

Workshop 3

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About the natural habitats of Community importance "pseudo-steppes with grasses and annuals of the Thero-Brachypodietea" : are they really priority habitats ?

Importance of therophytes and open lands in the global biodiversity of the mediterranean area found expression in their consideration within the european politic for conservation of natural habitats of Community interest ("habitats, fauna and flora" directive 92/43/EEC). The pseudo-steppes with grasses and annuals (code 6220) are traditionnal pastures issued from degradation of climacic shrublands or dry forests. Their expansion is essentially due to the neolithic revolution. In these habitats, regional endemic species with high degree of responsibility are rare within the therophytes functional group, who are mainly circum-mediterranean species. Preserving management thanks to the Natura 2000 network is a good security for a global strategy to conserve annuals on this biodiversity hotspot. But consider them than priority habitats seems to be exaggerated, because they are not immediately in danger of disappearance and most of them don't show an exceptionnal floristic richness. For example, only those who contains regional endemics or important richness sites (about therophytes and / or geophytes ?) could be protected in priority.

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