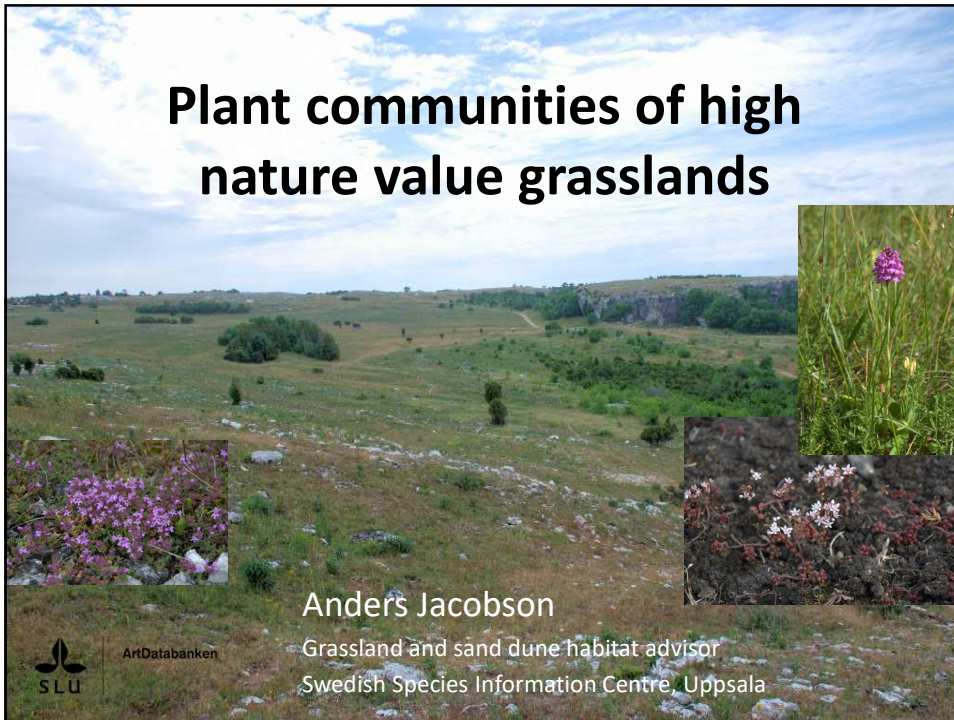


Plant communities of high nature value grasslands



Anders Jacobson

Grassland and sand dune habitat advisor
Swedish Species Information Centre, Uppsala



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Value of grassland plant communities

- Plants are fundamental to ecosystems. The composition of plant communities are of crucial importance for many other organisms



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Value of grassland plant communities

- Plants are fundamental to ecosystems. The composition of plant communities are of crucial importance for many other organisms
- Important for humans more directly
 - Important for the quality of milk and meat from grazing cattle
 - Estetic values
 - Indicators (classification and monitoring)



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Plants as indicators

Widely used for classification of habitat types and indicators of nature value.

Classification, identification

Plant communities



Vegetation types, plant sociology, habitat types etc.

Nature values, monitoring

Individual plant species
(indicator species)



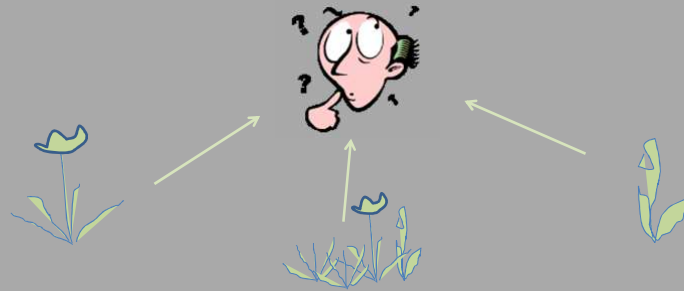
Positive and negative indicators etc.



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Plants as indicators

Are they good as indicators? What do they indicate and what are the limitations?



What do plants indicate?

Local scale – the site

Landscape scale



Plants, bryophytes, fungi, lichens



Some insects, e.g. butterflies and bumblebees

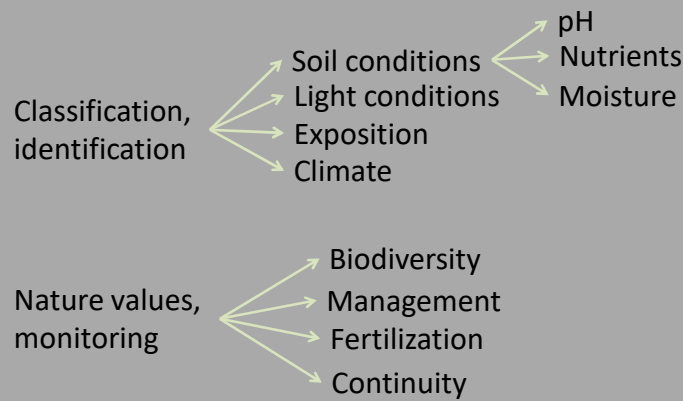


Birds



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What do plants indicate?



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Plants as indicators

+

- Many species
- Indicate many different things
- Relatively easy to identify and monitor
- Fundamental for the ecosystems

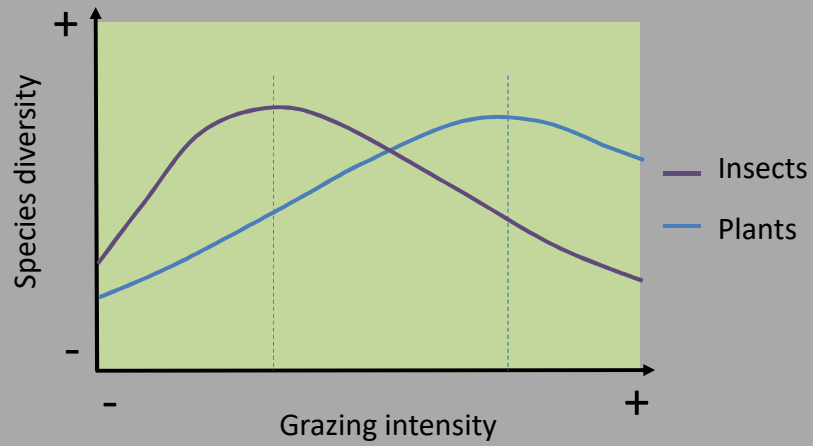
-

- Site specific , indicate on local level only
- Relatively slow indicators
- Many are long lived, seed bank
- Not necessarily representative for other organisms



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Plants as indicators



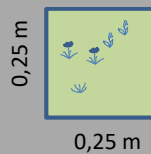
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Methods

- Qualitative methods – free search



- Quantitative methods – e.g. sample plots



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How to set targets and evaluate the results?

What are the appropriate target levels, e.g. is 10 hits on one species better than 3 species with one hit each? When is it good enough?

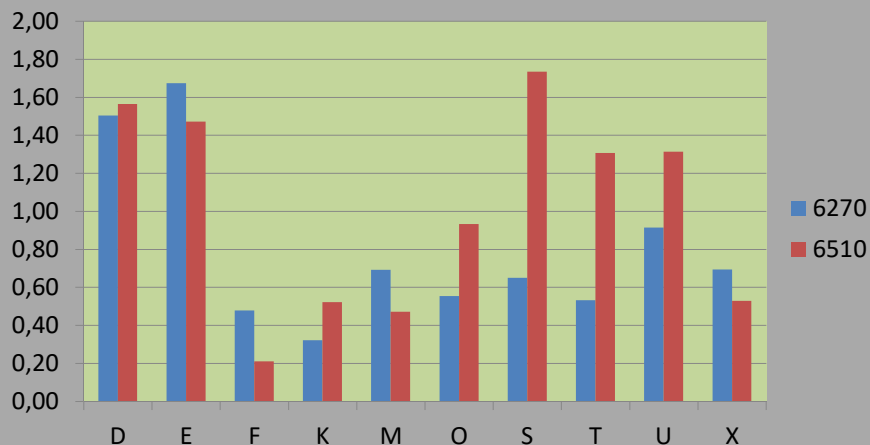


More experience is needed.



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Mean number of typical species in the sample plots in different Counties



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Is there a need for calibration between Member States?

- Classification of habitat types: *yes, we must know what we are talking about*
- Monitoring
 - Methods and targets: *yes, exchange of experience*
 - Indicator species: *some standardisation with regional additions*
- Restoration: *yes, exchange of experience*
- Management: *Caution is necessary! Best practice guidelines would be valuable, but what is best practice? Uniformity is dangerous.*



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