

# Floristic and habitat diversity in representative grassland communities in Bulgaria

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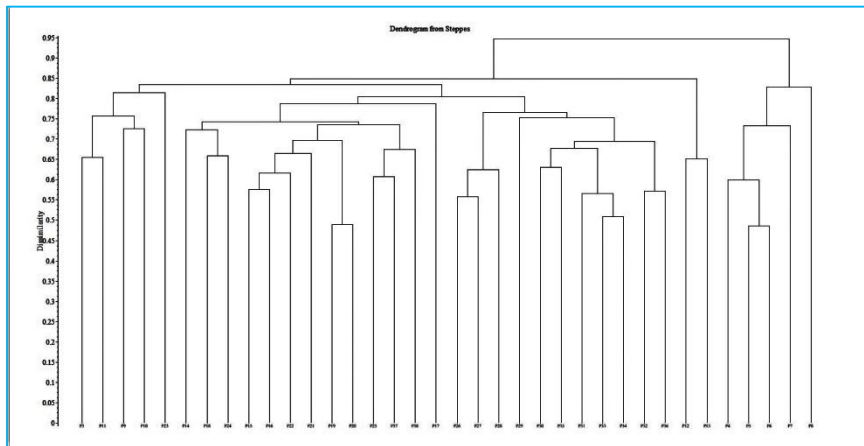
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## Abstract

Natural and semi-natural grassland communities in Bulgaria are subjected to anthropogenic pressure leading to their reduction and fragmentation. Since they are home to many other groups of living organisms, this poses serious challenges concerning their conservation and sustainable use. We present results of studies on the floristic and habitat diversity of diverse grassland communities in the plain areas of Bulgaria. The diversity evaluation was based on 38 experimental plots situated mostly in the eastern and northern parts of the country. More than 400 plant species and 12 habitat types were identified so far. Calculated diversity indices revealed that species richness varies substantially among the different habitats, with no clear trend detected. It is shaped by numerous environmental factors, and to a considerable extent – by the anthropogenic pressure. The threats to plant and habitat diversity are reviewed, and the conservation measures are discussed.

The aim of the study – characterization of floristic and habitat diversity in representative grassland plant communities in different regions of Bulgaria.



1. Objects – representative grassland communities situated in the different regions of Bulgaria.
2. Methods – evaluation of floristic diversity by the diversity indices of Shannon-Wiener ( $H'$ ), Simpson ( $1/d$ ) and Berger-Parker ( $1/d$ ).
3. Cluster analysis based on Sorensen pairwise similarity coefficient.
4. Identification of plant associations and the habitats in the studied communities.

