

PALAEARCTIC GRASSLANDS

Journal of the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group



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Palaeoartctic Grasslands

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Palaeoartctic Grasslands, formerly published under the names *Bulletin of the European Dry Grassland Group* (Issues 1–26) and *Bulletin of the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group* (Issues 27–36), is the journal of the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG). It appears in four issues per year. *Palaeoartctic Grasslands* publishes news and announcements of EDGG, its projects, related organisations and its members. It also serves as an outlet for scientific articles and photo contributions.

Palaeoartctic Grasslands is freely available at <https://edgg.org/publications/pg-journal> and new issues are announced to all EDGG members. All content (text, photos, figures) in *Palaeoartctic Grasslands* is open access and available under the Creative Commons license CC-BY-SA 4.0 that allow re-use provided proper attribution is made to the originators ("BY") and the new item is licensed in the same way ("SA" = "share alike").

Submissions following the [Author Guidelines](#) are welcome by the deadlines of the four issues: 31 January, 30 April, 31 July and 31 October.

Scientific articles (Research Articles, Reviews, Forum Articles, Scientific Reports) should be submitted to the Receiving Editor Jürgen Dengler (dr.juergen.dengler@gmail.com) and will then undergo peer review, so publication in a certain issue cannot be guaranteed.

All other text contributions (News, Announcements, Short Contributions, Book Reviews, Glimpses of a Grassland, Forthcoming Events) should be submitted to Idoia Biurrun (idoia.biurrun@ehu.es).

Photo contributions (photos for general illustrative purposes with captions; Photo Stories) and contributions to the section "**Recent Publications of our Members**" should be submitted to Rocco Labadessa (rocco.labadessa@gmail.com).

Contributions to Photo Competitions should be submitted to Edy Fantinato (edy.fantinato@unive.it).

Palaeoartctic Grasslands is published by EDGG c/o Prof. Dr. Jürgen Dengler, Plant Ecology, BayCEER, University of Bayreuth, Universitätsstr. 30, 85447 Bayreuth, Germany.

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On front cover page: *Argiope lobate* in a Mediterranean grassland. Photo: J. Dengler.

Editorial

Dear readers,

The year 2023 is coming to an end, not without a considerable and variegated amount of concerns for the future. However, this year brought a breath of good news in the EDGG community, starting from an enthusiast new Executive Committee and our extended team of resourceful active members, to whom we are truly grateful.

Thanks to them, we are starting to boost our online activity through social media and we are launching calls for data contributions within the GrassPlot database. At the end of the year, we are also announcing new calls for financial donations, which will help supporting ongoing EDGG projects and events, also towards our for Ukrainian Scientists.

Here, we are also highlighting the wide range of publication venues for grassland researchers, with four new EDGG-edited Special Features in international journals.

Among the most important events of this year, we were delighted with the very successful Field Workshop in South

Tyrol, and the wonderfully organised Eurasian Grassland Conference in Szarvas, with a detailed report (and many photos!), in this issue on pp. 14-25. In this issue, you can also read about the upcoming events, with the winter edition of Talk Grasslands, next Field Workshop in the South-Western Alps and the 19th Eurasian Grassland Conference in Italy.

Here, we also congratulate the winners of the photo competition and we present a Photo Story, back to a summer journey in the Baltic landscapes.

We really hope that you will spend peaceful moments while reading this year-end double issue, and we hope to meet you in a new year full of grasslands and discoveries.

With best wishes,
Rocco Labadessa



Stipa capillata. Photo: J. Dengler

News

EDGG Social Media update

Many of you are already following the EDGG on a variety of social media (SOME). After the elections for the Executive Committee earlier this year, our SOME team has now expanded to two; Ellen De Vrieze and Stephen Venn, which has also enabled us to boost our online activity. In addition to our established accounts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter/X](#) and [YouTube](#), there was also an iNaturalist project entitled 'Eurasian Grassland Conference 2023 Hungary'. Here you can currently find 794 records from the EGC conference and excursions. You can still add records of relevant observations, or add identifications of taxa you are sufficiently familiar with that maybe awaiting identification or confirmation.

We recently added [Instagram](#) to our SOME palette as well. On our Instagram page you can find reels, photos and stories (highlights >>> Post-EC2023 & #EDDG_EGC2023) related to the recent Eurasian Grassland Conference in Szarvas, Hungary. We would like to invite everyone to contribute

and share your content, whether it pertains to grassland research, diverse grassland taxa, fieldwork adventures, or any other grassland-related passions! So, if you have nice material to share, **please don't forget to tag us using @grasslandedgg**. This way, we can share our experiences with each other. Furthermore, we extend a special request to those planning to attend field workshops, or other events: *"feel free to tag us on Instagram!"*. This will enable those who cannot physically attend to partake in and enjoy these events and workshops from a distance.

Cheers!

Ellen De Vrieze, Ghent, Belgium
ellen.devrieze@ugent.be

Stephen Venn, Łódź, Poland
stephen.venn@biol.uni.lodz.pl



EDDG ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Research

...



Conference hashtag! >>> #EDDG_EGC2023

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GrassPlot calls for new data

The EDGG vegetation-plot database [GrassPlot](#) (Dengler et al. 2018, 2020; Biurrun et al. 2019, 2021; Dembicz et al. 2021a, 2021b) calls for new data contributions. GrassPlot seeks carefully sampled plots of any types of grasslands and other open habitats (heathlands, mires, dunes, tall-forb communities,...) in the whole Palaeoartctic biogeographic realm. Both nested-plot series (any grain size) and single-grain plots of one of our eight standard grain sizes (0.0001, 0.001, 0.01, 0.1, 1, 10, 100 and 1000 m²) are welcome. Treatment of bryophytes and lichens as well as measured environmental variables are particularly welcome, but not mandatory. For further specification of our requirements, see [our website](#). Data contributors become members of the GrassPlot Consortium, with the option to opt-in as co-authors to emerging papers using their data as well as to propose own paper projects.

Contributing data during the next few months (until mid-February 2024) is particularly attractive for two reasons:

- For data deliveries during this period, we can guarantee faster inclusion than usually because Iwona Dembicz employed in her GrassPlot Tandem project (Modelling scale-dependent alpha diversity across Palaeoartctic grasslands) Nadiia Skobel to help with data preparation, while usually this is done exclusively voluntarily by the GrassPlot Coordinating Board. Moreover, as a unique exception until mid-February, we can offer you that you do not have to prepare your data in the GrassPlot templates, but Nadiia will do this for you if you deliver your data in any well-structured and well-documented digital format.
- There are at least four more new paper projects apart from Iwona's that are starting in the next months where you could become co-author if you contribute suitable data ASAP.

We are available for any question and look forward to your data contribution to be sent to the database manager Idoia Biurrun.

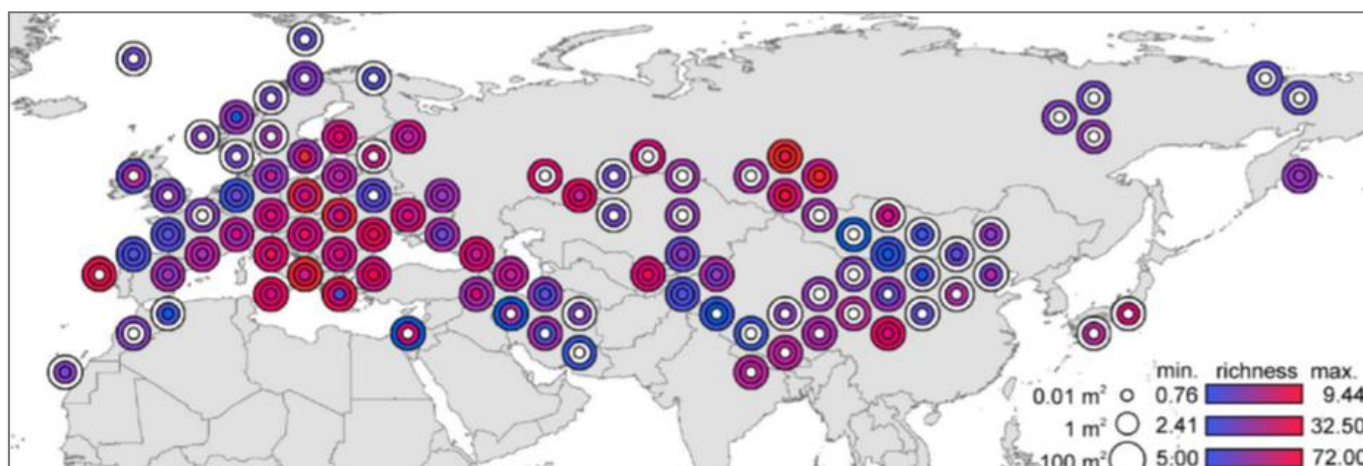
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Hotspots and coldspots of vascular plant diversity in open habitats of the Palaeoartctic at three grain sizes, based on data from GrassPlot (from Biurrun et al. 2021).

EDGG Fund for Ukrainian Scientists Call for financial donations

EDGG is deeply concerned about the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the impact it has on our colleagues in the scientific community. The conflict has led to the cancellation of projects, cut salaries, and the inability to conduct fieldwork in many parts of the country. Additionally, many scientists have had to flee their homes and are struggling to continue their work in other countries. As a community, we want to support our Ukrainian colleagues and help them continue their scientific careers. Therefore, we are once again opening the EDGG Fund for Ukrainian Scientists and calling for donations, big or small, to support this cause. All donations should be paid to the account of our mother organization IAVS, from where the payments will be made to the recipients in accordance with the aims of the fund and the decision of the Funding Committee.

We urge all of our members and supporters to consider donating to this important cause. Let us come together as a community and show our support for our Ukrainian colleagues during this difficult time.

Aim and organisation of the fund:

- The EDGG Fund for Ukrainian Scientists is governed by the Funding Committee comprising Ellen De Vrieze, Alireza Naqinezhad, Denys Vynokurov, Idoia Biurrun, Jürgen Dengler, Rocco Labadessa and Stephen Venn, and takes all decisions on the Fund on the basis of a simple majority.
- Project ideas could either be proposed by EDGG or by the applicant. Projects should be outlined in a way that they can be conducted under prevalent conditions regarding the war.
- Currently, EDGG offers work opportunities in two such projects, namely in its [regional vegetation-plot databases](#), for digitising and georeferencing plot data from the literature. Ukrainian members can propose their own project ideas, e.g. concerning the analysis of data or the writing of a manuscript.
- If EDGG members have project ideas which they wish to propose, they should contact the Funding Committee.
- Any Ukrainian member can apply to the Funding Committee to receive a grant.
- Decisions on the assignment of grants to applicants will be made by the Funding Committee whenever sufficient money and applications have accumulated.
- The decisions will normally comprise awards made in 500 -EUR tranches, but smaller awards are possible if there are many applicants or only limited funds. If there is enough money available, the Funding Committee can assign another tranche to the same applicant for the continuation of the same project or for another project.

- For each project, the Funding Committee appoints at least one mentor from outside Ukraine whose task is to remain in contact with the grantee and support her/him in the project.
- For each tranche assigned to a grantee, a short, written document will be created that formulates the scientific task to be addressed and its specifications (e.g., in the case of plot databases: the number of plots to be digitised for the amount of money agreed). The grant is paid prior to the start of the project. After the completion of the project, the grantee and mentor together compile and send a short (1 paragraph) report on the achievements of the project.
- From time to time, the Funding Committee will provide summarizing reports on all running projects on the EDGG website and in *Palaeoartctic Grasslands*.

How to make donations:

You can make donations, large or small, to our fund either by credit card via our online form or by money transfer to IAVS account. It is crucial that you indicate the purpose of your payment precisely, as stated below, because otherwise the money might not reach EDGG's Fund.

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You can make your payment [here](#).

Please indicate whether you wish your name as donor to be publicized or not.

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If you consent to your name being listed as a donor, please send an e-mail with your name, date and amount of the donation to anaqinezhad@gmail.com and dr.juergen.dengler@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF UKRAINIAN SCIENTISTS IN NEED!

Alireza Naqinezhad, Mazandaran, Iran
anaqinezhad@gmail.com

Call for financial donations to EDGG

EDGG is a community of scientists dedicated to the study and conservation of palearctic grasslands. We rely on the support of our members and supporters to continue our work, which includes research, education, and outreach. We are grateful for any donations, big or small, that can help us achieve our mission.

Your donation will go towards supporting our ongoing projects, such as monitoring biodiversity, studying ecosystem processes, and developing conservation strategies. It will also help us organize events and conferences, publish scientific papers, and engage with the public.

How to make donations:

You can make donations, large or small, to our fund either by credit card via our online form or by money transfer to IAVS account. It is crucial that you indicate the purpose of your payment precisely, as stated below, because otherwise the money might not reach EDGG's Fund.

(A) With credit card via the online platform

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If you consent to your name being listed as a donor, please send an e-mail with your name, date and amount of the donation to anaqinezhad@gmail.com and dr.juergen.dengler@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO EDGG!

Alireza Naqinezhad, Mazandaran, Iran

anaqinezhad@gmail.com



Phelipanche arenaria in the "Malopolski Przelom Wisly" Natura 2000 site, SE Poland. Photo: P. Chmielewski.

Palaeoarctic Grasslands now listed in ResearchGate

Since recently, ResearchGate has introduced a new section for journals in addition to the presentation of authors. Thus, you can find there the articles published in [Palaeoarctic Grasslands](#), with citation/viewing performance and link to their authors. There are also statistics which authors published the most-cited contributions (among those available in ResearchGate) visible in the right sidebar. Some of our articles evidently are cited quite well.

Since ResearchGate only shows articles uploaded by their authors, we would like to invite all our authors to upload their contributions in *Palaeoarctic Grasslands*, labelled with the journal name, volume and page number to make our journal page in ResearchGate even more comprehensive and informative.

Additionally, there is also a journal page for PG's predecessor [Bulletin of the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group](#).

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Articles

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Journal webpage of [Palaeoarctic Grasslands](#) in ResearchGate (accessed 28 October 2023).



Autumn fruits of *Paeonia mascula* in Central Puglia, Southern Italy. Photo: R. Labadessa.

Call for photos for *Palaeoartctic Grasslands*

As usual, we are looking forward to your contributions to the Photo Story section, as well as your photographs for general illustrative purposes.

Submissions for the **Photo Story** section are always welcome. Photo Story is an open space where members can submit their own photo collection on a certain grassland-related topic of their choice. High-quality photos should be provided together with their captions (at least species names or landscape description), a brief text and possibly other graphical elements (like a map or a drawing). The selection of photos should fit within 4-15 (-20) pages and the contributors should propose a preliminary layout (in PDF or MS Word format), which will be finally typeset by Editors. As an example, you can look at the Photo Stories published in previous issues.

As with scientific articles, Photo Stories undergo a review process with a focus on the quality of the photographs. There is no guarantee that they will be accepted without changes, and late submissions may be published in a subsequent issue.

We would also like to encourage you to contribute to the **Global Vegetation Project** with your vegetation photographs. Please take a look at the [project website](#) for an overview of the global map and the data entry form.

If you want to contribute to Photo Stories, or if you simply want to help us with enriching this aspect of the journal, please submit your photos together with the required information to Rocco (rocco.labadessa@gmail.com).

Deadline for photo submissions is **31 January 2024**.

Rocco Labadessa, Bari, Italy
rocco.labadessa@gmail.com



Carlina acaulis, Switzerland. Photo: J. Dengler.

Call for Photo Competition "Threatened Grasslands"

The theme of the Photo Competition is "Threatened Grasslands". Palaeoartctic grasslands are known for their high biodiversity. However, in the last century, Palaeoartctic grasslands have suffered a dramatic loss of area and biodiversity. The loss of grasslands through conversion to cropland, quarries or settlements and infrastructure, as well as the double threat of intensification and abandonment, seriously threaten this wealth of conservation value. The challenge we have set ourselves with this photo competition is to depict the state of threat to Palaeoartctic grasslands in a single photo. Would you take up this challenge?

You are invited to send up to three high-quality photographs within the competition theme (full size JPEG or TIFF images, at least 300 dpi) together with captions giving a short title or description and information on the subject (species name, date, place name). The Photo Jury (see imprint) will select the best photographs. The three best shots will be awarded with full space in the next issue, but we reserve the right to use other submitted materials for illustrative purposes in other parts of the issue. If you want to take part in the competition, please submit your photos together with required information to Edy (edy.fantinato@unive.it) by **31 January 2024**.

Edy Fantinato, Venice, Italy
edy.fantinato@unive.it

Call for new members of the Photo Competition Jury

We are looking for new members for the jury of the *Paleoartctic Grasslands* Photo Competition! Do you like naturalistic photography? Do you have aesthetic or technical skills in judging photos? Would you like to become a member of the international jury that selects the best photos for the journal? Send your application to Edy (edy.fantinato@unive.it) and Rocco (rocco.labadessa@gmail.com) by **31 January 2024**.

Edy Fantinato, Venice, Italy
edy.fantinato@unive.it

EDGG Event

Talk Grasslands Winter 2023-2024

Our Talk Grasslands series of online presentations will continue this winter in it's familiar format.

- Biodiversity-functioning relationships in grasslands and elsewhere
Santiago Soliveres Codina
Tuesday 16th January 2024, 14:00 cet
- Mediterranean coastal dunes: threats and trends
Alicia Acosta
Tuesday 6th February 2024, 14:00 cet
- A long-term perspective on European vegetation and implications for nature management,
Jens-Christian Svenning
Tuesday 12th March 2024, 14:00 cet

As previously, we will present a diverse range of topics related to grasslands, and from diverse regions. The talks will be broadcast via Zoom (Meeting ID: 635 8214 7567 Passcode: 828547). Each talk will have a duration of approximately 45 mins followed by discussion. You will be able to find updated information about the talks from EDGG's [Talks](#) web page, where you will also be able to find the links for the talks, and to access video recordings of previous talks, which are accessible via our [YouTube channel](#). The January and February Talks are confirmed and details of the March Talk will be announced on the web-page as soon as it has been confirmed.

Please contact the organiser if you have any questions:
stephen.venn@biol.uni.lodz.pl



Santiago Soliveres Codina is leader of the CODINA LAB Community assembly, biological Diversity and multifunctionality in a global change context at the University of Alicante. He has a range of interests in community ecology from diversity-ecosystem functioning relationships, the effect of grazing pressure, climate or land use on plant diversity, shrub encroachment, restoration of roadsides and mine sites, or the ecology of biological soil crusts. However, most of my research so far has focused on plant-plant interactions, their biotic and abiotic drivers, and their consequences for plant community assembly.



Biodiversity-functioning relationships in grasslands and elsewhere

Most of the research on the positive relationships between high levels of biodiversity and higher levels of the services an ecosystem provides to humans comes from grasslands, and it has provided strong research support to the need for conserving our biodiversity if we want to preserve our well-being. Despite this research effort, there are still exciting and important questions to be solved, such as how well do these biodiversity-functioning relationships extend to other ecosystem-types, or what is the relative importance of this local biodiversity changes regarding other biotic alterations occurring at larger (landscape) scales. In addition, climatic conditions are changing even more rapidly than expected, and to better understand how can we enhance the resilience of our grasslands to such changes is pivotal to maintain these key ecosystems. To aid advancing our knowledge in these pressing issues and (hopefully) inspire further research in the EDGG community, I will present recent work focusing both on temperate grasslands and in Mediterranean ecosystems.

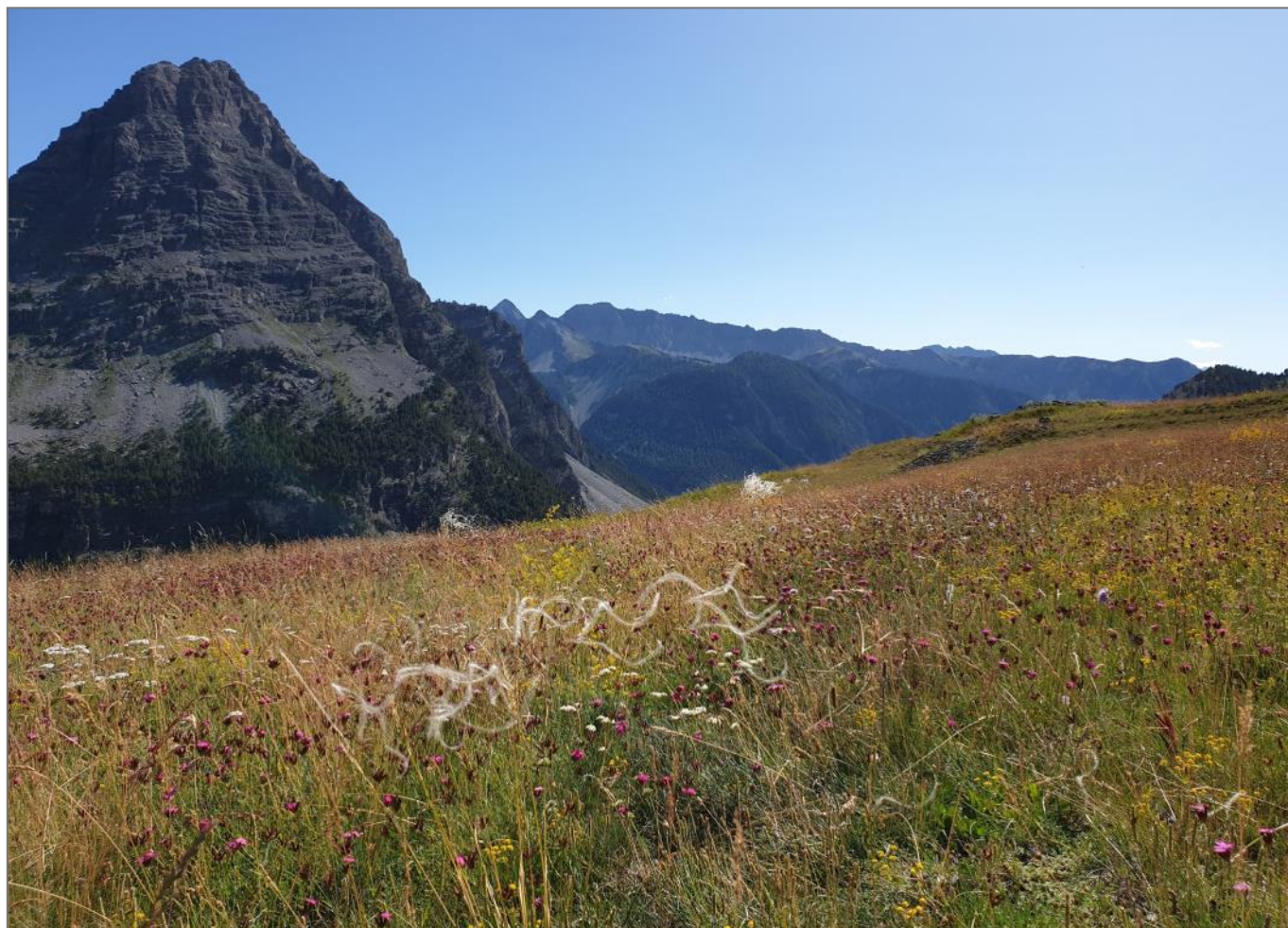
EDGG Event

18th EDGG Field Workshop: dry valleys of South-Western Alps (Aosta, Susa and Durance valleys) Italy and France, 1–11 June 2024

The 18th EDGG Field Workshop is scheduled to take place in two countries, Italy and France, from June 1 to June 11, 2024. The workshop's primary aim is to sample various dry grasslands within the three main dry valleys of the South-Western Alps, specifically in Aosta and Susa in Italy, and Durance in France. This Field Workshop is the final one in a series of Field Workshops conducted in inneralpine dry valleys following the trails of Josias Braun-Blanquet (1961), whose seminal work covered the inneralpine xerothermic vegetation of the entire Alpine arch.

The series started in 2018 in Austria during the 11th EDGG Field Workshop, where 15 nested-plot series ("EDGG Biodi-

versity Plots", Dengler et al. 2016) and 37 additional 10-m² normal plots were sampled in the Styrian Mur Valley, Virgen Valley, Upper Inn Valley in the Austrian Eastern Alps, and in Griffen in Carinthia (Magnez et al. 2020, 2021). In 2019, the 12th Field Workshop took place in the Swiss inneralpine dry valleys (Rhône, Rhine, and Inn), and resulted in the collection of 30 nested-plot series and 82 10-m² normal plots (Dengler et al. 2020; Bergauer et al. 2022). In 2023, the 17th Field Workshop (Hilpold et al. 2023) was conducted in Northeast Italy and adjacent parts of Switzerland (Adige/Etsch, Vinschgau/Val Venosta, Val Müstair, and Valtellina), leading to the acquisition of 26 nested-plot series and 107



Dry grasslands of *Stipo capillatae*-*Poion carniolicae* in the Durance Valley in France. Photo: S. Abdulhak.

normal plots. With the expected data from the 18th Field Workshop, plus additional data sampled with the same methodology by EDGG members, we will have about 100 nested-plot series and approximately 600 standardized 10-m² plots from the dry grasslands of all the major valleys of the Alps, allowing for comprehensive biodiversity analysis and a modern revision of the complicated classification of the *Festuco-Brometea* and *Sedo-Scleranthetea* of the Alps.

The starting and ending point of the Field Workshop will be Torino, Italy. We expect up to 18 participants. Detailed information, including costs, accommodation, itinerary, and the sampling plan, will be provided in the following issue of *Palaeoarctic Grasslands*.

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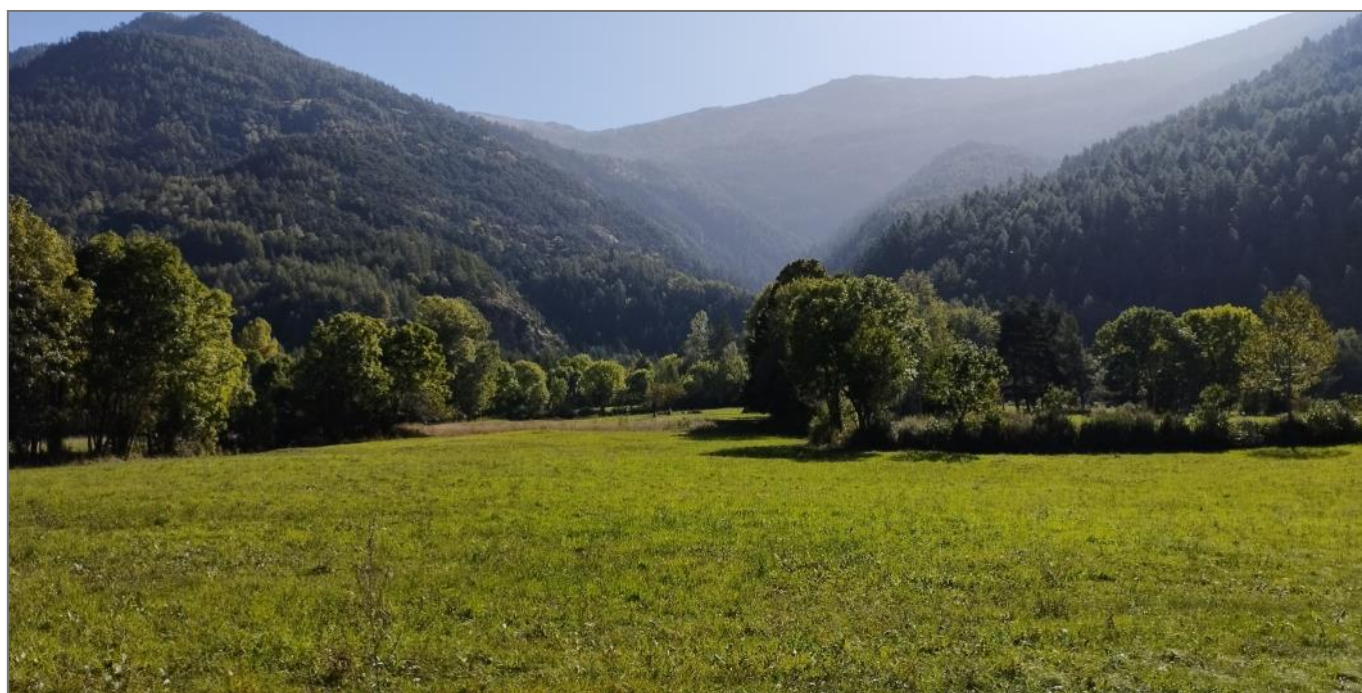
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Mesobromion in Susa Valley (Salbertrand). Photo: M. Lonati.

Conference update
19th Eurasian Grassland Conference
Bolzano, Italy, 26 August – 1 September 2024

As was announced in Szarvas, the 19th Eurasian Grassland Conference will be held in Bolzano (Bozen) in South Tyrol (Trentino-Alto Adige region). So after the lowlands of the Great Plain of Hungary, we will lift ourselves to the Alpine region. The theme of the event will be 'Grasslands as biodiversity hotspots' and it will take place from 26th August until the 1st September 2024. The venue for the conference sessions will be the EURAC research headquarters. The conference excursions will bring us to the nearby inner-alpine dry grasslands and to Alpine meadows and pastures of the Dolomites. Please make note of the dates and theme already now so that you can begin making preparations for your participation.

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EGC 2024 venue at EURAC research headquarters in Bolzano, Italy.



View of the inner-alpine valleys nearby the conference venue.

EDGG Event

DOI: 10.21570/EDGG.PG.58-59.14-25



Conference report
18th Eurasian Grassland Conference 2023, Hungary
<https://www.egc2023.hu/>

Introduction

The 18th Eurasian Grassland Conference (EGC) was organised in Hungary this year by the 'Lendület' Seed Ecology Research Group (Centre for Ecological Research) and the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate. The topic of the conference was 'Conservation and management of grasslands in transforming landscapes'. The Conference took place from 25 to 28 September 2023, and was followed by a three-day long post conference excursion in the Kiskunság

National Park. The Venue was the 'Körös-völgyi Állatpark', which is the Visitor Centre of the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate that is located in the town of Szarvas in the floodplain of the Körös River. The conference had altogether 98 participants from 20 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan).



Grazing Hungarian Grey cattle in alkali grasslands. Photo: S. Borza.



The conference venue in Szarvas. Photo: Z. Babák.



Introduction presentation of the Körös Maros National Park by Péter Bánfi. Photo: L. Godó.



The youngest researcher generation also provided help at the registration desk. Photo: L. Godó.



Happy organizers at the registration desk. Photo: T. Hamřík.

Workshop on grassland-related spiders

On the first day of the conference Róbert Gallé, Nikolett Gallé-Szpisjak (Centre for Ecological Research) and Tomáš Hamřík (Mendel University in Brno) experts in animal ecology, arachnology and grassland conservation led a workshop entitled 'Introduction to grassland-related spiders'. The participants of the workshop got an exciting interactive overview on the most important grassland related spider taxa, their main functional groups, and also an introduction to field sampling methodology. The program included several lectures about the theoretical background, and also an outdoor part where the participants had the opportunity to try basic sampling methods.



Enthusiastic introductory talk by Róbert Gallé about grassland-related spiders. Photo: T. Hamřík.



Field sampling during the Spider Workshop. Photo: T. Hamřík.



Determination of the caught spiders. Photo: H. Seiler.

Talks and poster sessions

The conference included 38 oral and 32 poster presentations focusing on grassland plant and animal ecology, syntaxonomy, the effect of climate change on grassland habitats, invasive species and grassland management and restoration. The presented studies provided a deep insight into the flora, fauna, diversity, management, and restoration of Palaeartic grasslands in changing modern landscapes. The talks were organized in a total of six sessions. The hard copies of the posters were displayed in the corridors of the visitor centre during the whole conference, and the electronic version of the posters were briefly presented in the lecture hall during the two thematic poster sessions.



The posters were displayed in the visitor centre, next to interesting local exhibitions. Photo: L. Godó.



Lively discussion in the coffee break. Photo: L. Godó.

Plenary talks

During the conference there were three plenary and one keynote talks revealing different aspects of grassland management, restoration and conservation. Corrado Marcenò, from the University of Perugia presented a talk entitled "Data collected by amateur botanists: coupling an old tradition and citizen science offers new opportunities for habitat monitoring and conservation". Denys Vynokurov, from M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the University of the Basque Country, provided new insights on the broad-scale classification of European dry grasslands and scrub vegetation. Szabolcs Lengyel, from Centre for Ecological Research revealed the aspects of grassland restoration and management with a special focus on animal taxa. András Kelemen (Department of Ecology, University of Szeged and Centre for Ecological Research) gave a keynote lecture on the current situation and challenges in grassland conservation and restoration in the Kiskunság region of Hungary.



Our plenary and keynote speakers (from left to right): Corrado Marcenò, Denys Vynokurov, Szabolcs Lengyel and András Kelemen.



Our large group headed towards exploring the grasslands in the mid-conference excursion. Photo: T. Hamřík.

Mid-conference excursion

In the mid-conference excursion, the participants could get an overview of the unique 'puszta' experience. Before the departure of buses, Ábel Molnár (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences) and Péter Bánfi (Körös-Maros National Park Directorate) delivered introductory talks about the vegetation and flora of the region, as well as about the mission and goals of the National Park. The mid-conference excursion was guided by Ábel Molnár, Péter Bánfi and Judit Kapocsi (Körös-Maros National Park Directorate) who showed us a great variety of protected grassland areas in the Körös-Maros National Park. The trip started in the floodplain of the River Maros, where the participants visited an ancient burial mound (so called Bekai-kurgan) covered by species-rich forest steppe vegetation on the north-, and steppe-like vegetation on the southern slope. These grasslands and the related species (such as *Phlomis tuberosa*, *Thalictrum minus* and *Agropyron cristatum*) have become extremely rare in the landscape due to intensive agricultural activities. Then the excursion continued in the 'Csanád puszták' protected area. Before exploring the endless grasslands, we were hosted by the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate in the Dália-major where they waited for the group with coffee, beverages and traditional sweets. After this nice refreshment, we explored the several types of pristine Pannonian alkali habitats and the vertical vegetation zonation gradient typical of alkali open landscapes, which are preserved at the site in an excellent condition. The gradient involved loess grasslands on the highest and alkali grasslands and marshes on lower elevations. Many grassland specialist plants typical to open alkali mud surfaces (*Myosurus minimus*), alkali grasslands (*Limonium gmelinii* subsp. *hungaricum*) and loess grasslands (*Sternbergia colchiciflora*) were flowering or in fruit. The last stop of the excursion was at the White Lake ('Fehér-tó') in Kardoskút, which is one of the most beautiful white-water alkaline lakes of the Great Plain. We first enjoyed the spec-

tacular views of the lake from the observation tower and also had a nice refreshment thanks to the National Park. This walk was a unique experience: in the basin of the lake, it was possible to walk through the stands of *Suaeda pannonica*, *Puccinellia distans* subsp. *limosa* and *Tripolium pannonicum*.



The best surprise: the National Park welcomed us with coffee, beverages, and sweets. Photo: T. Hamřík.



Flowering field of *Sternbergia colchiciflora*. Photo: Á. Molnár.



Réka Kiss was responsible for keeping the group together – with a traditional herder instrument called 'kolomp'. Photo: T. Hamřík.



Presentation during the mid-conference excursion by Ábel Molnár. Photo: D. Vynokurov.



Lycosa singoriensis is the largest spider species in Hungary. Photo: T. Hamřík.



Little rest during the excursion. Photo: I. Rabyk.



Group photo during the mid-conference excursion. Photo: A. Kelemen.

Social events

In the first day of the conference participants could take part in an exciting guided tour in the zoological garden at the Visitor Centre of the National Park. The guide of the tour was Krisztina Körömi, the director of the Visitor Centre, who told several exciting and less known facts and stories about the animals that once inhabited this part of the Carpathian Basin. Participants could have a close encounter with the inhabitants of the zoo. After that, during the welcome reception people had the possibility to meet each other while tasting local food and drinks.

After the mid-conference excursion, the participants could take part in a Hungarian folklore program and also learnt some traditional Hungarian dances. The night continued with a dinner consisting traditional Hungarian 'outdoor' meals (beef gulash stew and mushroom stew) prepared on open fire, then with the lead of Martin Magnes, the Auction began. In the Auction grassland-related items (such as cheese, wine, paintings, photographs, herbs, and decorations made of wildflowers) kindly provided by the participants from many countries were auctioned. Altogether 765 euros were collected that will be used for supporting grassland science with the coordination of the EDGG EC.



Presentation by Krisztina Körömi at the Zoo. Photo: D. Vynokurov.



Meeting of botanists and large grazers. Photo: D. Borovik.



Another cheerful human-wildlife interaction. Photo: T. Hamřík.



Cheerful moments of the Auction. Photo: T. Hamřík.



A lot of very happy people. Photo: L. Godó.

General Assembly and Closing Ceremony

At the end of the last conference day, the EDGG General Assembly was held. During the Assembly, chairs of the EDGG Executive Committee informed the participants about past, current and future activities, including conferences, field workshops, special features and databases. One of the most important news was the announcement about the 19th Eurasian Grassland Conference that will be held in Bolzano in 2024, organised by Andreas Hilpold (Eurac Research, Institute for Alpine Environment).

The announcement of the winners of the Young Investigator Prizes (YIP, in the categories of talks and posters for researchers under the age of 35 years) was the final highlight of the Closing Ceremony. The winners of the YIP at the 18th EGC were:

Oral presentations:

1. Ábel Péter Molnár: The Flora Continuity Hypothesis: massive potential survival of the flora since before the Last Glacial Maximum in the Carpatho-Pannonian region.
2. Szymon Czyżewski: Niche of plant species native to the temperate forest biome in Europe matches a heterogeneous natural vegetation shaped by megaherbivores.
3. Gantuya Batgelder: Traditional ecological and herding knowledge in the forest steppe region in Mongolia.

4. Svenja Wanke: Elevational patterns in calcareous grassland community diversity and flower colour spectra in the European Alps.

Poster presentations:

1. Katalin Lukács: A new aspect of seed dispersal: Human-dispersed propagules can survive and disperse after laundry washing.
2. Gergő Rák: Effects of grazing pressure and phytomass productivity on the density of the hungarian meadow viper (*Vipera ursinii rakosiensis*) in Kiskunság.
3. Dariia Borovyk: The impact of low-intensity, regular-intensity mowing and mowing abandonment on a diversity of semi-natural grasslands in South Moravia (Czech Republic).

The ceremony ended with the organizing team on the stage: Orsolya Valkó, Balázs Deák, András Kelemen (chairs of the organising committee), Rita Engel, Réka Fekete, Laura Godó, Orsolya Kiss, Réka Kiss, Eszter Korom, Abdubakir Kusbakhov, Katalin Lukács, József Nagy, Ágnes Tóth ('Lendület' Seed Ecology Research Group, Institute of Ecology and Botany, Centre for Ecological Research), Péter Bánfi, Judit Kapocsi, Krisztina Körömi, Judit Lestyan-Goda (Körös-Maros National Park Directorate).



Winners of the Young Investigator Prizes. From left to right: Dariia Borovyk, Gergő Rák, Svenja Wanke, Gantuya Batgelder, Szymon Czyżewski, Ábel Péter Molnár, and Katalin Lukács. Photo: D. Vynokurov.

Post-conference excursion

The purpose of the post-conference excursion was to provide participants with a broad overview of the habitats and conservation efforts in a characteristic part of the Great Hungarian Plain, the Danube-Tisza Interfluve. The excursion was led by András Kelemen, who designed the program to show the large-scale vegetation zonation of the landscape. In the middle of the region lies the Danube-Tisza Interfluve sand ridge, primarily comprising sandy grasslands and forest steppes. Moving towards the two big rivers (Danube and Tisza), the sand ridge is followed by the Turjánvidék, characterized by meadow habitats. The groundwater flowing from the direction of the sand ridge emerges to the surface (or comes close to the surface) in this area. Following this, as we move towards the rivers, we can see extensive saline habitats.

Our first stop was a solonetz saline grassland in the Tisza Valley. Orsolya Kiss and András Kelemen introduced the area, and explained that some parts of the visited grassland are secondary habitats, formerly used as fishponds until the early 2000s. But now in these areas, various types of saline grasslands have regenerated well. The dikes of the fishponds were removed in 2019 as part of the Roller Life project. The traces of the dikes are still visible four years after the soil works, but open saline communities colonized the linear landscape scars and became very similar to natural ones. Among the characteristic endemic species of open saline grasslands, *Suaeda pannonica* (Pannonian endemism) and *Plantago schwarzenbergiana* (Dacic-Pannonian endemism) occur here. After exploring the grasslands, we went up to the observation tower near the Roller Visitor Centre, from where we could overlook Lake Fehér which is a fishpond system and a famous birdwatching place.

The next program was special not only because we had to walk a considerable distance to reach our destination, but also because we visited a secondary habitat that most participants had not encountered before. It was a large (more than 30 hectares) abandoned sand quarry. The northern part of the area was excavated deeper than the southern

part. Consequently, in the northern section they reached the more compact soil layer with higher salinity under the sand, which led to the formation of saline habitats after the abandonment. The recovered habitat has communities very similar to the natural alkali pans. The country's largest population of *Cyperus pannonicus* can be found here. In the shallower part, meadow habitats had regenerated, with many orchid species, which were not in their most spectacular state in the autumn. However, we observed numerous specimens of *Blackstonia acuminata*, which are highly endangered plant species in this drying landscape and aban-



The traces of the former dikes are still visible, open saline communities with the endemic *Suaeda pannonica* regenerated well. Photo: A. Kelemen.



The alkali vegetation in the abandoned sand quarry very similar to the natural alkali pans. Photo: A. Kelemen.



Cyperus pannonicus and *Suaeda pannonica* in the abandoned sand quarry. Photo: A. Kelemen.



People in the mine. Photo: A. Kelemen.

doned sand quarries can serve as anthropogenic refuges for them.

After the „mining” and “walking”, to the delight of everyone, we stopped for some ice cream and coffee. As the last program of the day, we visited a typical stand of sandy forest steppe near Tázlár, where we saw *Dianthus diutinus*, considered an endemic species in the Danube-Tisza Interfluvial sand ridge. After this long day, our chefs prepared a delicious BBQ dinner for us.

On the second day, we visited the sand dunes near Fülöpháza. Here, György Kröel-Dulay (Centre for Ecological Research) introduced us his climate manipulation experiment. He gave a comprehensive and very interesting introduction to the drivers of vegetation dynamics of the sandy grasslands. We got to know the functional traits of species, which

have adapted to the abiotic environmental conditions, and which also determine the interactions between species in this harsh environment. Following this, the ExDrain experimental site was introduced, one interesting aspect of which was that the extreme drought treatment applied at the beginning of the experiment actually occurred in the surrounding grasslands as well, due to the exceptionally dry weather in the past year. After that, we took a walk in this sandy area covered by juniper-poplar forest-steppe, led by Ferenc Pálszabó, a ranger from the Kiskunság National Park Directorate. He provided detailed information about the wildlife of the area, its history, management, conservation issues, and applied conservation practices. The unique landscape was further enhanced by the colourful, spherical-shaped tumbleweeds of the *Corispermum nitidum*, which is a protected plant in Hungary. The mass appearance of



Discussion about *Plantago indica*. Photo: P. Sengl.



György Kröel-Dulay shows the roots of *Festuca vaginata* starting from a shallower depth than the roots of the other dominant species of sandy grasslands, *Stipa borysthena*. Photo: D. Vynokurov.



Introduction of the climate manipulation experiment. Photo: P. Sengl.



Ferenc Pálszabó presents the nature conservation issues of the sandy habitats. Photo: A. Kelemen.

this species in undisturbed sand grasslands is a rare phenomenon, occurring especially after dry years or following wildfires.

Our next point was an area invaded by the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*). Here, we discussed the causes and consequences of cactus invasions. Many were surprised to



Smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*). Photo: P. Sengl.



Group photo on a sand dune. Photo: A. Kelemen.



Sandy landscape with *Corispermum nitidum*. Photo: A. Kelemen.



Prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*) invasion in a sandy grassland. Photo: A. Kelemen.

hear about the extensive populations of naturalized cacti in the Great Hungarian Plain, which is why it was beneficial for them to see one with their own eyes.

On Saturday afternoon, we headed to the area near Kunpeszér, where we had the opportunity to witness vast mosaic grasslands consisting of wet meadows, meadow steppes, and sandy steppe meadows. Additionally, we gained insights into the dynamics of broad-leaved deciduous forest-steppes. Csaba Vadász, a ranger from the Kiskunság National Park Directorate, presented the results of their research on the regeneration of forest-steppes, highlighting the roles of abiotic processes, consumers, pathogens, and structural elements of vegetation in the dynamics of the forest-steppes.

During the day, we walked a lot and, on several occasions, we had to hurry to ensure there was time for the evening program, which was a wine tasting. During this, we were given a glimpse of the best wines from the Danube-Tisza Interfluvium, guided by our expert, Roland Tengölics. The wine tasting set the tone for the rest of the evening to be filled with a great atmosphere.

On the last day, we explored the loess dune used as a sacred place (cemetery) and closed sandy grasslands around our accommodation, where we saw the blooming of the rare and endangered *Colchicum arenarium*.

Our last destination was the alkali habitats of Mikla-pusztá, which is the most beautiful alkali landscape along the Danube Valley, with a complete set of alkali habitat types represented in this area. Here, the excursion's organizer spoke about their research conducted in the area, which revealed the dual effect of cattle grazing on this alkali habitat complex. Grazing has a positive effect on the vegetation of the lowest and highest parts of this mosaic landscape. In the lowest parts, it can control the spread of reeds, while in the higher elevations, in the loess plateaus, it can increase vege-



Colchicum arenarium. Photo: D. Borovyk.



Donkey sausage party in the middle of the pusztá. Photo: A. Kelemen.



Wine tasting. Photo: D. Borovyk.

tation diversity and the number of orchids by reducing living biomass and litter. However, on the slopes of the plateaus, it has an adverse effect because of the accelerated erosion. As a surprise, the staff from the Dunatáj Foundation (responsible for managing the area) welcomed us with a small snack, and so, as a farewell gesture, we watched the grazing flock of sheep while enjoying donkey sausage.

Acknowledgments

We are especially indebted to the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate who kindly provided the venue, organized the mid-conference excursion, and supported the conference in all possible ways. We thank the colleagues of the Centre for Ecological Research for the essential help in managing many administration issues and transportation before, during and after the conference. We are grateful for the Kiskunság National Park Directorate for supporting the professional program of the post-conference excursion. Big thanks to György Kröel-Dulay (Centre for Ecological Research), Csaba Vadász, Ferenc Pálszabó (Kiskunság National Park Directorate) and Rozália Kustár (Dunatáj Foundation) for being our professional guides during the post-

conference excursion. We really enjoyed and appreciated the services of the BBQ Heroes Restaurant and the Kiskunság Betyár Kúria. We are also grateful to the IAVS for their financial support provided for Ukrainian scientists and young scientists from many countries. Many thanks for the BirdLife Hungary for sponsoring the event. We were delighted that, through the coordinated efforts of the conference's main organizers, additional organizers, and numerous colleagues and service providers, everything ran smoothly. And last but not least we are grateful for the participants of the conference for presenting great science, and sharing memorable moments during scientific discussions, social events and during the exploration of the grasslands in the Hungarian lowlands. We appreciate the participants for being so cheerful and curious!

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Alkali landscape in Mikla-pusztá. Photo: D. Vynokurov.

EDGG Publication

EDGG publication venues for scientific papers

EDGG offers a wide range of publication venues for its members and other grassland researchers. Currently, there are four open Special Features in international journals plus the option to publish scientific articles in our own journal, *Palaeoartctic Grasslands*. Thus, there is a good option available in our portfolio for nearly any study on Palaeoartctic grasslands. Publishing in our Special Features is particularly attractive compared to publishing regularly in a journal – because on average the rejection rates in Special Features are much lower and the citation rates of published articles significantly higher than for regular journal articles.

Below you find an overview of our current options, from the most demanding to the least demanding. Most of them are even diamond open access, i.e. your article will be freely accessible to everybody, without you having to pay an article processing charge (APC).

Jürgen Dengler, Wädenswil, Switzerland
EDGG Special Feature Coordinator
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EDGG Special Feature in *Biological Conservation*

Topic: Conservation of Palaeoartctic grasslands.

Guest Editors: Orsolya Valkó (chair, HU), Leonardo Ancillotto (IT), Jürgen Dengler (CH) & Johannes Kamp (DE)

Journal Impact Factor: 5.9

Cite Score: 11.6 (Tracker: 9.5)

Publication type: Subscription journal with hybrid option, i.e. no fees for authors unless they opt for open access.

Suited for: High-end papers that are addressed to a broad international readership.

Deadlines: Abstract submission until 15 February 2024 to valkoorsi@gmail.com; submission of invited full articles until 31 October 2024.

Submissions: Via journal website and ONLY for invited articles; inquiries: valkoorsi@gmail.com.

Further details: See p. 28 of this issue.

Special Collection in *Vegetation Classification and Survey*

Topic: Grasslands of Asia.

Guest Editors: Jürgen Dengler (chair, CH), Idoia Biurrun (ES), Victor Chepinoga (DE), Alireza Naqinezhad (IR) & Arkadiusz Nowak (PL)

Journal Impact Factor: NA

Cite Score: 2.0 (Tracker: 2.4)

Publication type: Gold open access journal, but with very low article processing charges (APCs) for those who do not have access to APC funding ("virtual diamond open access"): IAVS members get 85–100% reduction in article processing charges (APCs).

Suited for: Papers developing or using a vegetation classification/typology for grasslands in Asia.

Deadlines: Submissions within the scope of the Special Collection possible until ca. January/February 2024 (even if not invited).

Submissions: Via [journal website](#) (please indicate Special Collection); inquiries: dr.juergen.dengler@gmail.com.

Further details: Accepted papers benefit from free linguistic editing by one of our Linguistic Editors. More information at [VCS EDGG collection](#).

EDGG Annual Special Feature in *Tuexenia*

Topic: Vegetation ecology and geobotany of grasslands in nemoral Europe and adjacent regions.

Guest Editors: Steffen Boch (chair, CH), Jürgen Dengler (CH) and further editors to be appointed.

Journal Impact Factor: 1.2; **Cite Score:** 2.4 (Tracker: 2.6)

Publication type: Diamond open access, i.e. free for authors and for readers.

Suited for: Regional to national studies in vegetation ecology from grasslands in the nemoral biome in Europe (plus adjacent regions).

Deadlines: Submissions are possible anytime.

Submissions and inquiries: steffen.boch@wsl.ch.

Further details: The printed version of *Tuexenia* is published once a year, but the journal publishes all articles "online first" shortly after acceptance. The EDGG Special Features have a tradition starting in 2005. After two years of interruption due to a lack of submissions, it is already clear that 2024 we will have a thick Special Feature again.

Scientific articles in *Palaeoarctic Grasslands*

Topic: Any topic within the scope of EDGG.

Editors: Jürgen Dengler (chair, CH) & all scientific editors of the journal (see imprint)

Journal Impact Factor: NA; **Cite Score:** NA

Publication type: Diamond open access, i.e. free for authors and for readers.

Suited for: Publishing scientific articles in PG is an attractive option for papers whose dataset is too small or whose spatial scope too narrow to be interesting for international journals indexed in Web of Science or Scopus. PG only requires that the analyses are sound and the presentation appropriate for an international scientific journal, but it does not require a huge dataset or innovative methods. Therefore, PG is particularly suitable publication venue for Bachelor and Master theses as well as project reports. PG accepts the following different types of scientific papers: Research Article, Methods in Grassland Ecology, Review, Forum Article, Scientific Report.

Deadlines: Submissions are possible anytime.

Submissions and inquiries:

dr.juergen.dengler@gmail.com.

Further details: From now on we replaced the previous editorial peer review with a full peer review, making the publication in PG even more attractive. Accepted papers benefit from free linguistic editing by one of our Linguistic Editors.

EDGG Special Feature in *Hacquetia*

Topic: Biodiversity and conservation of Palaeoarctic grasslands.

Guest Editors: Rocco Labadessa (Chair, IT), Orsolya Valkó (HU), Stephen Venn (PL/FI) & Denys Vynokurov (DE/UA)

Journal Impact Factor: 0.5; **Cite Score:** 1.6 (Tracker: 1.3)

Publication type: Diamond open access, i.e. free for authors and for readers.

Suited for: Any regional to national articles within the scope of EDGG, i.e. any study dealing with grasslands s.l. throughout the Palaeoarctic biogeographic realm (fauna, flora, vegetation, ecology, conservation).

Deadlines: Abstract submission until 15 February 2024 to rocco.labadessa@gmail.com; submission of invited full articles until 31 October 2024.

Submissions and inquiries: rocco.labadessa@gmail.com.

Further details: See p. 29 of this issue.



Graphical illustration of the range of the EDGG publication venues for scientific papers. Graphics: L. Ancillotto.

EDGG Publication

Call for contributions to the new EDGG Special Feature in *Biological Conservation*

This is the first call for the submission of manuscripts for the EDGG-edited special feature (SF) in *Biological Conservation*. The title of the special issue is 'Conservation of Palaeoartctic steppes and semi-natural grasslands: challenges and solutions'. This SF will aim to highlight the most pressing conservation challenges that Palaeoartctic grasslands face and possibly provide evidence-based solutions for these problems. Presenters at the 18th Eurasian Grassland Conference ([EGC](#)) are especially welcome to submit papers related to their presentations, but the SF is open not only to participants of the EGC, but any scientist dealing with grassland conservation in the Palaeoartctic realm.

[Biological Conservation](#) is a leading international journal in conservation science, published by Elsevier. It has a Journal Impact Factor of 5.9 (2022) and a Scopus Cite Score of 11.6. The journal is ranked as 5/199 in the subject area 'Nature and landscape conservation' in the Scimago ranking. The journal publishes high-quality studies that push forward our knowledge on the conservation of species, habitats, ecosystems or landscapes. *Biological Conservation* is a hybrid journal that publishes both open access and subscription articles.

In the SF, studies on any taxon and any Palaeoartctic grassland habitat (including steppes, arctic-alpine grasslands, semi-natural grasslands) are welcome as long as they meet the following criteria:

- the article should be of sufficient novelty, and should be broadly generalizable beyond the studied system or the studied species
- the article should have direct implications for the conservation of Palaeoartctic grasslands (either theoretical, practical, or policy-related implications)
- the article should be based on robust analyses and results (in case of original research articles and meta-analyses)

Various article types (original research articles, review papers, short communications, and perspectives) are welcome to the SF. We are especially looking forward to multi-taxon studies or research that addresses broad-scale conservation issues, including reviews, and perspective papers. For detailed author guidelines please consult the journal homepage.

Procedure and deadlines

The details of the call for submissions will be published at the end of 2023.

We plan the following schedule for the special feature. If you plan to contribute, you are invited to **send an abstract** to the managing guest editor, Orsolya Valkó, **by 15 February 2024** (more details about the abstract submission will be communicated later in 2023). Based on these abstracts, the guest editor team will decide which papers to invite and will inform the authors by 31 March 2024. The **deadline for full-text submission is planned to 31 October 2024** and manuscripts will undergo the normal peer-review process. We plan to open the submission portal for the invited contributions by 1 May 2024. Accepted papers will appear online shortly after acceptance and will receive final page numbers when the whole SF is completed.

Guest Editor Team:

Orsolya Valkó, Hungary, [Google Scholar](#)

Jürgen Dengler, Switzerland, [Google Scholar](#)

Leonardo Ancillotto, Italy, [Google Scholar](#)

Johannes Kamp, Germany, [Google Scholar](#)

Contact for questions and submission of manuscripts (Managing Guest Editor):

Orsolya Valkó, valkoorsi@gmail.com

EDGG Publication**Call for contributions to the new
EDGG Special Feature in *Hacquetia***

This is the first call for the submission of manuscripts for the new EDGG Special Feature in *Hacquetia*. We welcome manuscripts about biodiversity and conservation of natural and semi-natural grasslands, including studies on all taxa and from any region in the Palaeoartctic realm (Europe; West, Central and North Asia; North Africa). Presenters at the 18th Eurasian Grassland Conference ([EGC](#)) are especially welcome to submit papers related to their presentations, but we welcome any study dealing with grassland studies in the Palaeoartctic realm.

[Hacquetia](#) is the international journal of the Biological Branch of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences. It appears in two issues per year, both in print and online. Through offering longer articles, open access publication and free reproduction of colour figures, it is a very attractive publication venue. The journal is indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science literature databases, and it now has a Journal Impact Factor of 0.5 and a Scopus Cite Score of 1.6.

This Special Feature will be the 8th EDGG-edited Special Issue in *Hacquetia*, following seven previous editions since 2014. This Special Feature will appear as the first issue of 2025, with about 150–250 pages reserved for our articles. EDGG is also considering the opportunity of providing linguistic editing support for accepted manuscripts.

Procedure and deadlines: If you plan to contribute, you are invited to **send an abstract** to the managing guest editor (see below) **by 15 February 2024**. The guest editor team will select papers to invite by 31 March 2024. The **deadline for full-text submission is planned to 31 October 2024** and manuscripts will undergo the normal peer-review process. Accepted papers will appear online approximately in June 2025. Author guidelines can be found at [Hacquetia homepage](#).

Guest Editor Team:

Rocco Labadessa, Italy, [Google Scholar](#)

Orsolya Valkó, Hungary, [Google Scholar](#)

Stephen Venn, Poland, [Google Scholar](#)

Denys Vynokurov, Ukraine, [Google Scholar](#)

Contact for questions and abstract submission

(Chair of the Guest Editors):

Rocco Labadessa, rocco.labadessa@gmail.co)



Poplar tree in typical steppe in the Orenburg Province, Russia. Photo: I. Smelansky.

EDGG Publication

EDGG chapters in the *Encyclopedia of the World's Biomes* are highly cited

In 2020, EDGG edited 13 chapters in the 3500-page volume *Encyclopedia of the World's Biomes* (Goldstein et al. 2020; see presentation by Dengler & Török 2020). These chapters are harmonised treatises of the grasslands and shrublands of the whole Palaeoarctic biogeographic realm, accompanied with a synthesis chapter (Dengler et al. 2020).

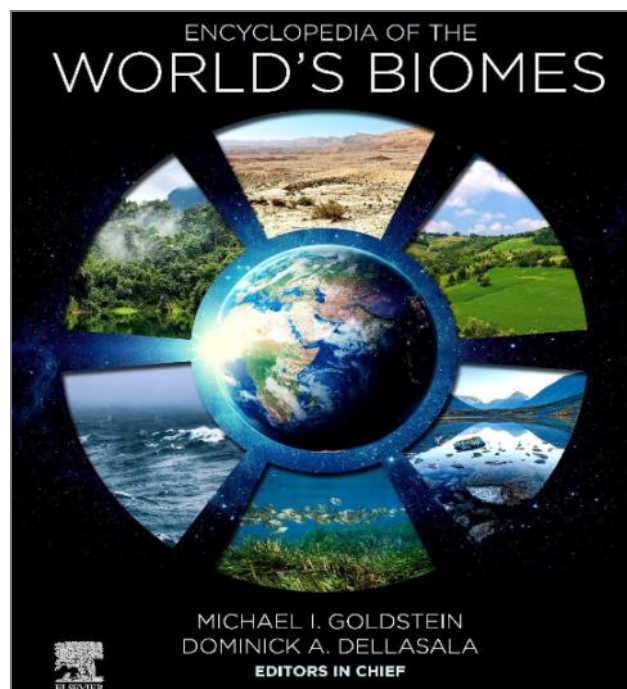
Usually, it is hard to assess how well book chapters are perceived and used by the scientific community in relation to journal articles. Luckily, this has changed as one of the two main global bibliometric databases, Scopus, now also covers major books and book series. Using this opportunity yielded the following results (as of 28 October 2023), which underline an outstanding impact of the joint publication efforts within EDGG. The synthesis paper (Dengler et al. 2020) is with hitherto 46 citations the by far most cited among 556 chapters in the *Encyclopedia*. However, also some of the regional chapters perform quite well, with *Grasslands of Western Europe* (Boch et al. 2020) on rank 4 (14 citations), *Grasslands of Eastern Europe* (Török et al. 2020) on rank 5 (13 citations), *Grasslands of China* (Li et al. 2020) and *Grasslands and shrublands of the Mediterranean region* (Guarino et al. 2020) jointly on rank 11 (11 citations each) and *Grasslands and shrublands of Mongolia* (Pfeiffer et al. 2020) on rank 22 (9 citations). Congratulations to all authors!

This underlines the value of the EDGG-edited chapters as major reference works for research on Palaeoarctic grasslands and shrublands. We thus invite you (EDGG members and beyond) to take advantage of these modern and comprehensive treatises by EDGG-experts. You find the full list of all EDGG-edited chapters in Dengler & Török (2020). In case your university does not provide access to the content of the *Encyclopedia*, Dengler & Török (2020) list the e-mails of the lead authors of each chapter, whom you can ask for a pdf (or you can do it via Research Gate).

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- Dengler, J. & Török, P. 2020. Encyclopedia of the World's Biomes published with 13 EDGG chapters included. *Palaeoarctic Grasslands* 46: 10-11.
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- Guarino, R., Vrahnakis, M., Rodriguez Rojo, M.P., Giuga, L. & Pasta, S. 2020. Grasslands and shrublands of the Mediterranean region. In: Goldstein, M.I., DellaSala, D.A., DiPaolo, D.A. (eds.) *Encyclopedia of the world's biomes*. Volume 3: Forests – trees of life. Grasslands and shrublands – sea of plants, pp. 638–655. Elsevier, Amsterdam, NL.
- Li, F.Y., Jäschke, Y., Guo, K. & Wesche, K. 2020. Grasslands of China. In: Goldstein, M.I., DellaSala, D.A., DiPaolo, D.A. (eds.) *Encyclopedia of the world's biomes*. Volume 3: Forests – trees of life. Grasslands and shrublands – sea of plants, pp. 773–784. Elsevier, Amsterdam, NL.
- Pfeiffer, M., Dulamsuren, C. & Wesche, K. 2020. Grasslands and shrublands of Mongolia. In: Goldstein, M.I., DellaSala, D.A., DiPaolo, D.A. (eds.) *Encyclopedia of the world's biomes*. Volume 3: Forests – trees of life. Grasslands and shrublands – sea of plants, pp. 759–772. Elsevier, Amsterdam, NL.
- Török, P., Dembiczy, I., Dajic-Stevanovic, Z. & Kuzemko, A. 2020. Grasslands of Eastern Europe. In: Goldstein, M.I., DellaSala, D.A., DiPaolo, D.A. (eds.) *Encyclopedia of the world's biomes*. Volume 3: Forests – trees of life. Grasslands and shrublands – sea of plants, pp. 703–713. Elsevier, Amsterdam, NL.

Jürgen Dengler, Wädenswil, Switzerland
dr.juergen.dengler@gmail.com



Cover of the five-volume series *Encyclopedia of the World's Biomes*.

Photo Competition

Best Shots on “The colour blue in grasslands”

Here are the three winners of the EDGG Photo Competition dedicated to “The colour blue in grasslands”.

The Jury for the Photo Competition was composed of Edy Fantinato (Chair), Anna Kuzemko, Rocco Labadessa and Jim Martin.

1st place:



Echinops ritro subsp. *ruthenicus* in the dry grasslands of Măcin Mountains, Romania, September 2022.

Roxana Nicoară, Bucharest, Romania, roxanaion85@gmail.com

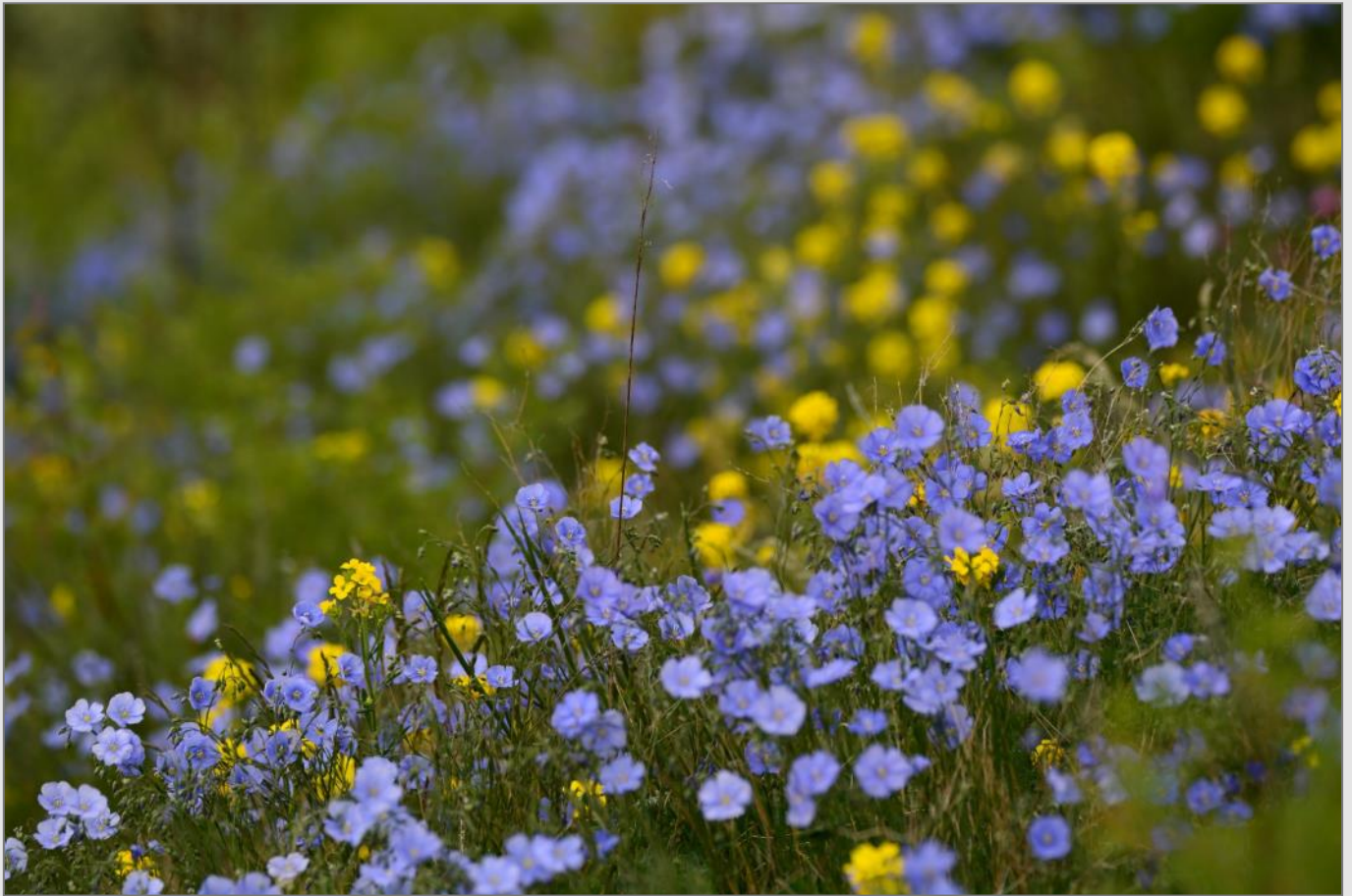
Reviews from the Jury:

“The *Echinops* plants here as if offer a blue anchor among the yellow straws of the dry grasslands.”

“The globe thistle heads standing out on the contrasting dry background wonderfully capture the sense of blue as a special colour in grasslands.”

“The colour complementarity in this photo between the yellow of the dry grasses and the blue of the *Echinops* emphasises the contrast and results in a wonderful portrait of the *Echinops*.”

2nd place:



The Staffelstein is a butte hill with a large nutrient poor grassland plateau surrounded by rocky slopes with huge stands of *Linum austriacum*. Bad Staffelstein, Germany, Bavaria. May 2022.

Andreas Zehm, Weilheim, Germany, andreas.zehm@on-our-way.de

Reviews from the Jury:

"I guess I'm just a bit obsessed with the delicate violet-blue flowers of the flax, which here remind me of a flowing river."

"I really like the composition of this photo, with the sharply focused blue flowers in the foreground turning to an impressionist style mixture of blue, yellow and green in the background."

"The diagonal composition of the photo makes the composition particularly dynamic, and the blue flowers become a single flowing body."

3rd place:



Mass occurrence of *Hyacinthella leucophaea* in alternate moist/dry, grazed grassland near Buško Jezero, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Robin Nikolei, Darmstadt, Germany, robin.nikolei@web.de

Reviews from the Jury:

"Colour blue fill this photo creating a beautiful pattern."

"The blue of *Hyacinthella* makes the composition wonderfully light and soft."

Photo Story

DOI: 10.21570/EDGG.PG.58-59.34-43

The Hailuoto island: antropogenically transformed, but still interesting

Photos and text by Mykyta Peregrym^{1,2*}, Oksana Futorna^{2,3} & Viktoriya Berezovska^{2,4}

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Inspired by the captivating photo story published in the last year December issue of *Palaeartic Grasslands* (Dengler & Dembiczy, 2022), we have decided to continue talking about islands of the Baltic Sea. In today's narrative, our focus turns to Hailuoto, the expansive gem of the Bothnian Bay, belonging to Finland, spanning 200.53 km². We were able to visit this unique territory three times in summer 2023, because of our fellowships in the University of Oulu within a special support of Ukrainian researchers in the time of the Russian invasion in Ukraine from the [Biodiverse Anthropocenes research programme](#).

Hailuoto is located approximately 53 km opposite one of the largest cities of Finland, Oulu, which also names the capital of Northern Scandinavia. It is possible to reach by local public buses or private vehicles crossing the water area by free ferry. While the island took shape as a singular landmass only in the last century, numerous smaller islands that now form part of it emerged from the sea approximately 1850 - 1950 years ago, owing to the continual land elevation resulting from post-glacial rebound. Notably, Hailuoto's land area continues to expand, with projections suggesting an eventual connection with the mainland.

Despite its flat terrain, with its highest point reaching 31 meters above sea level, Hailuoto boasts an array of diverse habitats, including sandy shores, coastal meadows, pine forests, inland dunes, dry pine barrens, sphagnum bogs, and lakes, among others. With a modest population of about 950 inhabitants, the island maintains an incredibly low population density of 4.73 people/km². However, Hailuoto is attractive a place for tourists, especially during the summer months, because of its long sand beaches and natural wonders, though there are some interesting phenomena in other seasons too, for example, the autumn migration of swans or accumulating thousands of "egg-shaped" sea ice on the shore.

While a comprehensive inventory of vascular plants specific to Hailuoto is yet to be compiled, there are 281 species known for the northernmost islands of Gulf of Bothnia for a whole, not including several hybrids of *Alnus* Mill., *Carex* L., *Equisetum* L., *Galium* L., *Rubus* L. and *Salix* L. genera, previously noted here. According to data gathered from iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org>), Hailuoto is confirmed to host 140 species of vascular plants. On October 16, 2023 the most popular plants were *Lathyrus japonicus* Willd. with 43 observations, *Honckenya peploides* (L.) Ehrh. (25 observations), *Leymus arenarius* (L.) Hochst. (20 observations), and



Marjaniemi Lighthouse. Read more: [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marjaniemi_Lighthouse).

Empetrum nigrum L. (18 observations). Other species have been recorded with seven observations or fewer.

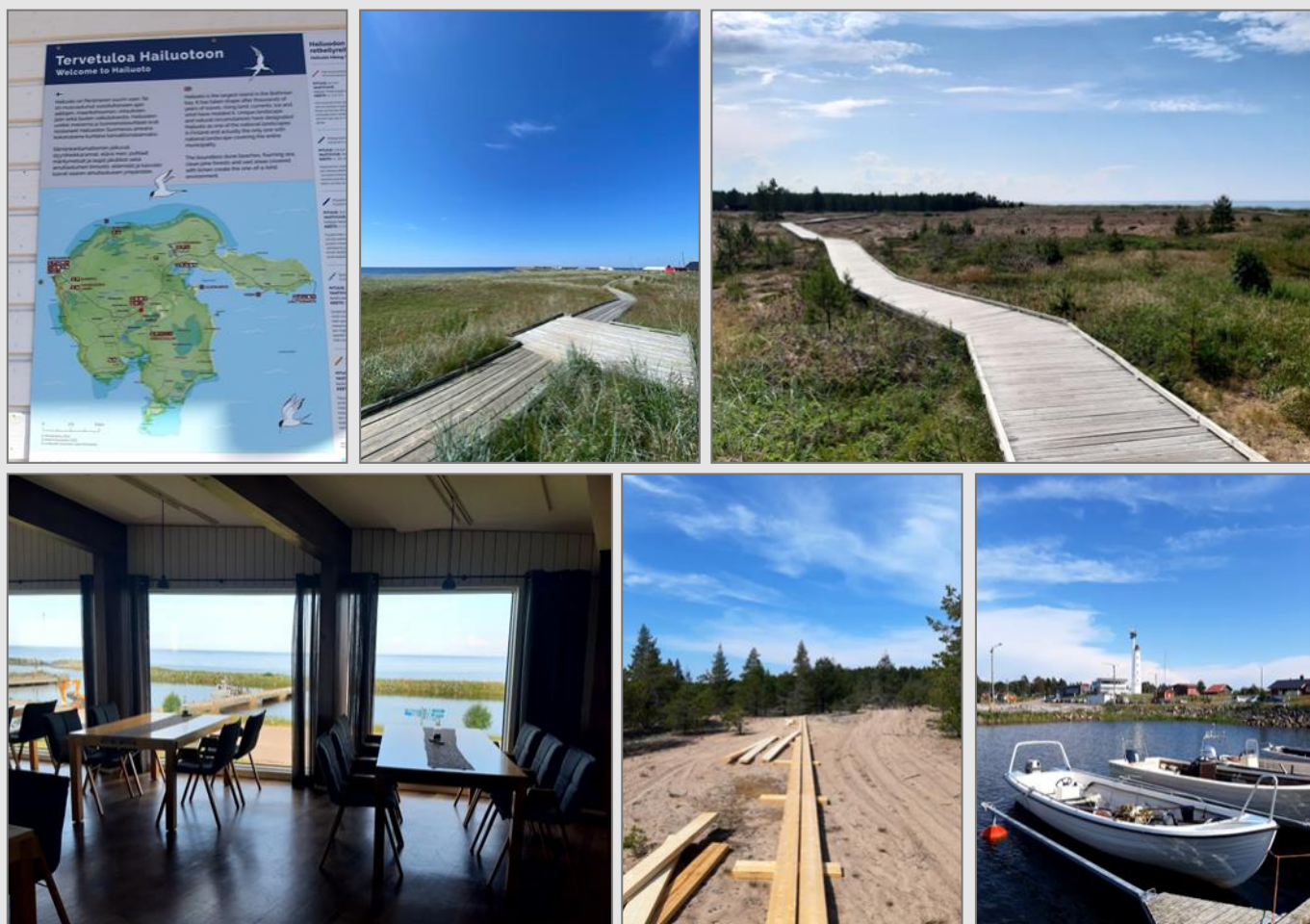
A swift survey of Hailuoto through Google Maps satellite imagery reveals extensive tracts of managed forests, some of which have been recently cleared. As a result, one gets the impression that nature here has been completely transformed and nothing interesting may be found there. However, this is not absolutely true, because many small plots of different kinds of natural and semi-natural vegetation remain in their relevantly unchanged state. We

saw this during our three one-day trips on June 29, July 11 and August 18, 2023, when we visited eastern, southern and northern parts of the island respectively.

Hailuoto is home to five Nature 2000 areas, spanning a total of 7068 hectares. Four of these areas are protected under both Birds and Habitats Directives (FI1100201, FI1100202, FI1100203, FI1100204), and one territory - only under the Habitats Directive (FI1100206). These areas boast an array of unique habitats, including Baltic esker islands with sandy, rocky and shingle beach vegeta-



Typical buildings in the middle of natural ecosystems, which are mainly used for recreation in summer and weekends.



The elements of the recreation and education infrastructure.

tion and sublittoral vegetation; Boreal Baltic coastal meadows; Boreal Baltic sandy beaches with perennial vegetation; annual vegetation of drift lines; coastal lagoons; decalcified fixed dunes with *Empetrum nigrum*; dry sand heaths with *Calluna* and *Empetrum nigrum*; embryonic shifting dunes; European dry heaths; Fennoscandian wooded pastures; fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"); humid dune slacks; shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (L.) Link ("white dunes"); wooded dunes of the Atlantic, Continental and Boreal region; as well as some protected forests, bogs, mires and fens. Birds are absolutely dominated among target species (*Grus grus* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Falco subbuteo* Linnaeus, 1758, *Sterna hirundo* Linnaeus, 1758, *Anser fabalis* (Latham, 1787), *Limosa limosa* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Limosa lapponica* (Linnaeus, 1758) and others), but also there are two such species of plants (*Alisma wahlenbergii* (Holmb.) Juz. in V.L. Komarov and *Hippuris tetraphylla* L. f.). Also, Hailuoto is designated as an Important Bird Area within "[Oulu region wetlands](#)" site, and as Ramsar site "[Bird Wetlands of Hailuoto Island](#)".

For a more profound understanding of Hailuoto's natural history, we recommend acquainting oneself with the works of Vartiainen (1980), Vilpa & Alasaarela (1983), Hicks (1988), Hulme (1994), and Hellemaa (1998). As well, we think that Hailuoto might be a very interesting place for future EDGG field workshops or even for a mid-excursion during an Eurasian Grassland Conference, especially taking into account the fact that such events of our working network have never been held in the Nordic countries.



Hailuoto has practically abandoned livestock farming, but horses are kept in small numbers

Further Reading:

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- Hellemaa, P. 1998. The development of coastal dunes and their vegetation in Finland. *Fennia - International Journal of Geography* 176(1): 111–221.
- Hicks, S. 1988. Palynological evidence for the occupation of Hailuoto. *Studia Historica Septentrionalia* 15: 35–88.
- Hulme, P.D. 1994. A palaeobotanical study of paludifying pine forest on the island of Hailuoto, northern Finland. *New Phytologist* 126: 153–162.

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Small areas of meadows, especially near settlements, are systematically mown, because grazing is absent on the island.



Dunes and heaths, very rare and threatened habitats in Finland, were restored in some places by clearing away trees and bushes, cutting the rootstock of common reeds and other species.



Littoral habitats of the Hailuoto island.



Coastal dunes mostly with *Leymus arenarius* communities.



Pine, birch and willow saplings are slowly spreading on coastal dunes.



Heaths of Hailuoto.



Inland dunes mostly covered by *Empetrum nigrum* L., *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (L.) Spreng., *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* L. and lichens.



A typical pine forest with domination of *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* L. and *V. myrtillus* L.



Diverse meadows.



A few examples of Hailuoto's bogs, mires and fens.



Lathyrus japonicus Willd., the most impressive plant of the coastal dunes in June.



Honckenya peploides (L.) Ehrh., a small spreading plant, forming patches on sand beaches and coastal dunes.



Silene uniflora Roth.



Cornus suecica L., a rhizomatous herbaceous perennial of heaths and forests.



Eriophorum angustifolium Honck. and its community.



Linnaea borealis L.



Some edible berries of Hailuoto: *Empetrum nigrum* L., *Vaccinium myrtillus* L., *V. vitis-idaea* L., *V. uliginosum* L., *Rubus arcticus* L. and *R. chamaemorus* L.

Recent Publications of our Members

In this section, the contents of which will also be made available via our homepage, we want to facilitate an overview of **grassland-related publications** throughout Eurasia and to improve their accessibility. You are invited to send lists of such papers from the last three years following the format below to Rocco Labadessa, rocco.labadessa@gmail.com. We will include your e-mail address so that readers can request a pdf.

Biodiversity and Ecology

Billeter, R., Widmer, S., Riesen, M., Krüsi, B.O., **Dengler, J.** & Thiel, D. 2023. *Biodiversitätsforschung im Jagdbanngebiete Graue Hörner (Kt. SG)*. N+L Inside 2023(3): 29–33.

Fóti, Sz., Bartha, S., Balogh, J., Pintér, K., Koncz, P., Biró, M., Süle, G., Petrás, D., De Luca, G., Mészáros, Á., Zimmermann, Z., Szabó, G., **Csathó, A.I.**, Ladányi, M., Péli, E.R. & Nagy, Z. 2023. Fluctuations and trends in spatio-temporal patterns of plant species and diversity in a sandy pasture. *Journal of Vegetation Science* 34: e13190. doi.org/10.1111/jvs.13190

Riedel, S., Widmer, S., Babbi, M., Buholzer, S., Grünig, A., Herzog, F., Richner, N. & **Dengler, J.** 2023. The Historic Square Foot Dataset – Outstanding small-scale richness in Swiss grasslands around 1900. *Journal of Vegetation Science* 34: e13208. doi.org/10.1111/jvs.13208

Peterka, T., Hájková, P., Jiroušek, M., Hinterlang, D., Chytrý, M., Aunina, L., Deme, J., Lyons, M., Seiler, H., Zechmeister, H., Apostolova, I., Beierkuhnlein, C., Bischof, M., Biță-Nicolae, C., Brancaloni, L., Čušterevska, R., **Dengler, J.**, (...) & Hajek, M. 2023. Formalised classification of the class *Montio-Cardaminetea* in Europe: towards a consistent system of spring vegetation. *Preslia* 95: 347–383. doi.org/10.23855/preslia.2023.347

Venn, S., Teerikangas, J. & Paukkunen, J. 2023. Bees and pollination in grassland habitats in Helsinki (Finland) are diverse but dominated by polylectic species. *Basic and Applied Ecology* 69: 1–12. doi.org/10.1016/j.baae.2023.03.003

Conservation and Restoration

Labadessa, R., Ancillotto, L., Adamo, M.P., Forte, L., Vicario, S., Zollo, L., & Tarantino, C. 2023. Echoes of the past: Agricultural legacies shape the successional dynamics of protected semi-natural dry grasslands. *Science of The Total Environment* 905: 166990. doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2023.166990

Methodology, classification, databases

Dengler, J. 2023. Priorities in journal selection for authors, reviewers, editors, librarians and science funders. *Vegetation Classification and Survey* 4: 219–229. doi.org/10.3897/VCS.110296

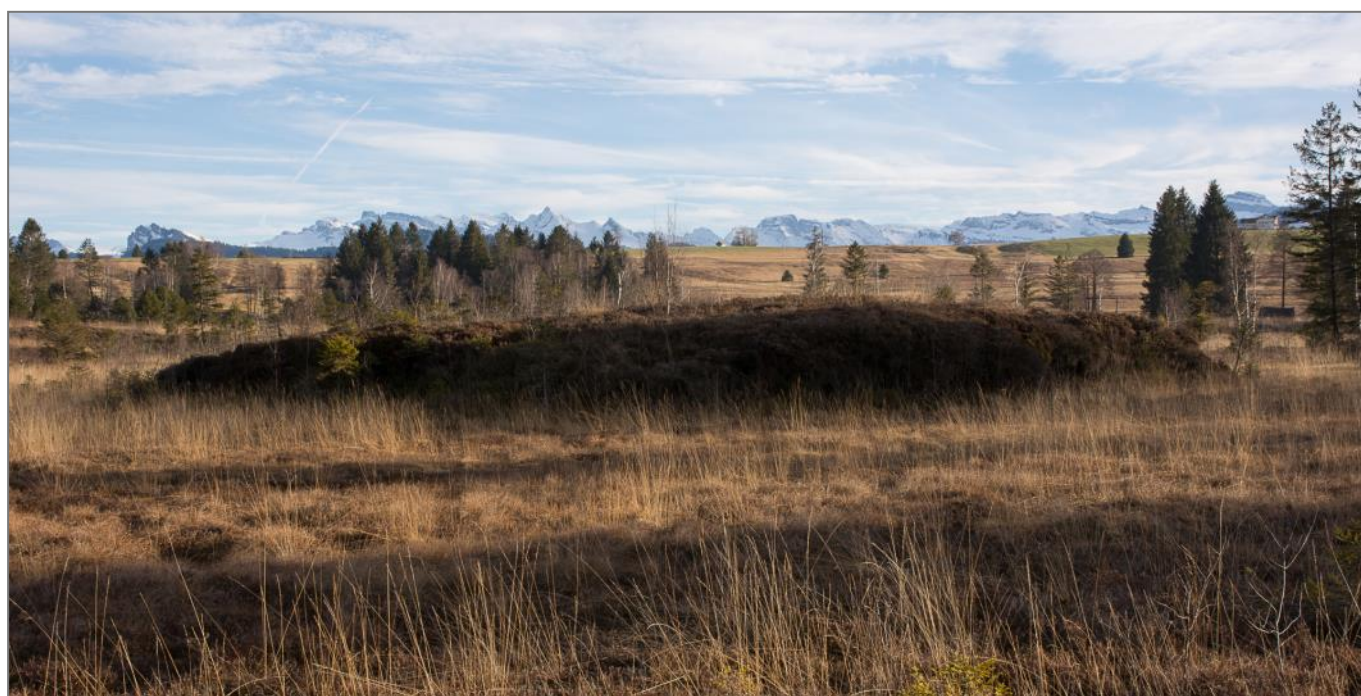
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Schwantenu mire complex in Switzerland. Photo: J. Dengler.

Forthcoming Events

Talk Grasslands January 2024

Tuesday 16 January 2024, 14:00 cet

See details at pp. 10.

Talk Grasslands February 2024

Tuesday 6 February 2024, 14:00 cet

See details at pp. 10.

Talk Grasslands March 2024

Tuesday 12 March 2024, 14:00 cet

See details at pp. 10.

7th European Congress of Conservation Biology (ECCB)

17-21 June 2024, Bologna, Italy

Conference website: <https://eccb2024.eu/>

18th EDGG Field Workshop

1-11 June 2024, SW Alps, Italy and France

See details at pp. 11-12.

19th Eurasian Dry Grassland Conference 2024

26 August – 1 September 2024, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy

See details at p. 13.

Joint IAVS/EVS Conference

16-21 September 2024, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal.



Ehippiger zelleri in the Province of Rome, Italy. Photo: L. Ancillotto.



EDGG on the web:

<http://www.edgg.org>



The Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG), founded in 2008, is a working group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS) and member of the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP). On 30 November 2023, it had 1422 members from 65 countries.

The **Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG)** is a network of researchers and conservationists interested in any type of Palaeartic natural and semi-natural grasslands. It is an official Working Group of IAVS (<http://www.iavs.org>) but one can join our group without being an IAVS member. We live from the activities of our members. Everybody can join the EDGG without any fee or other obligation.

The EDGG covers all aspects related to grasslands, in particular: plants - animals - fungi - microbia - soils - taxonomy - phylogeography - ecophysiology - population biology - species' interactions - vegetation ecology - syntaxonomy - landscape ecology - biodiversity - land use history - agriculture - nature conservation - restoration - environmental legislation - environmental education.

EDGG Executive Committee and responsibilities of its members

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Secretary-General; Deputy Treasurer and Representative to IAVS; Special Feature Coordinator; Deputy Chief Editor of *Palaeartic Grasslands*; Deputy Field Workshop Coordinator

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Social Media Administrator; Deputy Editor of Website; Deputy Secretary-General

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Stipa capillata and *Stipa zalesskii* steppe in the Altai Territory, Russia. Photo: I. Smelansky.