# *Book review*

Rūsiņa S. (Ed.) (2017): Protected habitat management guidelines for Latvia, Volume 3, Semi-natural grasslands. Nature Conservation Agency, Sigulda, 456 pp. Will be available for free download at www.daba.gov.lv

Grassland restoration and application of suitable management in semi-natural grasslands is in the focus of scientific and practical interest since decades (Dengler et al. 2014). On the one hand, there were high scientific efforts made to understand the internal community dynamics and the effect and mechanisms of external drivers (i.e. management practices) on grassland biodiversity. On the other hand, there is an urgent need to support nature conservation authorities, farmers and other stakeholders with appropriate reference works and guidelines for appropriate management and restoration (Blakesley & Buckley 2017). There is, however, a visible gap between the restoration theory and conservation and restoration practice which should be bridged by supporting effective knowledge transfer and communication (Török & Helm 2017).

The reviewed book by Rūsiņa (Ed.) (2017) is a very comprehensive and practice driven approach summarising the existing scientific and evidence-based knowledge of management and restoration of Latvian grassland habitats. The 24 chapters of the book are arranged in four thematic parts. The first part of the book, containing four chapters, deals with historical origin of grasslands and their traditional use, ecosystem goods and services, current protection status and biodiversity. The second part with three chapters introduce the principles of habitat restoration and management planning. The most voluminous third part with 12 chapters introduce the 13 EU protected grassland types (one introductory chapter followed by the introduction of 10 types in 10 chapters plus one chapter with three types of wooded grassland types). The fourth part with five chapters focus on the evaluation and comparison of methods frequently used in maintaining and recovery of grasslands.

It is also important to mention that the book contains also five annexes, out of the first introduce a key for the identification of habitat quality (i.e. habitat naturalness and degradation). The second annex summarise in smart spreadsheets the optimal, suboptimal and inappropriate management schemes for all EU protected grassland habitat types of Latvia. Annex 3 introduces the most important problematic species (both natives and adventives), Annex 4 the most important indicator plant species of various grassland types, while Annex 5 provides a compilation of bird species for which grasslands serve as important breeding and feeding habitat. The latter three annexes are supplemented with a photo-documentation of mentioned species based on which most of them can be easily identified also by farmers.
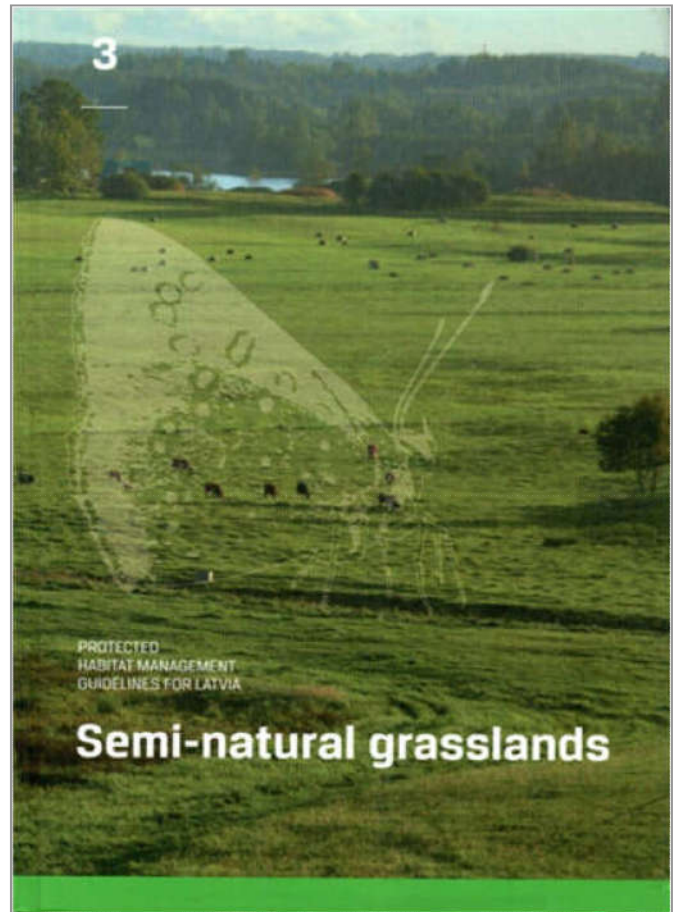
The book is richly illustrated with photographs and other types of paintings and artworks. To sum up the reviewed book is an important milestone on the road to the wise and sustainable management and conservation of Latvian grasslands, but it is also an important reference work for overall grassland conservation and restoration in Europe as most of the reviewed grassland types, related problems and suggested solutions and conservation schemes are also valid for other countries.

References

Blakesley, D. & Buckley, P. 2016. Grassland restoration and management. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter UK.

Dengler, J., Janišová, M., Török ,P. & Wellstein, C. 2014. Biodiversity of Palaearctic grasslands: a synthesis. *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment* 182: 1-14.

Török, P. & Helm, A. 2017. Ecological theory provides strong support for habitat restoration. *Biological Conservation* 206: 85-91

Péter Török, Debrecen, Hungary

molinia@gmail.com