

of the European Dry Grassland Group



We hope that you have a pleasant summer full of exciting fieldwork and relaxing holidays. We also spent many days outside studying and enjoying grassland ecosystems. We met many of you during the conferences, workshops and meetings, some of them organized within the EDGG. To remember all these pleasant moments, we prepared a new Bulletin issue filled with some reports and numerous pictures. We are looking forward to meeting you again, one good opportunity to achieve this is to attend the next European Dry Grassland Meeting, which will be held in May 2015 in Mainz, Germany. The invitation and first call information can be found inside this issue. Enjoy the summer and see you soon!

Editors

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Satyrium esculi on Helichrysum stoechas. Lorca, Navarre, Spain. Photo: Didem Ambarli

July 2014

EDGG homepage: www.edgg.org

European Dry Grassland Group

The European Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) is a network of specialists for European dry grassland and Palearctic steppes. EDGG is a Working Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS).

The basic aims of the EDGG are:

- ♠ to compile and to distribute information on research and conservation in dry grasslands beyond national borders;
- ♠ to stimulate active cooperation among dry grassland scientists (exchanging data, common data standards, joint projects).

To achieve its aims, EDGG provides seven media for the exchange of information between dry grassland researchers and conservationists:

- ♠ the **Bulletin of the EDGG** (published quarterly);
- ♠ the **EDGG homepage** (www.edgg.org);
- ♠ e-mails via our **mailing list** on urgent issues;
- ♠ the **European Dry Grassland Meetings** - organized annually at different locations throughout Europe;
- ♠ **EDGG research expeditions and field workshops** to sample baseline data of underrepresented regions of Europe;

♠ EDGG vegetation databases;

♠ **Special Features** on dry grassland-related topics in various peer-reviewed journals.

The EDGG covers all aspects related to dry 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.

Anyone can join the EDGG without any fee or other obligation. To become a member of the European Dry Grassland Group or its subordinate units, please, send an e-mail to Jürgen Dengler, including your name and complete address, and specify any of the groups you wish to join. More detailed information can be found at: http://www.edgg.org/about_us.htm.

As of 19 July 2014 EDGG had 1023 members from 61 countries all over the world.

EDGG Subgroups

EDGG members are automatically assigned to the Regional Subgroup of the region in which they reside. If you additionally wish to join other Subgroups or the new Grassland Conservation and Restoration Subgroup, just send an e-mail to the Membership Administrator (juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de).

Arbeitsgruppe Trockenrasen (Germany) (contact: Thomas Becker - beckerth@uni-trier.de), Ute Jandt - jandt@botanik.uni-halle.de : 236 members

Working Group on Dry Grasslands in the Nordic and Baltic Region (contact: Jürgen Dengler - juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de): 90 members

South-East European Dry Grasslands (SEEDGG) (contact: Iva Apostolova - iva@bio.bas.bg): 264 members

Mediterranean Dry Grasslands (Med-DG) (contact: Michael Vrahnakis - mvrhna@teilar.gr): 311 members

Topical Subgroup Grassland Conservation and Restoration (contact: Péter Török - molinia@gmail.com): 68 members

EDGG Executive Committee and responsibilities of its members

Jürgen Dengler: Membership Administrator, Coordinator for Special Features, Coordinator for EDGG Expeditions, Book Review Editor, Deputy Contact Officer to other organisations. juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de

Monika Janišová: Editor-in-Chief of the Bulletin of the EDGG, Representative to the IAVS, Deputy Meetings Coordinator. monika.janisova@gmail.com

Solvita Rūsiņa: Editor-in-Chief of the EDGG homepage (incl. other electronic media). rusina@lu.lv

Péter Török: Contact Officer to other organisations, Deputy-Secretary-General, Deputy-Officer of the Special Policy Committee. molinia@gmail.com

Stephen Venn: Secretary-General, Deputy-Editor-in-Chief of the EDGG homepage (incl. other electronic media). stephen.venn@helsinki.fi

Michael Vrahnakis: Meetings Coordinator, Officer of the Special Policy Committee. mvrhna@teilar.gr

The 12th European Dry Grassland Meeting

From Population Biology to Community Ecology

22-27th May 2015, Mainz, Germany



Pulsatilla vulgaris at the excursion site Höllberg in Rhine Hesse. Photo: T. Becker

First call

The 12th European Dry Grassland Meeting will take place in Mainz, south-west Germany, and will be hosted by the Universities of Mainz and Trier. The venue of the conference will be the Green School in the Botanic Garden and the neighbouring lecture hall.

Overall topic: **From Population Biology to Community Ecology**

For Palearctic dry grasslands there is a long-reaching tradition of community description leading especially for Central Europe to a detailed picture of dry grassland stock. On the other hand, there is increasing research on the biology of species and populations reaching from e.g. pollination biology and dispersal ecology to demography and population genetics. Both scientific disciplines, population biology and community ecology, are often less connected with each other and therefore we like to make this connection for the dry grassland biota (invertebrates, vertebrates, non-vascular plants, vascular plants, fungi and lichens) as the overall topic of the next EDGM. We expect a fruitful combination of the different scientific fields and ask: what can the different disciplines learn from each other?



*Middle Rhine valley near Bacharach with wine yards and rocky slopes bearing xerothermic vegetation complexes with *Acer monspessulanum*. Photo: T. Becker*

Specific topics of the meeting:

- Population biology and community ecology of dry grassland species
- Diversity and general ecology of dry grasslands
- Management and conservation of dry grasslands
- Socio-cultural aspects of dry grasslands

Preliminary programme

May 22 (Friday)

16:00-18:00 Registration

18:00-20:00 Come-together in the Green School in the Botanic Garden

May 23 (Saturday)

9:00 Opening ceremony followed by oral presentations and poster sessions

May 24 (Sunday)

9:00-afternoon: Oral presentations and poster sessions

EDGG General Assembly (approx. at 18:00)

Grassland Party in the Green School (approx. at 20:30)

May 25 (Monday)

Morning-noon: Botanic Garden excursion

Afternoon: Mainz Sand excursion

Evening: Town visit

May 26 (Tuesday)

Post-excursion 1: Dry grasslands on volcanic rock in Rhine-Hesse (with Grassland Pick-nick)

May 27 (Wednesday)

Post-excursion 2: Xerothermic vegetation complexes in the Middle Rhine valley; back at the Mainz station at late afternoon



View over the Rhine River on Mainz and the Theodor Heuss Bridge. Photo: Arcalino / Wikimedia Commons

The conference language will be English.

Location

Mainz is the capital of the federal state Rhineland-Palatinate, with about 200,000 inhabitants. The town is located precisely on the 50° northern latitude, on the Rhine River and is well-connected both by train and plane (see below). The federal state Rhineland-Palatinate in south-west Germany is dominated by large natural landscapes, such as the Pfälzer Wald forest or the Eifel Mountains. In the river valleys in particular, the climate is warm and dry, which is ideal for wine production and the development of extensive dry grasslands. The dry grasslands of the Rhineland-Palatinate mostly grow on siliceous parent rock, mostly originating from as far back as the Devonian Period. In parts, the bedrock is the result of ancient volcanic activity, as is the case in the area of Rhine-Hesse, which comprises the landscape between Mainz and the adjacent mountain area to the west.

Registration and deadline

The conference webpage is intended to open in autumn 2014. The deadline for Abstracts is intended to be in February 2015 (but some weeks earlier if you apply for travel grants).

Fees and grants

The conference fee will be lower for IAVS members. We hope to offer a limited number of travel grants to attend the EDGM. For application, active participation in the workshop with an oral presentation or poster is required and prevalence will be given to young scientists with financial constraints (i.e. low income and/or particularly high costs to get to the meeting).

If you wish to apply for financial support, you first need to register yourself and the abstract of your contribution in the online form, then you can provide the necessary information for the travel grant application. Applicants for IAVS travel grants must be IAVS members.



View on the Mainz cathedral. Photo: Martin Bahmann



One of the venue places: Green School within the Botanic Garden (left) and steppe reconstruction site in the Mainz Botanic Garden (right). Photos: T. Becker

Presentations

There will be selection of oral presentations by the scientific committee of the meeting. The number of posters accepted will depend on the available wall space. Oral presentations may be 15 min for presentation + 5 min for discussion (or 12 + 3 min, depending on the number of submitted/accepted talks). Poster presentations may be 2 + 2 min long.

Excursions

Besides a guided tour to the dry grassland reconstruction sites in the Botanic Garden (the steppe reconstruction site has been among others created with seed material collected on the EDGG expeditions to Ukraine 2010 and Siberia 2013), we intend three excursions, two of them a whole day and one half a day long. The latter will lead into the Mainz Sand area at the city margin of Mainz. The area is part of a larger aeolian sand area reaching from Mainz to Ingelheim about 15 kilometres west. It was formed in the Pleistocene, when sand had been blown out from the Rhine River valley and accumulated. Today most parts of the sand area are under intensive land use by production of wine, fruits (mainly stone fruits) and even asparagus. Part of the protected area was already established in 1939 as the Mainz Sand reserve. In the 1970s, at the margin of the area, a number of high-rise buildings were built and in addition the highway to Wiesbaden was constructed. Therefore it is surprising that the area is still full of endangered species, both



Dry sand grasslands of the *Koelerion glaucae* with *Jurinea cyanoides* (left) and semi-dry grasslands of the *Cirsio-Brachypodium* with *Adonis vernalis* (right) in the Mainz Sand reserve. Photos: T. Becker

plants and animals. In the Mainz Sand area, the westernmost dry continental sand grasslands belonging to the *Koelerion glaucae*, variants of the *Festucion valesiacae* on sandy soil, can be found. In a natural pine forest, semi-dry grasslands of the *Cirsio-Brachypodium* type has developed, and on disturbed open sites there is annual vegetation of the *Sileno conicae-Cerastion semidecandri*. This area is the only known location of *Onosma arenaria* in Germany and is an example of relict vegetation that had survived in this isolated area since the late Pleistocene. During our excursion through the area we will focus on plants and animals (mainly insects) and on vegetation. Furthermore we will discuss the challenges and opportunities for conservation.

During the one-day excursion to Rhine-Hesse, we will visit dry grasslands on volcanic soil between Frei-Laubersheim and Siefersheim, west of Mainz. This excursion area comprises the transition zone of the Mainz Basin and the North-Palatinate Mountains. Topographically it is a hilly plain with embedded low mountains. Dry grasslands occur on steeper slopes and plateaus, while gentle slopes and plains were under intensive land-use (mostly vineyards). Hills and rocks bearing dry grasslands were formed by magmatic rhyolite, while at two separate sites, dry grasslands on magmatic andesite and basaltic melamphyre have developed. Dry grasslands on loess soil bearing *Festucion valesiacae* steppe-like grasslands occur at several places within a confined area. The area is the locus classicus and a core area of *Koelerio-Phleion* communities. Other dry grassland and heathland communities in the area belong to the *Sedo-Veronicion dillenii*, *Alyssosedion*, and *Genistion pilosae* alliances. The area is also well known for its white wine taverns, so-called *Straußenwirtschaften*, which we intend to “explore” during the excursion in this area.

Finally, an excursion is planned to the Middle Rhine Valley, to the north-west of Mainz. This area harbours rock slopes with extensive xerothermic vegetation complexes containing rocky grasslands (*Koelerio-Phleion*, *Sedo-Veronicion dillenii*) and xerophilic *Acer monspessulanum* forests (*Quercion pubescentis*). It is designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and is one of the classic touristic attractions of Germany. Moreover, this valley is a culturally important place for German ancient history. It was here that the Nibelungen Saga took place, in which a German king became invincible by bathing in the blood of a dragon, and finally the gold of the kingdom was sunk in the Rhine River and became the legendary Rhine Gold Treasure. Another saga tells that a fair-haired mermaid named Loreley sat on the rocks and allured skippers, distracting them from the dangerous currents, so that they finally sank with their ships in the river.



The Sand violet, *Viola rupestris*, in the Mainz Sand reserve.
Photo: T. Becker



A solitary wild bee (identified as a female of *Colletes cunicularis*) digging its hole in the Mainz Sand reserve.
Photo: T. Becker



Steppe-like grasslands on volcanic soil of the *Festucion valesiacae*/Koelerio-Phleion at the Höll site in Rhine Hesse. *Stipa pulcherrima* and *Genista sagittalis* are flowering; in the background the excursion site Martinsberg site. Photo: T. Becker



Dry grasslands on volcanic soil of the Koelerio-Phleion at the excursion site Höll in Rhine Hesse with flowering *Genista sagittalis* and *Rumex acetosella*. Photo: T. Becker

Travel to Mainz

Frankfurt Airport is about 20 km east of Mainz, while about 70 km west of Mainz there is the low budget Frankfurt-Hahn Airport, which is connected to Mainz by a shuttle bus.

N.B. When booking your tickets, please take care to distinguish between the two airports Frankfurt Airport (close to Mainz) and Frankfurt-Hahn Airport (70 km west of Mainz).

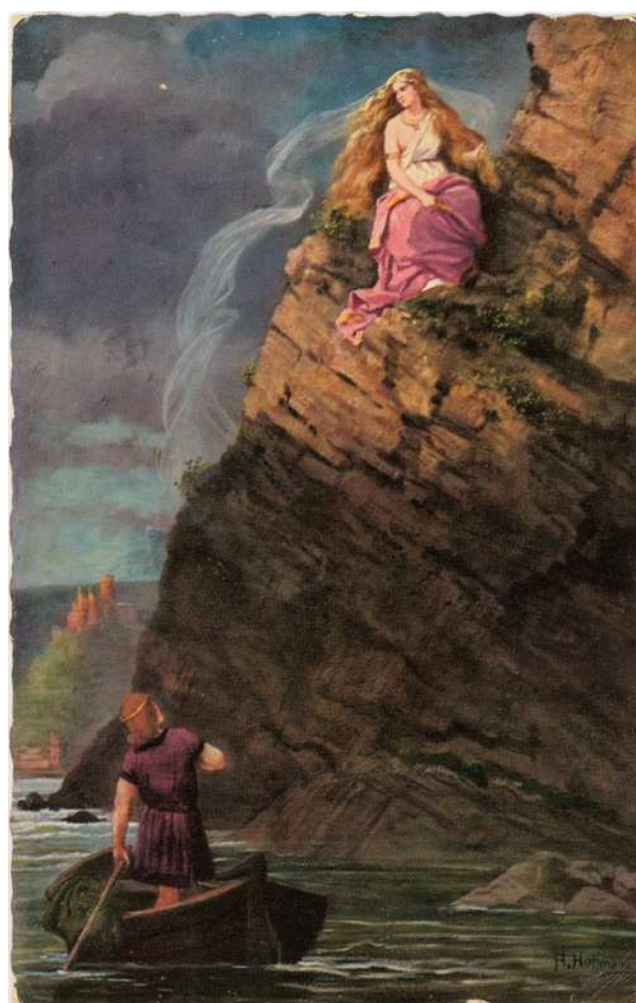
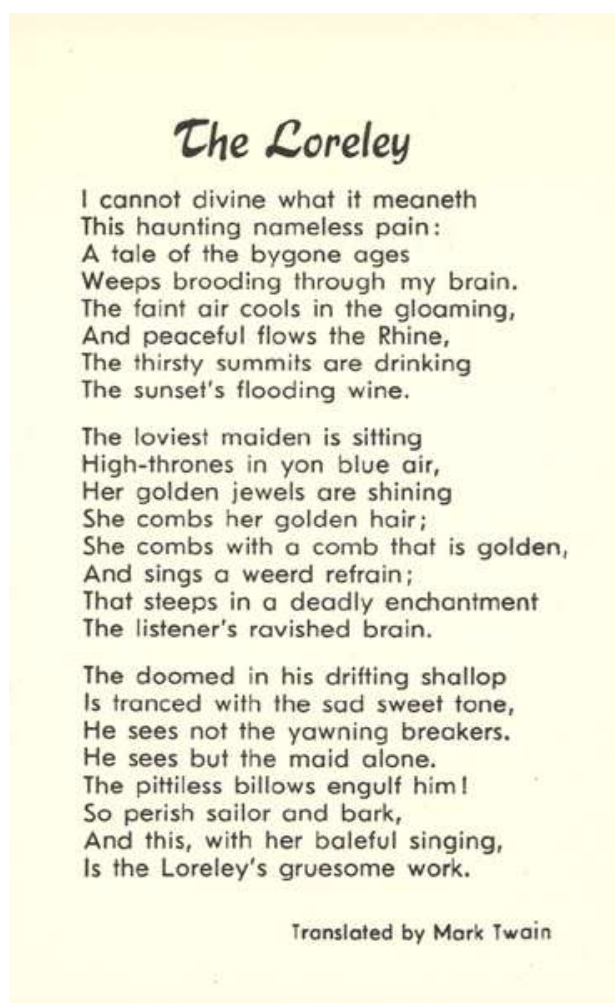
Participants arriving at Frankfurt Airport should travel to Mainz via the city train (S-Bahn), which runs every 20 minutes. Participants arriving at Frankfurt-Hahn Airport should travel to Mainz via the shuttle bus (one way: € 13.50). Shuttle buses leave Frankfurt-Hahn Airport every 30 minutes to 2 hours and terminate at Mainz Main Station. The duration of the journey is 65 minutes.

Young Investigator Prizes

As in previous years, prizes will be awarded to young scientists who excellently present their researches (orally or as poster). For these purposes, young scientists (less than 35 years old) will be asked at the registration desk if they wish to participate in the contest.

Conference publications

Participants will receive a Book of Abstracts during the meeting, which will also be published online via the EDGG homepage. As in previous years, there will be Special Features/Special Issues with selected contributions from the conference in international journals, guest-edited by EDGG members.



Historical postcards of the Loreley from the Rhine River Valley: a fair-haired mermaid sitting on the rocks allures skippers distracting them from the dangerous current, until they finally sank with their ships in the river (from Goethezeitportal. URL: <http://www.goethezeitportal.de/index.php?id=2587>)

Organizers



European Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) (www.edgg.org) was established in August 2008. It is as an official working group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS, www.iavs.org). Its aims are to compile and distribute information on research and conservation in dry grasslands beyond national borders, and to stimulate active cooperation among dry grassland scientists, NGO's and all who work with or are interested in dry grasslands.



Universität Trier

Geobotany Department of the Trier University (www.uni-trier.de/index.php?id=2621&L=2) covers the fields of specific botany and plant ecology. The main activities of the department are eco-physiology and ecosystem research, vegetation analysis, bio-indication and bio-monitoring, and plant conservation. The department is also active in teaching students studying regional and environmental sciences.



Green School in the Botanic Garden of the University of Mainz (www.botgarten.uni-mainz.de/102.php) is an extra-mural learning facility in the Botanic Garden of Johannes Gutenberg University's. It offers courses for school classes and groups of adult using the enormous plant diversity at the Botanic Garden.



Onosma arenaria in the Mainz Sand reserve. Photo: T. Becker

Supporting organisations and institutions



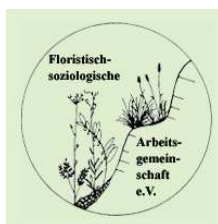
Institut für Spezielle Botanik und Botanischer Garten (Head: J.W. Kadereit) (www.spezb0t.fb10.uni-mainz.de/eng/index.php) focusses on plant evolution. Research and teaching include classical systematics, molecular phylogeny and historical biogeography as well as functional morphology, ontogeny and experimental flower biology.

Botanischer Garten

Mainz Botanic Garden (www.botgarten.uni-mainz.de/index.php). The Botanic Garden at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz was laid out in 1946-1955. In 1986, the garden was extended and a reproduction of the Mainz Sand area was added. In 2006, the Mainz Sand area was new built and several xerothermic vegetation types were added including a reproduction of the south Russian steppe. Main purposes of the Garden are research and teaching, public education, and conservation of biological diversity.



International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS) (www.iavs.org); its original precursor was the International Phytosociological Society (IPS) which was founded in 1939. IAVS is a worldwide union of scientists and others interested in theoretical and practical studies of all aspects of vegetation. The main goals of the IAVS are to facilitate personal contacts among vegetation scientists all over the world and to promote research in all aspects of vegetation science and its applications.



Floristisch-soziologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft (FlorSoz) (www.tuexenia.de) is a German-speaking association of specialists and enthusiasts interested in the floristic structure of spontaneous vegetation, phytosociology and vegetation ecology. The association is a non-profit organization and will be pleased to welcome everyone who is interested.



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On behalf of the Local Organizing Committee
Thomas Becker, University of Trier, beckerth@uni-trier.de
Ute Becker, University of Mainz, beckeru@uni-mainz.de

On behalf of the EDGG Executive Committee
Mike Vrahnakis, EDGM co-ordinator, mvrahnak@teilar.gr

Historical wine yard building (so called Trullo) in Rhine-Hesse. Photo: T. Becker

The 11th European Dry Grassland Meeting in Tula 2014



The river Don into the Rostov region. Photo: B. Deák

The 11th European Dry Grassland Meeting took place between the 5th June and 15th June 2014 in Kulikovo Field, Tula region, Russia. The host of the meeting was a museum-reserve “The Kulikovo Field”. The Russian Foundation for Basic Research, the Central Black Earth State Reserve of Professor V.V. Alekhine, the State M. Sholokhov Museum-Reserve and some other organisations supported this meeting.

The aims of the EDGM-2014 were to acquaint participants with the diversity of steppe and dry grassland vegetation in different ecological situations, to discuss the influence of intensive anthropogenic impacts on steppe and dry grassland transformation and the means of restoration.

The meeting consisted of two parts, a conference (oral and poster presentations, excursions to protected areas of Tula region) and a post-conference tour (visit to Central Black Earth Reserve, excursion to Strelets Steppe, Kursk region; visit to the M. Sholokhov Museum-Reserve, excursions to chalk slopes and sandy sites, Rostov region).

The conference consisted of 3 sessions:

1. Steppes and Dry Grasslands: Diversity and Succession
2. History, Ecology and Current Management of Steppes and Dry Grasslands
3. Conservation and Restoration of Steppes and Dry Grasslands

Fifty-five EDGG members from 10 countries (Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine) took part in the conference. In total, 29 talks and 18 posters were presented during the sessions. Participants also visited the protected areas “Srednyi Dubik” and “Tatinki”, and experimental fields of steppe restoration (Kulikovo Field).

The goal of post-conference tour was to acquaint the participants with the vegetation of the southern regions of Russia: forest-steppes of the Kursk region and the steppes of the Rostov region. 21 participants from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Greece, Finland, Russia took part in a post-conference tour (10-15 June). They saw not only dry grassland vegetation in the Upper Don



Tula region, Srednyi Dubik, Photo: B. Deák



*Rostov region, chalky grassland with *Scrophularia cretacea*. Photo: B. Deák*



Galatella villosa in the Rostov region. Photo: B. Deák



Gonolimon tataricum in the Rostov region. Photo: B. Deák

but also in the lower reaches of the Don! Local experts gave detailed information about the biota of each region by the lectures and field excursions.

During and after the conference the participants were involved in cultural programme and could see the living style of local people, and experience local meals, songs and dancing.

The Local Organizing Committee would like to thank all participants, the EDGG Executive Committee, sponsors and supporters and many other people and organisations who made this conference possible.

Elena Volkova, Tula, Russia (convallaria@mail.ru)



Elena Volkova, the president of the local organizing committee. Photo: T. Svetasheva



Participants of EDGG meeting near the river Don. Photo: T. Svetasheva



The participants of the excursion on the steppe slope near the Don river (Rostov region). Photo: T. Svetasheva



The chalk steppe slopes along the Don river valley (Rostov region). Photo: T. Svetasheva

General Assembly 2014

The General Assembly (GA) of the EDGG was held in conjunction with the 11th EDGM, in Tula, Russia on 7th June. The venue of the meeting was the Kulikovo Pole Scientific Centre. The GA was opened by Jürgen Dengler at 7:30 p.m. and commenced with a brief introduction of the six chairs (Jürgen Dengler, Monika Janišová, Solvita Rusina, Peter Török, Stephen Venn and Mike Vrahnakis) and their responsibilities in the organization. The meeting was legal, as it was organized in keeping with the Bylaws, though it was not able to make binding decisions, as it did not fulfil the terms of Bylaw 5 § 4, which requires that there should be at least 40 members present from at least 10 countries and no country should be represented by more than one third of the members present. In this case there were 10 countries represented though only 34 members were present and more than one third of the members present were from the same country; the host nation, Russia. This means that any decisions made at the conference will be unofficial or will have to be ratified by the Executive Committee (EC).

After approval of the agenda for the GA, reports were presented of the activities of the organization since the 10th Meeting, which was held in Zamość, Poland in 28 May 2013. First Jürgen Dengler presented a report on the development of the membership, which has now risen to a total of 1020 members (an increase of 72 since Zamość) and 61 countries (increased by three since Zamość). Whilst our focus is on Palaearctic dry grasslands, clearly our membership extends beyond the geo-political borders of Europe.

Next the assembly reviewed the finances of the EDGG. Both for 2013 and 2014, our mother organization IAVS provided baseline support of 500 €, which is so far only partly spent. Also every year, IAVS gives a honorarium to one EDGG representative to attend the annual IAVS Symposium and give a report on EDGG activities in the Council meeting. With this honorarium (1000 € in 2013, 1500 € in 2014), EC member Monika Janišová attended the IAVS Symposium 2013 in Tartu and will attend the IAVS Symposium 2014 in Perth. Further, EDGG was successful with project proposals to IAVS. For 2013 we received 800 € for linguistic editing of our Special Issue in *Hacquetia* 2014 and 1500 € for renovating our homepage (both to be spent in 2014). For 2014, a joint project proposal with the European Vegetation Survey (EVS, another IAVS Working Group), resulted in 1500 € support for preparation of SE European vegetation databases (many specialised on grasslands) for inclusion in the European Vegetation Archive (EVA). For 2014, IAVS has established an additional funding scheme for its Working Groups, which provides travel grants for workshops and conferences. In 2014, 6000 € were available for each active Working Group. This funding has been used to provide 1500 € to support the participation of three members in the EDGM-11 at Kulikovo Pole, Russia, and 4500 € to support 11 participants in the EDGG Field Workshop in Navarre,

Spain. Finally we got also some financial support from the Floristisch-Soziologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft to cover the costs of our server space and the linguistic editing of articles in our Special Feature in *Tuexenia* 2014.

Regarding the web-site, Editor Solvita Rūsiņa is currently supervising a renovation of the site. Some parts have now been revised and are currently being reviewed and commented upon. Regarding the EDGG Bulletin, of which the Editor-in-Chief is Monika Janisova, three issues were published during 2013, of which one was the double edition 19/20. Number 22 was published in March 2014 and Number 23 was originally due to be published in June, though has been postponed until July. Brief reports were also presented on the activities and current status of the sub-groups and committees. The German group Arbeitsgruppe Trockenrasen now has two new chairs, Thomas Becker and Ute Jandt. The contact person for the Nordic-Baltic sub-group is Jürgen, and Steve has suggested using this group to try and revitalize cooperation between people working with dry grassland habitats in that region. The contact person for the South-East European Dry Grassland sub-group (SEEDGG) is Iva Apostolova. The contact person for the Mediterranean Dry Grasslands sub-group (Med-DG) is Mike Vrahnakis. The contact person for the Grassland restoration and management sub-group is Péter Török and the contact person for the Special Policy Committee (SPC) is Mike Vrahnakis. Further information about the groups can be found from the group's web-site at <http://edgg.org/subgroups.htm>.

Next Jürgen Dengler presented a review of the current status of the numerous Special Features that are currently in progress. The Special Edition entitled 'Dry grasslands of Southern Europe: syntaxonomy, management and conservation' edited by Iva Apostolova, Jürgen Dengler, Romeo Di Pietro, Rosario Gavilan and Ioannis Tsiropidis, has been published in *Hacquetia* (2014) and contains a total of eight articles and an editorial. A special feature in *Tuexenia*, edited by Thomas Becker, Steffen Boch, Monika Janišová, Eszter Ruprecht and Triin Reitalu, containing five articles and an editorial, is in progress and due to be completed within a week or two after the assembly. A Special Issue of *Hacquetia* entitled 'Semi-natural open habitats of Europe: biodiversity, conservation and management' edited by Péter Török, Idoia Biurrun, Marta Carboni, Jasmin Mantilla-Contreras, Stephen Venn, Michal Zmihorski and Jürgen Dengler with currently 13 manuscripts in review, is also in preparation and due to be published in 2015. These publications all offer full open access. Preparations for a joint Virtual Special Feature for Applied Vegetation Science entitled 'Large-scale classification of European grasslands s.l.' commenced in spring 2013 together with the European Vegetation Survey (EVS). The editors are Jürgen Dengler, Erwin Bergmeier, Wolfgang Willner & Milan Chytrý and approximately 12-15 articles are



Maxim Bobrovsky, Larisa Khamina (Russia), Michael Vrahnakis (Greece), Irina Safronova, Yury Semenishchenkov (Russia) among Stipa tussocks on the steppe meadow "Sredniy Dubik" (Kulikovo Field). Photo: T. Svetasheva



The excursion on the steppe meadow "Sredniy Dubik" (Kulikovo Field) conducted by Elena Volkova. Photo: T. Svetasheva

expected for this Special Features, with publication within a few years.

Preparations are also currently in progress for an additional three Special Issues, including ones on 1) Natural Steppes of the Palaearctic realm in Biodiversity and Conservation coordinated by Jürgen Dengler, 2) Vegetation and Flora of Semi-Natural Dry Grasslands in Central Europe s.l. in *Tuexenia* coordinated by Thomas Becker and 3) Fauna, flora, vegetation and conservation of steppes and semi-natural dry grasslands in *Hacquetia*, coordinated by Stephen Venn. In addition to these, negotiations are underway for a Special Issue in *Phytocoenologia* on large-scale syntaxonomic works, particularly from outside Central Europe, to be coordinated by Jürgen Dengler. All members are encouraged to submit manuscripts on suitable topics for consideration for these forthcoming publications.

Mike Vrahnakis reviewed the current status regarding EDGMs. He has collated a set of guidelines for meeting organizers, and these will be provided to the organizers of future EDGMs. The next EDGM will be organized in Mainz, Germany on 23-26th May 2015. Tentative discussions for subsequent EDGMs are under way though more proposals are welcome.

Jürgen Dengler presented reports on the recent Research Expeditions to Khakassia, South Siberia, organized by Nikolai Ermakov & Marya Polyakova in 2013 and Navarra, N. Spain organized by Idoia Biurrun, Itziar Garcia-Mijangos & Asun Barestegui, in 2014. Plans for future Research Expeditions are still open and proposals are welcome. The following publications have been prepared from previous expeditions:

Turtureanu, P.D., Todorova, S., Becker, T., Dolnik, C., Ruprecht, E., Sutcliffe, L.M.E., Szabó, A., Dengler, J. (2014): Scale- and taxon-dependent biodiversity patterns of dry grassland vegetation in Transylvania (Romania). *Agric. Ecosyst. Environ.* 182: 15–24.

Pedashenko, H., Apostolova, I., Boch, S., Ganeva, A., Janišová, M., Sopotlieva, D., Todorova, S., Ůnal, A., Vassilev, K., Velev, N., Dengler, J. (2013): Dry grasslands of NW Bulgarian mountains: first insights into diversity, ecology and syntaxonomy. *Tuexenia*. 33: 309–346.

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Other papers on the results of subsequent Research Expeditions are in preparation.

Jürgen Degler gave an overview on two data base projects to which members are invited to submit suitable data. One of these is the European Vegetation Archive (EVA), coordinated by Milan Chytrý for the European Vegetation Survey, which is another Working Group of the IAVS. Currently this database contains data on 550 000 vegetation plots, of which 90% are georeferenced. EDGG is involved for handling and attracting grassland



Photos: T. Shupova

databases. Further information can be found from <http://euroveg.org/eva-database>. The second project is the sPlot global vegetation-plot database coordinated by Jürgen Dengler.

Finally, attention was given to the following matters raised by members for consideration by the General Assembly.

1. To post the presentations of participants in the EDGM on the EDGG web-site.
2. To support the proposal of including the European and Asian steppes as carbon intensive ecosystems in the post Kyoto protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
3. To initiate discussion on the syntaxonomy of European grasslands, including the natural and semi-natural steppes, via the EDGG web-site.
4. It was proposed that the EDGG should support the efforts of the Kulikovo field towards the preservation of various grasslands and recommend the expansion of the territory of the biosphere reserves.
5. It was also proposed that the EDGG should support the creation of a virtual “Encyclopedia of the Great Steppe”, initiated by the joint Holarctic Steppes Thematic Group of the CEM (Commission for Ecosystem Management) and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature).

The General Assembly of the EDGG ended at 9:00 p.m.

*Stephen Venn, Secretary-General
Jürgen Dengler, Chair of the Assembly*



Xeranthemum annuum on the abrupt slope of the Don river. Photo: T. Svetasheva



Astragalus tanaiticus a rare steppe species, endemic to the Central and Azov Upland, Russia. Photo: T. Svetasheva

Carabid beetles of the Russian steppe

Stephen Venn & Andrey Matalin

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Bulletin of the European Grassland Group 23 (2014): 21-23

Abstract: *Carabid beetles were collected or observed from three areas in the Russian steppe region during the post-conference excursion of the European Dry Grasslands Meeting XII. Some records of beetles from other families were also made. This paper presents a list of specimens recorded and information on their habitat requirements. We call for the instigation of research into intertrophic reactions between invertebrate taxa and vascular plants in grassland ecosystems.*

Keywords: grassland, habitat requirements, invertebrates

Introduction

The steppe region is an extensive region of temperate grassland which extends through much of Russia to China and Tibet in the east, through Ukraine and Hungary into Germany in the west. The steppe grasslands include diverse range of species rich grasslands characterized by such grass species as *Stipa* spp. and *Bromus* spp. There are also a number of notable arthropod species associated with steppes, including such Orthoptera as the praying mantis *Mantis religiosa* and spiders such as the orb-web spider *Argiopa bruennichi* and the pigmy spider *Linyphia triangularis*. The carabid assemblage of steppe grasslands is also speciose.

The steppe region was a particular focus of the European Dry Grassland Meeting this year in Tula Russia. The programme of the meeting was supplemented by excursions to selected steppe sites. The purpose of this study was to obtain a sample of the carabid fauna of some of the steppe sites visited during that excursion and for the first author (Venn) to become familiar with species that are uncommon or absent from northern Europe.

Materials and Methods

The sites visited during this study were: Kulikovo Pole, Tula; Streletsky Reserve, Kursk and Rostov. A number of sites in each region were visited once during the period 9th-12th July 2014. Beetle samples were obtained exclusively by hand-searching and now trapping protocol was employed. The sampling was conducted by Venn at each site. The sampling intensity was not standardized and the efficiency of sampling was subject to the abundance of stones and other subjects which could be turned over to look for arthropods. Therefore the results cannot be considered comparable but merely indicative of some of the species that occur in them during this part of the season.

Specimens were sought by lifting stones, leaves, pieces of wood and other such debris. Also tiger beetles (*Cicindela* spp.) were stalked. At sites where collecting was prohibited (Streletsky), specimens were observed, identified if possible and then released. At the other sites, captured specimens were placed into collecting pots, fixed in ethanol and labelled with information of the site and date collected. The carabid species were identified by

A. Matalin using a dissection microscope and with reference to taxonomical keys, and to specimens from the reference collection of the Moscow State Pedagogical University.

Results

A total of 37 individuals of 25 species was collected from the studied sites. The species recorded for each site are listed in Table 1.

Discussion

The number of species recorded at the different sites varied considerably due to the variation in sampling effort and the scarcity or abundance of stones and other artefacts beneath which to search. The largest catches were obtained from the Rostov sites, which were sparsely vegetated, and also had loose rocks and stones. The Kulikovo Pole sites were more densely vegetated apart from an escarpment that had loose stones, though this was completely exposed and rather parched and generated only few specimens. The Streletsky reserve at Kursk had particularly dense vegetation, though a small number of carabids were active on sandy paths and areas with less dense vegetation. The number of observations from both Kulikovo and Streletsky Reserve were minimal, primarily due to the relatively dense vegetation. Also the latter site was a strict reserve and I did not obtain permission to collect at this site, so records are based on observations rather than collected specimens. In addition to carabids, a number of longhorn beetles (Cerambycidae) were also recorded, including *Dorcadion equestre*, which was abundant at Streletsky, Kursk. Tenebrionid beetles were also relatively abundant in all of the steppe sites, some of which superficially resemble carabid beetles.

The genera *Amara* and *Harpalus* are amongst the most speciose grassland genera (Venn et al. 2013). They are primarily xerophilous (favour dry conditions), heliophilic (favour bright sunny conditions) and spermatophagous (seed-eating) species (Hurst & Doberski 2003, Klimeš & Saska 2010), and only very few species in these genera favour more shady habitats. Such species are most easily observed on sandy roads or patches of bare soil, in bright sunlight (Thiele 1977). Cafeteria experiments (Honek et al. 2006), in which test subjects are offered seeds of a

Table 1. List of species recorded at the studied sites

Species	Region	Habitat	Observations
<i>Cicindela</i> (s. str.) <i>sahlbergii</i> <i>sahlbergii</i> F.-W.	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Semideserts, Sandy roads	2
<i>Notiophilus laticollis</i> Chaud.	Rostov-on-Don	Meadows	1
<i>Dyschiriode</i> ssp.	Rostov-on-Don	River banks	1
<i>Bembidion</i> (<i>Emphanes</i>) sp.	Rostov-on-Don	River banks, Salines	1
<i>Bembidion</i> (<i>Notaphus</i>) <i>varium</i> (Ol.)	Rostov-on-Don	River banks	1
<i>Agonum</i> (<i>Olisares</i>) <i>impressum</i> (Panz.)	Rostov-on-Don	River banks, Wet meadows	1
<i>Calathus</i> (<i>Neocalathus</i>) <i>ambiguus</i> <i>ambiguus</i> (Payk.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Dry meadows	1
<i>Amara</i> (<i>Bradytus</i>) <i>apricaria</i> (Payk.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Dry meadows	5
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>amplicollis</i> Mén.	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Dry meadows	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>anxius</i> (Duft.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Dry meadows	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>fuscicornis</i> Mén.	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Semideserts	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>hirtipes</i> (Panz.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Semideserts	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>pumilus</i> (Sturm)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Dry meadows	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>rubripes</i> (Duft.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Meadows	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>subcylindricus</i> Dej.	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Dry meadows	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>serripes</i> <i>serripes</i> (Quenz.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Semideserts	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>servus</i> (Duft.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Semideserts	1
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>smaragdinus</i> (Duft.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Meadows	5
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>tardus</i> (Panz.)	Rostov-on-Don	Steppes, Meadows	1
<i>Chlaenius</i> (<i>Chlaeniellus</i>) <i>vestitus</i> (Payk.)	Rostov-on-Don	Muddy river banks	2
<i>Carabus</i> (<i>Morphocarabus</i>) <i>excellens</i> (F.)	Streletsky, Kursk	Steppes	2
<i>Amara</i> (s. str.) <i>aenea</i> (De Geer)	Streletsky, Kursk	Different grasslands (ruderal)	2
<i>Harpalus</i> (s. str.) <i>subcylindricus</i> Dej.	Streletsky, Kursk	Steppes, Dry meadows	1
<i>Carabus</i> (<i>Trachycarabus</i>) <i>sibiricus</i> <i>haeres</i> F.-W.	Kulikovo, Tula	Steppes	1
<i>Ophonus</i> (<i>Hesperophonus</i>) <i>azureus</i> (F.)	Kulikovo, Tula	Steppes, Dry meadows	1
Total			37

variety of different species have revealed that spermatophagous species vary considerably in their food preferences, with some being restricted to a narrow range and others feeding on a broad range of grassland seeds (Klimeš & Saska 2010). The anatomy of the mandibles of such species also influences the potential range of seeds that can be exploited, depending on the size of the seeds and the hardness of the seed coat (Zetto Brandmayr et al. 1998; Paarmann et al. 2006). In general, *Harpalus* spp. have larger, stronger mandibles and therefore are capable of processing larger and harder seeds compared to *Amara* spp. (Klimeš & Saska 2010).

Harpalus spp. were the best represented genera in this study. The *Harpalus* species were all known to be typical of the steppe region and comprised a group of species that are typical of steppe and meadow vegetation, steppe and dry meadow vegetation and steppe and semi-deserts, so habitat moisture level is a major factor determining the *Harpalus* assemblage of a particular site. Some of these species, such as the harpalinids *Harpalus rubripes*, *H. smaragdinus* and *Ophonus azureus*, as well as *Calathus ambiguus*, also occur in dry grassland habitats in the north of Europe, even as far north as Finland, though they are not common there. Species such as *Harpalus tardus* and *Amara aenea* and *A. apricaria*, are common in grassland habitats throughout Europe.

The genus *Carabus* spp. includes a small number of rather ubiquitous species and a considerable number of species and sub-species with rather restricted ranges. Two such species were observed in this study, *Carabus excellens*, of which two individuals were observed on the

Streletsky steppe and *C. sibiricus haeres*, of which one specimen was taken from Kulikovo Pole.

The tiger beetles (*Cicindela* spp.) are a sub-family of Carabid beetles that generally favour sandy conditions. They are weak flyers though fly actively. Typically they fly short distances of 1-2 m when disturbed. Thus they are relatively easy to catch with a sufficiently long-handled net, though frustratingly difficult to catch without such equipment (Fig. 1). These beetles were very active on the sandy roads of sandy sites in the Rostov region. The two individuals that I captured proved to belong to the southern species *Cicindela sahlbergii sahlbergii*.

Finally a group of riparian species were collected from the muddy banks of the River Don in Rostov. These included two specimens of the colourful green *Chlaenius vestitus*, which was abundant in a disturbed muddy area where cattle had been drinking, and two small *Bembidion* species. *Bembidion* are a speciose genera of carabid beetles that are mostly adapted to riparian habitats and are often highly substrate specific, some favouring gravel, others sand and others clay and rock, for instance.

Conclusions

Steppe grasslands have speciose carabid assemblages, and include some species with restricted ranges. It is highly likely that the occurrences of some of these species are correlated with particular vegetation types, soil types or plant species. Many of these carabid species are predominantly seed-eating spermatophagous, and therefore they are likely to be closely linked with the



Fig. 1 The first author (Steve Venn), accompanied and assisted by Dieter Frank, stalking specimens of *Cicindela sahlbergii sahlbergii* along a sandy road in Rostov-on-Don. Photo: Thomas Rohde

occurrences of favoured plant species. As yet little information is available on the trophic interactions between carabid beetles and vascular plants, though spermatophagous carabids clearly have the potential to affect vegetation structure. On the basis of their abundance, it can be assumed that tenebrionid beetles also clearly have an important role in steppe ecosystems. Longhorn beetles are also prevalent in steppe ecosystems, though they are dependent on woodlands with suitable resources of decaying wood, in addition to the nectar-plants on which the adults feed in steppe grasslands.

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Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process

Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar

Thessaloniki, GREECE, 26-28 May 2014

The following report uses material from (a) the pre-Seminar document titled MED Seminar draft programme and (b) the Mediterranean Seminar Input Document.

Hosted by the Ministry of Environment and the Axios, Loudias and Aliakmonas Management Authority, Greece, the Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar provided an important opportunity for participants to ensure progress in the region towards the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets - by building common understanding about practical ways to halt biodiversity loss, to inform and increase restoration actions where necessary and prioritised, to disseminate knowledge about effective management approaches and techniques, and to improve the conservation status of priority habitats and species.

Eighty experts interested in priority habitats and species from twelve Mediterranean countries were present. The seminar had been developed to launch a continuing process of networking, information sharing and knowledge building, of direct benefit to stakeholders across the Mediterranean biogeographical region. It is seen as the first in a series of themed workshops and seminars that will be developed in the months and years ahead to improve practical management knowledge in priority habitats across the Mediterranean region. Through such networking events, as well as the Natura 2000 (knowledge & information) platform, the core aim is to achieve maximum benefits for nature and improve essential cooperation amongst all stakeholders as that is required to achieve progress towards the 2020 targets.

Over the course of this 3-day Mediterranean seminar, it was aimed to

- identify and agree practical concrete actions and cooperation priorities, which can be developed and taken forward by various actors in the region,
- share information and experiences, capitalising on completed projects, available guidance and potential new proposals to increase synergies and collaboration opportunities, and
- seek new commitments to develop networking in future and, where possible, propose a firm timetable for future Mediterranean events.

At the kick-off seminar, four Habitat Working Groups were established, one for each of the following habitat groups: Coastal, Forests, Freshwater/Wetlands and Grassland/Heath/Scrub. Seminar participants shared their expertise, information and knowledge about the Natura 2000 habitats in which they have experience. Especially in the interactive Habitat Group sessions, participants gained understanding about how the Natura 2000 biogeographical process can be used to contribute to EU and MS strategic priorities, as well as about practical steps to help them in their work.



The participants of the seminar. Photo: M. Vrahnakis

For grasslands emphasis placed on the following habitat types: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) (6210), Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals of the Thero-Brachypodietea (6220), Thermo-Mediterranean and pre-desert scrub (5330) and Dehesas with evergreen Quercus spp. (6310). Thus, out of the total of 75 grassland habitats listed on the reference list for the Mediterranean biogeographical region, only three habitat types were selected for the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process (6210, 6220 and 6310). However, this does not mean that other grassland habitat types cannot be addressed through the Process.

According to the Input Document, circulated among participants before the start of the meeting, in the areas where grasslands are still present, the lack of management results in a continuing decrease in range of the many species that depend on it. Active management of the habitat includes grazing, cutting or a combination of both. In rural areas, grazing is important both to the local economy and to maintain the aesthetic value of grassland sites for the benefit of the local community. It was stressed the total area of grassland in the EU fell by an average of 12% between 1975 and 1998, while large grassland areas have disappeared in the last century, causing severe fragmentation of the remaining habitat areas and a consequent drop in populations of certain species by as much as 20-50%. Unregulated grazing, overgrazing, land use-changes, abandonment, afforestation and succession are the main issues for Mediterranean grasslands. Pressures include significant changes in management practices and increasing threats by fire. In many cases traditional management practices have been replaced by transformation into intensive agricultural land and utilisation of pesticides, herbicides

and fertilisers. In addition urbanisation and tourism cause pressure on the health of these grasslands, especially in coastal areas.

Several commitments were taken from the "grassland" group: (a) To provide guidance on how to deal with farming within the Natura2000, (b) to share knowledge on monitoring strategies and understand conditions and pressures/threats of habitats of community interest in the Mediterranean region and to compare and contrast different approaches in approaching favourable

conservation status and favourable reference values, (c) to foster networking for grassland management, among others in order to create a better connection between EC, management authorities and stakeholders on documents and common decisions, and (d) networking for best-practices. Finally, the team foresees technical workshops on management (probably in Prespa/Greece and Ancona/Italy), while a project application is planned for the next period.

*On behalf of the "grassland" group Mike Vrahnakis,
Karditsa, Greece (mvrahnak@teilar.gr)*

Call to contribute to forthcoming EDGG Special Issues/Features

This year, EDGG is initiating **four new Special Issues/Features** (SIs/SFs) in international journals, more than ever before. They involve a total of 21 editors from 15 countries. This gives you a great choice where to publish your new dry grassland and steppe studies. If you are interested in one or several of these opportunities, please read carefully the General Instructions that apply to all four Special Features/Issues and the individual information given for the respective journal.

General instructions

Eligible for publication are in all four cases papers based on presentations given at the 11th European Dry Grassland Meeting in Kulikovo Pole, other manuscript by EDGG members as well as papers solicited by the SI/SF Editors. If interested, please submit your **abstract** to the respective Receiving Editor (as listed below) **until 30 September 2014**. The abstract for evaluation must be **structured into the sections Aims, Location, Methods, Results and Conclusions** (note that this style can deviate from the journal style to be used for submission of your full paper later on). The abstract should **not be longer than 300 words**. Please give all authors and their affiliations and indicate who is the corresponding author.

In the first half of October 2014, the teams of SI/SF Editors will then assess the abstracts and inform the authors by around mid-October whether their paper is invited for full submission or not. Generally, submission of manuscripts is only possible after positive pre-evaluation of an abstract. Please note that the invited manuscripts will be subject to a regular peer review procedure then, i.e. invitation of a full paper does not imply that the paper will finally be accepted (though the chances are then rather high if you are willing to do the required revisions).

Biodiversity and Conservation

Last year, we published a Special Issue of Biodiversity and Conservation (IF = 2.3) focussed on European semi-natural grasslands (Habel et al. 2013). Now, we plan to complement this by a Special Issue on the **natural steppes of the Palaearctic biogeographic realm** that

deals with **natural history, biodiversity, conservation and management of the steppe biome** in the Old World in a comprehensive way.

Compared with other biomes of the world, the Palaearctic steppes have received relatively little attention in international conservation discussion despite in hardly any other biome the natural vegetation has been destroyed to such a degree as in the European part of the steppe biome. In the Asian part, the conservation status is still better, but good overviews of present and past extent of steppes, their biodiversity and state are missing also there (but see Werger & van Staalduinen 21012, compare book review in Bulletin No. 21: p. 44). Moreover, a significant part of the knowledge on Palaearctic steppes has been published in Russian, Mongolian, Chinese or other regional languages, and thus is hardly accessible to international readership.

In this Special Issue, papers on all aspects of natural steppes (including forest-steppes) of East Europe, West Asia, Central Asia and North Africa, from palaeo-ecology to global change and across all groups of organisms are welcome. While we accept also case studies of good quality, we particularly encourage review, synthesis and forum papers. Pure syntaxonomic papers are not possible and should instead go to our parallel Special Issue in Phytocoenologia (see below). Abstracts for consideration should be sent no later than **30 September 2014** to Jürgen Dengler (juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de). **Tentative deadline for submission of invited papers is 31 January 2015, and intended publication end of 2015 or early 2016.**

Special Issue Editors are **Jürgen Dengler** (DE, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?hl=de&user=j-9uXQ8AAAAJ>), **Didem Ambarli** (TR, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=rLdx5XoAAAAJ>), **Nikolai Ermakov** (RU, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=fPKsXxIAAAAAJ>), **Johannes Kamp** (DE, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=mKcd7VoAAAAJ>), **Péter Török** (HU, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=7ho2aw8AAAAJ>), **Karsten Wesche** (DE, <http://scholar.google.co.uk/citations?user=5JTRmwYAAAAJ>), **Mihai Zmihorski**

(PL, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=1sF6YvQAAAAJ>).

Habel, J.C., Dengler, J., Janišová, M., Török, P., Wellstein, C., Wiezik, M. (2013): European grassland ecosystems: Threatened hotspots of biodiversity. – *Biodivers. Conserv.* 22: 2131–2138.

Werger, M.J.A., van Staalduinen, M.A. (2012) [Eds.]: Eurasian steppes. Ecological problems and livelihoods in a changing world. – 565 pp., Springer, Dordrecht.

Tuexenia 2015

For our traditional Special Feature in Tuexenia (first IF for 2013 will be 0.9), papers dealing with **vegetation ecology, conservation and management of dry grasslands in Central Europe** (and adjacent areas) are welcome. Purely zoological papers are not possible. **Abstracts** for consideration should be sent no later than **30 September 2014** to Thomas Becker (beckerth@univ-trier.de). **Tentative deadline for submission of invited papers is 30 November 2014, and intended publication June 2015.**

Special Issue Editors are **Thomas Becker** (DE), **Steffen Boch** (CH, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=QM2YrLUAAAAJ>), **Monika Janišová** (SK, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=bQ8o3uQAAAAJ>), **Estzer Ruprecht** (RO, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=qaTh9tYAAAAJ>), **Laura Sutcliffe** (DE, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=koxNzAQAAAAJ>).

Hacquetia 2016

For the third time we will publish a Special Issue/Feature in Hacquetia (not yet in Web of Science, but has applied) in 2016. The guest editor team consists both of editors of the past two Special Issues and some new partners. Topically, this Special Issue is the broadest of all four as it accepts papers dealing with **any aspect of dry grasslands and steppes of the Palaearctic, i.e. animals, fungi, plants, vegetation, conservation and management**. This SI/SF is particularly suited for **studies from Mediterranean and sub-Mediterranean Europe and zoological papers in general**. Abstracts for consideration should be sent no later than **30 September 2014** to Stephen Venn (stephen.venn@helsinki.fi). Tentative deadline for submission of invited papers is 31 January 2015, and intended publication March 2016.

Special Issue Editors are **Stephen Venn** (FI, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=1AbbyQEAAAAJ>), **Iva Apostolova** (BG, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=0tQ26kAAAAJ>), **Idoia Biurrun** (ES, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=4GEi4OoAAAAJ>), **Rocco Labadessa** (IT), **Solvita Rusina** (LV), **Orsolya Valko** (HU, <http://scholar.google.de/citations?user=PwD4cKcAAAAJ>), **Michael Vrahnakis** (GR).

PHYTO-COENOLOGIA

In collaboration of the science publisher Borntraeger and the IAVS Governing Board, **the international geobotanical journal *Phytocoenologia* got a new scope and subtitle**. Further, a new team of eight equal Editors-in-Charge have been appointed, who will publish their inaugural issue soon. In the future, *Phytocoenologia* will closely cooperate with EDGG and the other IAVS Working Groups, which is reflected in the new editorial team. Please have a look at the journal homepage and consider submitting your manuscripts on vegetation classification and its underlying methodology. The editorial team is looking forward to your sub-missions. Note that from now on in each issue the Editors-in-Charge will select one particularly exciting paper for free online access to everybody (without payment of the authors).

Phytocoenologia – International Journal for Vegetation Survey and Classification

Phytocoenologia is an international, peer-reviewed journal of plant community ecology. It is devoted to vegetation survey and classification at any organizational and spatial scale and without restriction to certain methodological approaches. The journal publishes original papers that develop new vegetation typologies as well as applied studies that use such typologies, for example, in vegetation mapping, ecosystem modelling, nature conservation, land use management or monitoring. Particularly encouraged are methodological studies that design and compare tools for vegetation classification and mapping, such as algorithms, databases and nomenclatural principles. Papers dealing with conceptual and theoretical bases of vegetation survey and classification are also welcome. While large-scale studies are preferred, regional studies will be considered when filling important knowledge gaps or presenting new methods.

Phytocoenologia was founded by Reinhold Tüxen in 1973 and is published in collaboration with the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS; www.iavs.org). The journal closely cooperates with various subgroups of IAVS and serves as publication outlet for their workshops as well as for selected sessions of the IAVS Symposia. It contains special sections on “Phytosociological Nomenclature” and “Ecoinformatics”, which are published in collaboration with the respective IAVS Working Groups. Guest-edited special features that fall within the scope of the journal are also possible.

Phytocoenologia (ISSN 0340-269X) is published in four issues per year. It is indexed in the Web of Science and the Scopus literature database. Present ISI Impact Factor is 1.0. The journal offers online submission and provides author guidelines at <http://www.schweizerbart.de/journals/phyto>. *Phytocoenologia* will be governed by eight Editors-in-Charge (Erwin Bergmeier [DE], Jürgen Dengler [DE], Monika Janišová [SK], Florian Jansen [DE], Pavel Krestov [RU], Jan Roleček [CZ], D.A. (Skip) Walker [US] & Wolfgang Willner [AT]), who are supported by an international Editorial Board.

Current and finished EDGG Special Issues/Features

Virtual Special Feature in Applied Vegetation Science

The Virtual Special Feature on large-scale grassland classification (Editors: Jürgen Dengler, DE, Erwin Bergmeier, DE, Wolfgang Willner, AT, & Milan Chytrý, CZ), which has been started one year ago (Dengler et al. 2013), is continuously progressing despite the production of that type of papers, often based on thousands of vegetation-plots from multiple databases, seemingly takes much longer than originally anticipated. There are two new papers:

Šilc, U., Aćić, S., Škvorc, Ž., Krstonošić, D., Dajić Stevanović, Z. (2014): Grassland vegetation of the Molinio-Arrhenatheretea class in the NW Balkan Peninsula. *Appl. Veg. Sci.* 17: 591–603.

Rodríguez-Rojo, M.P., Fernández-González, F., Tichý, L., Chytrý, M. (in press): Vegetation diversity of mesic grasslands (Arrhenatheretalia) in the Iberian Peninsula. *Appl. Veg. Sci.* DOI: 10.1111/avsc.12118.

Tuexenia 2014

This year, the traditional EDGG Special Feature in Tuexenia was edited by Monika Janišová (SK), Steffen Boch (CH), Eszter Ruprecht (RO), Triin Reitalu (EE) & Thomas Becker (DE). It contains five articles and one editorial, is presently in press and will be available in print and open access online in approximately one month:

Janišová, M., Boch, S., Ruprecht, E., Reitalu, T., Becker, T. (2014): Continental dry grasslands from range margin to range centre – Editorial to the 9th Dry Grassland Special Feature. *Tuexenia* 34 (in press).

Aćić, S., Šilc, U., Lakušić, D., Vukojičić, S., Dajić Stevanović, Z. (2014): Syntaxonomic overview of grassland vegetation from class Festuco-Brometea in Serbia. *Tuexenia* 34 (in press).

Ermakov, N., Larionov, A., Polyakova, M., Pestunov, I., Didukh, Y. (2014): Diversity and spatial structure of cryophytic-steppe vegetation of the Minusinskaya inter-ountain basin (Southern Siberia). *Tuexenia* 34 (in press).

Kienberg, Ol, Thill, L., Baumbach, H., Becker, T. (2014): A method for selecting plant species for reintroduction purposes: A case-study on the steppe-like grasslands of Thuringia (Germany). *Tuexenia* 34 (in press).

Kuzemko, A.A., Becker, T., Didukh, Y.P., Ardelean, I.A., Becker, U., Beldean, M., Dolnik, C., Jeschke, M., Naqinezhad, A., Uğurlu, E., Ůnal, A., Vassilev, K., Vorona, E.I., Yavorska, O.H., Dengler, J. (2014): Dry grassland vegetation of Central Podolia (Ukraine) – a preliminary overview of its syntaxonomy, ecology and biodiversity. *Tuexenia* 34 (in press).

Merunková, K., Preislerová, Z., Chytrý, M. (2014): Environmental control of species richness and composition in dry grasslands of northern and central Bohemia, Czech Republic. *Tuexenia* 34 (in press).

Hacquetia 2014

Our first Special Issue in the Slovenian journal Hacquetia on **Mediterranean and sub-Mediterranean dry grasslands** (Special Issue Editors: Iva Apostolova, BG, Jürgen Dengler, DE, Romeo Di Pietro, IT, Rosario G. Gavilán, ES, & Ioannis Tsiripidis, GR) has been published in June, both in print and open access online (<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/hacq.2014.13.issue-1/issue-files/hacq.2014.13.issue-1.xml>). On 219 pages, it comprises eight articles and an editorial:

The articles are:

Apostolova, I., Dengler, J., Di Pietro, R., Gavilán, R.G., Tsiripidis, I. (2014): Dry grasslands of Southern Europe: syntaxonomy, management and conservation. *Hacquetia* 13: 5–18.

Foggi, B., Lastrucci, L., Gennai, M., Viciani, D. (2014): The Festuco-Brometea grasslands on sandstone and marl-clay-sandstone substrata in Tuscany (Northern-central Italy). *Hacquetia* 13: 19–55.

Kabaš, E., Vukojičić, S., Alegro, A., Surina, B., Kuzmanović, N., Šegota, V., Lakušić, D. (2014): Numerical evaluation of grasslands dominated by *Sesleria juncifolia* agg. in Serbia. *Hacquetia* 13: 57–77.

Sopotlieva, D., Apostolova, I. (2014): Dry grassland vegetation in the transition zone between two biogeographic regions. *Hacquetia* 13: 79–120.

Pirini, C.B., Tsiripidis, I., Bergmeier, E. (2014): Steppe-like grassland vegetation in the hills around the lakes of Vegoritida and Petron, North-Central Greece. – *Hacquetia* 13: 121–169.

Fotiadis, G., Vrahnakis, M., Kazoglou, Y., Tsiripidis, I. (2014): Dry grassland types in the Prespa National Park (NW Greece), including the southernmost occurrence of the priority habitat type “Pannonic sand steppes” (code 6260). *Hacquetia* 13: 171–189

Velev, N., Vassilev, K. (2014): Management regimes within syntaxa of semi-natural grasslands in West Bulgaria. *Hacquetia* 13: 191–204.

Evangelou, C., Yiakoulaki, M., Papanastasis, V. (2014): Spatio-temporal analysis of sheep and goats grazing in different forage resources of northern Greece. *Hacquetia* 13: 205–213.

Demina, O., Bragina, T. (2014): Fundamental basis for the conservation of biodiversity of the Black Sea-Kazakh steppes. *Hacquetia* 13: 215–228.

Hacquetia 2015

The second EDGG-edited Special Issue of Hacquetia will be devoted to **biodiversity and conservation of Europe's semi-natural open habitats**. A total of 21 new papers have been invited by the team of Special Issue Editors (Jürgen Dengler, DE, Idoia Biurrun, ES, Marta Carboni, IT/FR, Jasmin Mantilla-Contreras, DE, Péter Török, HU, Mihal Zmihorski, PL, & Stephen Venn, FI). Additionally, five papers originally planned for the Special Issue 2014 but not ready then have been transferred. Presently 13 manuscripts are under review or already in revision, and a few more manuscripts are expected. Publication is expected for March 2015.

Snapshots from the Field Workshop in Navarre (Spain)

Recorded by Didem Ambarli



The Navarre landscape supports many Griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) and Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*) as we saw them soaring at a distance at most of the survey sites. We observed some Griffon Vultures sitting on hills watching nearby sheepfolds. It was a pleasure to watch soaring Egyptian Vultures, which is an endangered species declining in most of the Europe. We also enjoyed observing butterflies of southern Europe such as the False Ilex Hairstreak (*Satyrrium esculi*, I), the Spanish Gatekeeper (*Pyronia bathseba*, II), the Southern Gatekeeper (*Pyronia cecilia*, III) and the Iberian Marbled White (*Melanargia lachesis*).



Recent publications of our members

With this section, the contents of which will also be made available via our homepage, we want to facilitate an overview of **dry grassland-related publications** throughout Europe and to improve their accessibility. You are invited to send lists of such papers from the last three years following the style below to monika.janisova@gmail.com and rusina@lu.lv. We will include your e-mail address so that readers can request a pdf. For authors who own full copy-right, we can also post a pdf on the EDGG homepage. As we plan to publish a book about the European dry grasslands at some point in the future, under the auspices of the EDGG, we would appreciate if you could send a pdf (or offprint) of each of your dry grassland publications to juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de.

Apostolova, I., Dengler, J., Di Pietro, R., Gavilán, R.G., Tsiripidis, I. (2014): Dry grasslands of Southern Europe: syntaxonomy, management and conservation. *Hacquetia* 13: 5–18.

Berg, C., Abdank, A., Isermann, M., Jansen, F., Timmermann, T., Dengler, J. (2014): Red Lists and conservation prioritization of plant communities – a methodological framework. *Appl. Veg. Sci.* 17: 504–515.

Dengler, J., Janišová, M., Török, P., Wellstein, C. (2014): Biodiversity of Palaearctic grasslands: a synthesis. *Agric. Ecosyst. Environ.* 182: 1–14.

Hanke, W., Böhner, J., Dreber, N., Jürgens, N., Schmiedel, U., Wesuls, D., Dengler, J. (2014): The impact of livestock grazing on plant diversity: an analysis across dryland ecosystems and scales in southern Africa. *Ecol. Appl.* 24: 1188–1203.

Turtureanu, P.D., Todorova, S., Becker, T., Dolnik, C., Ruprecht, E., Sutcliffe, L.M.E., Szabó, A., Dengler, J. (2014): Scale- and taxon-dependent biodiversity patterns of dry grassland vegetation in Transylvania (Romania). *Agric. Ecosyst. Environ.* 182: 15–24.

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Forthcoming events

57th Symposium of the I. Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS)

Vegetation patterns and their underlying processes
1–5 September 2014, Perth, Australia
<http://www.iavs2014.com>

Conference of the European Grassland Federation (EGF)

EGF at 50: the future of European Grasslands
7–11 September 2014, Aberystwyth, UK
<http://www.egf2014.org/>

Annual Conference of the GfÖ

Integrating Ecological Knowledge into Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Management
8–12 September 2014, Hildesheim, Germany

Annual Meeting of the British Ecological Society (BES) and the Société Française d'Ecologie (sfe)

9–12 December 2014, Lille, France
http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/events/current_future_meetings/2014-annual-meeting/

Biennial Meeting of the International Biogeography Society (IBS)

8–12 January 2015, Bayreuth, Germany
www.biogeography.org/html/Meetings/index.html

24th European Vegetation Survey Meeting

4–8 May 2015, Rennes, France
It will be hosted by Anne Bonis and Jan-Bernard Bouzillé at University of Rennes, supported by Société Française de Phytosociologie.

58th Symposium of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS)

19–24 July 2015, Brno, Czech Republic

The 4th European Congress for Conservation Biology and 27th International Congress for Conservation Biology

3–6 August 2015, Montpellier, France
Contact: <http://www.iccb-eccb2015.org/ECCB>

59th Symposium of the Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS)

30 May–3 June, Pirenópolis 2016, Brazil

The European Carabidologists' Meeting XVII

20–25 September 2016, Croatia



Feather grass steppes, Tula, Russia. Photo: B. Deák

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Important dates: The deadline for Bulletin 24 is 15 September 2014

Bulletin 24 to appear: October 2014

Bulletin 25 to appear: December 2014