asian typologies with that of [GrassPlot](#), an EDGG-associated database of multi-scale vegetation-plot data of Palaearctic grasslands and other open habitats. All the vegetation plots incorporated in the GrassPlot database are assigned to a vegetation typology, which include 22 vegetation types grouped into six coarse units (see [Appendix S2 in Biurrun et al. 2021](#)). While this two-level classification, along with its syntaxonomic crosswalk, is reasonably tested for Europe, many "grey" and undefined zones remain for the Asian continent, both on the side of the GrassPlot classification and on the side of the syntaxonomic classification. Any contribution about the phytosociological classification of grasslands and other open habitats from any part of the Asian continent, as well as any critical review of the so far applied GrassPlot typological classification are highly welcome to this workshop. If successful, a publication could arise from such a workshop.



Historical heritage near Altyn Dala (Golden Steppe). Kostanay region, Kazakhstan. Photo: T.M. Bragina.

- **Young Investigator Competition:** The aim is to award young scientists for an excellent presentation of their research. Young scientists (less than 30 years old) will be asked during registration if they wish to participate in the contest. During her/his presentation, the applicant needs to explain clearly her/his contribution to the presented work.
- **Asian Grassland Photo and Video Competition:** This event aims to present the beauty and diversity of grasslands in Asia, where scientists can challenge each other with photographic and video contributions. A jury will select the best contributions, which will be presented in the concluding session of the AGC, on the EDGG website and in the subsequent issue of *Palaearctic Grasslands*.
- **Notice board:** We are planning to set up a notice board where participants can share their announcements (including job posts, events etc.) with all participants. All announcements will be collected in advance after the Second Call.



Subtropical grassland on Jeju island, South Korea. Photo: J. Dengler.

Special Features

EDGG regularly publishes Special Features (SF) in international journals on topics related to ecology, biodiversity, classification, conservation and management of Palearctic grasslands. Publishing in EDGG Special Features typically comes with significant visibility and therefore our Special Feature articles on average receive more citations than “normal” articles in the respective journal. Therefore, we are planning to organize three SFs to give the participants the opportunity to make their research more visible in a topical SF. Depending on the subject and quality of their presentation, participants will be able to choose from three SFs in international, peer-reviewed journals :

- High-level journal (*Biodiversity and Conservation* under consideration) (Chair of Guest Editors: Didem Ambarlı): For the outstanding contributions of the AGC.
- *Hacquetia* (approved; Chair of Guest Editors: Orsolya Valkó): For good contributions that are not outstanding enough for a leading international journal.
- *Vegetation Classification and Survey* (approved; Guest Editors: Jürgen Dengler & Arkadiusz Nowak): For any paper that deals with the development or application of a classification system of Asian grasslands.

Registration and costs

The registration and abstract submission will be launched in autumn 2021 with the Second Call. The registration and all side events will be free of charge to ensure maximum participation without financial barriers. Participants can pre-register by sending their name, e-mail address and affiliation to edgg.agc@gmail.com. We will save the contact information and contact you via an e-mail once the registration is open.



Chukar Partridge (*Alectoris chukar*) on snow, Turkey. Photo: D. Ambarlı.



Sub-alpine scrubland in Central Nepal. Photo: K. Prasad Bhatta.



Littledalea alaicae-Stipetum trichoidis in the Allay valley, Kyrgyzstan. Photo A. Nowak.

Scientific Committee

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Tatyana M. Bragina, Kostanay Regional University named after A. Baitursynov, Kazakhstan

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Organizing Committee

For any questions, suggestions and requests, please contact the Organizing Committee:

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Turgay Steppe, Kazakhstan. Photo: B. Deák.