

Photo Story

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Summer field work in the Pyrenean valleys of Navarra (Western Pyrenees)

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During the summer of 2019 a field study was carried out in the Pyrenean valleys of Navarra, with the aim to characterize the High Nature Value (HNV) system of this area. The final objective was to select some specific indicators enabling qualitative monitoring of this HNV system. To achieve this, 30 farms of the area were randomly selected from amongst all the farms that have at least one plot that met specific criteria. The aim was to relate the nature value of each plot with the characteristics of the plot (slope, size, crop, geographic location, planting pattern...), and the nature value of the whole farm with its characteristics (socioeconomic characteristics, size, number of different crops, management, use of inputs...). The nature value of each plot was defined using a specific scoring sheet. More than 130 fields were visited in total. A transect was set up across each field in order to identify characteristic species of well conserved hay-meadows. The natural elements (edges, trees, ponds...) and human elements (stone walls, stone buildings) were also evaluated. Finally, impacts and

bad practices were measured, resulting in negative points in the evaluation of each field. 144 fields were scored, spending between 1 and 2 hours in each field.

Some hay meadows are particularly rich in species. These are usually far from railways, and quite far from the villages. In these fields biodiversity elements have been kept in the field (pollard trees), but also human traditional structures can be seen (stone walls).

Some hay meadows, particularly in the transition to dry grasslands or when small rocky patches are included in the field, are particularly rich in fauna.

Whilst, high variety in the natural elements have been found in some fields. Curiously there is not always an expected relationship between floristic biodiversity in the field and biodiversity elements. Poor meadows or even seeded meadows can harbour some very interesting diversity elements and, afterwards, quite good landscape structure has been maintained.



Abaurrepea, in Basque language (Euskera), and Abaurrea baja in Spanish, one of the typical villages of the Pyrenean valleys of Navarra. 855 m a.s.l.



High diversity hay-meadow. 900 m. Isaba.



High diversity hay-meadow. Aintzinoa-Erro. 700-800 m a.s.l.



Hay meadows. Aintzinoa-Erro.



The months of June-July are a very active period for obtaining hay which will be used during winter. Cutting hay meadows near Garralda.



Chrysomelidae beetle.



Young roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*).



High quality landscape with high diversity in the fields.



High quality landscape with medium diversity in the fields.



High quality landscapes with high diversity in the fields.



In some areas abandonment is becoming a big problem for the conservation of the hay meadows



¿High quality landscape? with very poor diversity in the fields.



Even in seeded meadows, sometimes very diverse fringes are maintained.



Pollard trees, usually ash tree, are maintained in the border of some hay-meadows.



Old houses, sometimes not used anymore.



Traditional wicket made of wood.



Wicket.



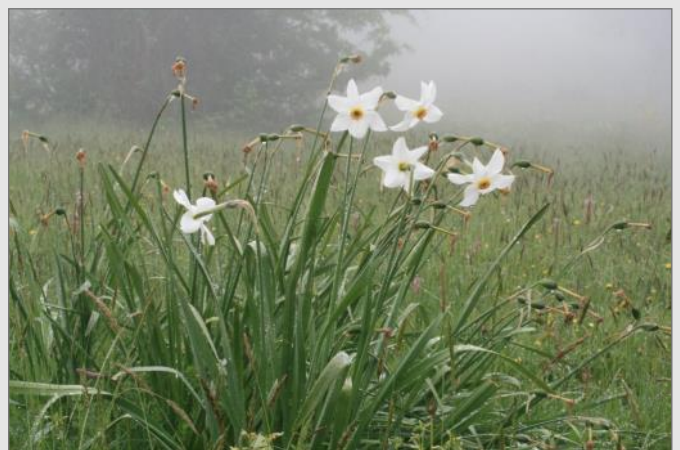
Stone walls are usually covered with vegetation.



Stone houses.



Villages of the area have been losing inhabitants over recent years. Some days, only botanists were seen in the field.



Some endangered plants in Navarra grow in the hay-meadows of the area. *Narcissus poeticus*.



The Pyrenean cow is the typical breed of cattle of this High Nature Value System and its traditional management is linked to grazing.



Carlina acanthifolia, sun flower, is used to drive away dangers.



The Latxa is a native breed of sheep very well adapted to the characteristics of the territory and whose milk is used to make traditional cheese of high quality.