



IAVS

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Species-rich pavement in front of the symposium venue in Bremen (Germany)

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Meet the new IAVS Governing Board

During the Bremen Symposium, the new Council meeting on Wednesday 17 July, a new IAVS Governing Board has been elected:

Susan Wiser: President

David Zelený: Secretary

Martin Diekmann: Vice President

Alessandra Fidelis: Vice President

Monika Janišová: Vice President

Javier Loidi: Vice President

Peter Minchin: Vice President

In order to introduce ourselves to the IAVS members, we have done some mutual interviews where everybody asked the other Governing Board members about what was most interesting to him or her. Finally, each of us provided short answers to 6 questions. The person who asked is indicated by initials at the beginning of the question.

Susan Wiser

MJ: Was it difficult to establish in New Zealand as a vegetation scientist (I mean adaptation to a different system of institutions, research approach, vegetation or plant species)?

I first came to New Zealand for personal reasons and was uncertain about whether it would be possible to establish myself as a vegetation scientist here. My first challenge was to get to know other plant ecologists in NZ, but this was not too hard because NZ is a small place, I quickly met other early-career plant ecologists through the NZ Ecological Society and through my partner, and collaborator, who was a well-established forest ecologist. Except for the weeds, all the plants were new and I was surprised that NZ ecologists generally didn't think about what plant family a species belonged to. At the same time, the flora here is not too diverse so I managed to learn the primary species pretty quickly – although I am still learning (and forgetting!) species in the more difficult groups. As I had come directly from completing my PhD, the system of working in a NZ crown research institute, a corporatised Crown entity charged with conducting mostly applied scientific research, was new to me. However as these had only been established a few years before, they were new to most the scientists here anyway. I adapted pretty quickly and it has been an interesting and varied career.

JL: What do you think about the current trends in Vegetation Science after your experience in attending the Symposia and reading IAVS journals?

I think the incorporation of functional traits into our understanding and interpretation of pattern and process in vegetation has led, and continues to lead, to important insights. The increased availability of global datasets of vegetation plot data and the ability to integrate with global spatial layers, trait and phylogenetic data is allowing novel syntheses and generalities. The ability to link high resolution remotely sensed data with spatially accurate ground-based plot data is enabling us to both spatially extrapolate the nuanced understandings we gain from our hard-won plot data and allowing us to understand properties of vegetation that were extremely difficult, or impossible, to measure until now. Last but not least, with the rapid change in natural ecosystems as a result of anthropogenic change, the value of long-term datasets to help us understand the impacts of these changes is becoming increasingly apparent.

DZ: You asked us all about our first IAVS meeting and how we liked that, so I can't help myself to ask you the same: what was your first IAVS meeting and how was it? And did you already that time have a "gut feeling" that you will stay with this association for so many years?

My first IAVS symposium was in Uppsala in 1998. I participated in the pre-symposium excursion to Öland and got my first taste of the beautiful diverse, traditionally managed systems and landscapes in Europe. I learned so much at the conference and can still remember discussions about constrained versus unconstrained ordination. The most impressive event, however, was at the symposium dinner when many of the delegates congratulated Eddy Van der Maarel on his retirement in their native language. There must have been >50 different languages spoken. I was so impressed by the combination of scholarliness and friendliness that with time IAVS became my favorite society and the one in which I am most active.

PM: What is your favourite plant community and why?

My favorite plant communities are those of the high elevation rocky outcrops of the Southern Appalachians. They are the closest community in physiognomy and species composition to alpine plant communities of the Northern Appalachians, in a region where the mountains aren't tall enough for there to be an alpine



Long-term studies of disturbance and dynamics of southern beech forests, Grey Valley, New Zealand.

zone. I love the aesthetic of the open, low vegetation, the abundance of endemics and other rare species, the relatively low levels of weed invasion and the geomorphological setting. I suppose I'm also partial to them because these communities were the primary study sites for my PhD, so they feel like old friends.

AF: You have to deal with big data and different data base. From your experience, what is the most important thing you have to keep on mind when working with such a big amount of data?

This is a very difficult question as the challenge is that there is no single most important thing, instead the devil is in the details and the challenge is keeping track of all these details and remembering that problems will arise that you haven't even considered. When combining data from many sources it is critical that one understand what each element of the data from these sources actually signifies and that the analyst combines like with like rather than mixing apples with oranges. Data analysts always need to consider sources of poten-

tial error and bias in their source datasets. In vegetation science one needs to know the methods used in collecting original data, to appreciate inconsistencies that can arise especially with inconsistent use of taxonomic names and much more. The main lesson? Garbage in, garbage out...

MD: How would a „perfect working day“ look like for you?

Can I have two types of perfect days? The first is going to a new field site that requires some exercise to get to, but not too much, and sampling vegetation consisting of diverse and interesting plants in a beautiful landscape, with perfect weather and colleagues who have both high standards and are fun to be with. Oh, and a delicious lunch in my pack. The second is back at the office, when I have realistic goals set at the start of the day to do something interesting, such as analysing data or writing a paper or reading the literature. Nothing diverts me from my intention – no spontaneous urgent meetings or crises. For lunch, I sit

outside with my colleagues and it is a nice day and we talk in an animated way about some strange and interesting topic. Then at the end of the day I've actually achieved everything I had planned to do!

David Zelený

MJ: Since 2015 you work at National Taiwan University in Taipei. Is botany and vegetation science a popular study field in Taiwan and what features do you appreciate on the students at your university?

I started to teach in Taiwan in 2015, half for the personal reason, half because I really hoped to study Taiwanese vegetation "seriously". The first year I had hard time to adjust to awkward university bureaucracy and environment which is practically entirely Chinese spoken, but eventually I got over it and also managed to convince students not to be afraid of me as a "white hairy monkey". I also learned that the lack of vegetation ecologists in Taiwan, which I originally thought is a result of the generation gap, is in fact mostly caused by a fear of students (and their parents) that to study ecology will not bring good job and money. Students are smart and genuinely interested, but frustrated from the lack of job opportunities in the field. Taiwanese government is riddled by party fighting, with most of other energy spent toward technological innovations. At the same time Taiwan is facing serious environmental challenges, like air pollution, non-regulated land use changes, more frequent drought events and typhoon-induced damage as a result of climate change. Government needs to realize that if Taiwanese people want live in clean, save and pleasant environment, ecologists will be desperately needed. Hope that parents will then not push their children to study either medicine or law, and support them to become ecologists.

SW: What did you like most about the first IAVS symposium that you ever attended?

My first one was in Crete in 2009, where I had my first oral presentation at so big meeting. I remember that Crete was truly nice place to visit, with pleasant weather and sea close to the conference venue, allowing to go swimming even during the coffee breaks. Conference was organized in a Mediterranean style, which means that it was cheerful, happy and a bit messy at the same time; I remember a senior Turkish scientist presenting a talk twice longer than was the assigned 20 minutes slot, with session chair desperately trying to lead him to conclusion (unsuccessfully), while audience was either sleeping or laughing. But overall it was a great experience; first time in my life I see that those famous scientists I knew only as authors of papers I read are in fact just ordinary people like anybody else. Since then, I went to almost every IAVS meeting, if time and money allowed, and eventually found IAVS to be my scientific home (as Monika once nicely said about herself).



JL: What do you think about the current trends in Vegetation Science after your experience in attending the Symposia and reading IAVS journals?

A year ago I made (mostly for fun) an analysis, in which I downloaded titles and abstracts of all papers published in JVS and AVS since the beginning, and run the ordination on them using the linguistic analysis (imagine that every word is like a species, and every paper is like a site; if you sort articles according to the time of their publication, you can see which words are occurring more frequently now and which are disappearing. Vegetation ecology, at least as published in JVS and AVS, is a dynamic field, with new terms arriving and old terms disappearing the published articles. Perhaps its time to find that analysis and make the use of it as the blogpost for www.jvsavsblog.org.

PM: What is your favourite plant community and why?

I have two, geographically far from each other and physiognomically completely different. One is dry acidophilous grasslands, occurring at the agriculture landscape north of my home city, Třebíč, in the Czech Republic. That's a place I learnt determining plants when I was grammar school student, and whenever I go back home, I will surely visit there. These grasslands are creating small diverse "islands" surrounded by the "sea" of agriculture fields with monodominant crops, and the rules of island biogeography apply to them as they do to true islands. The second type is the cloud forest in Taiwan. First time I hiked there in 2005, during my first visit of Taiwan, and since then I like it more and more, and eventually made it a central topic of my



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Taiwan's cloud forest dominated by *Fagus hayatae* (Lalashan, 2017, above) and *Chamaecyparis obtusa* var. *formosana*, covered by epiphytes (Smangus, 2009, below).



© D. Zelený

current research. The cloud forest has many faces, from depressively dark and wet letting you feel you must get crazy, to optimistically cool and comfortable letting you feel like that is the best place in the World.

AF: You had the experience to be the Chair of the Global Sponsorship Committee for some time. How was your experience and what advices can you give to students and researchers who want to apply for travel grants?

It was an interesting experience and I liked that, although it includes also a lot of repetitive tasks. Our committee currently has a great team of people, willing to help and constructively discuss, which is very useful when the time is short during the pre-symposium application period. And although there were some bumps on the way (including an unpleasant cheating case by one of the applicants), I appreciate this opportunity. My suggestions to applicants are several, and we actually (together with Alessandra) recently wrote an article about this, published in this Bulletin issue (pages 14-16). Welcome to read it!

MD: How tough was it to learn the Taiwanese flora?

When I first time came to Taiwan 14 years ago, I had a feeling that all trees look almost identical. Now, after so many field trips and learning the plants, it's better, although still far from perfect. I have quite good sense in recognizing herbs (ferns, forbs, even grasses), but not much trees and shrubs, perhaps because I didn't really need this back in Czech. For foreigner, learning Taiwanese flora has some specificities. Although the Flora of Taiwan is written in English, the determination key is often based on characteristics which are not available in the field (e.g. flowers of trees), so it may not always be too helpful. Also, Taiwanese students and researchers are good in plant determination, but they don't have the habit of learning and using the Latin names. It became much easier when I printed Taiwanese checklist of vascular plants with Chinese and Latin names, translated the pronunciation of Chinese characters into pinyin, so as I can read them, and started to bring it with me to the field to ease communication. I am also convincing my students that, if they want to study plants and vegetation seriously, it's really important to learn Latin names. I introduced a short „Latin moments“ in the research seminar of my lab, where we discuss the meaning and pronunciation of selected Latin names, and where students, in return, teach me the meaning and pronunciation of Chinese names. It quite works, for both me and students.

Alessandra Fidelis

MJ: You travel a lot and I have seen your map of visited countries. Could you list some countries which you still did not visit and which you plan to visit in the future?

I really love traveling and trying to visit the different vegetation types. I have many countries in my bucket list, that I still want to visit, but I really wanted to see the savannas in Asia and other savannas in Africa, like in Tanzania (Serengueti National Park). My plan is to visit Russia (for the IAVS symposium in 2020) and be able to visit the vegetation there, which is totally unfamiliar to me!

SW: What did you like most about the first IAVS symposium that you ever attended?

My first IAVS was in Freising, 2001. And this IAVS really changed my life (“scientific life”) because there I met my two future supervisors (Prof Dr. Jörg Pfadenhauer and Prof. Dr. Valerio Pillar). What I liked the most was that people were always so friendly and easy to reach and talk. I had just finished my undergraduate studies and I had the opportunity to have lunch together with Dr. Eddie van der Maarel, who explained me passionately about the IAVS, and to chat with Dr. David Goodall for hours during the Mid-Symposium excursion. Because of these impressions, I kept trying to attend the IAVS Symposium when I was a student and it became my scientific home, I must say.

JL: What do you think about the current trends in Vegetation Science after your experience in attending the Symposia and reading IAVS journals?

One of the trends that just popup in my mind is Dark Diversity (which I think is so exciting!) and also using functional traits to analyse and explain patterns and vegetation responses is still the main trend in every Symposia and we always have exciting papers at the IAVS journals about this.

DZ: Whenever I hear about fire, you just popup in my mind. I wonder, how did you get to study this environmental factor, and how is the feeling to setup experiments where you use “live” fire to see its impact? Do you feel scared while seeing fire, or excited?



Alessandra with one of her favorite plants - *Actinocephalus* sp. (Eriocaulaceae)

I must say it was an accident (a real one!). I was starting my Master thesis and I was supposed to study population biology of a rosette species and the effects of grazing. But one of the areas where some colleagues were working burned and they observed this species resprouting a lot, so I decided to add this to my question. I was so excited when I went to the area and saw how vegetation was regenerating after fire, that I decided to change subject for my PhD project and study the effects of fire on plant communities. And indeed – it is super exciting! It is not easy to study fire, because usually people associate fire to destruction and getting permits to do fire experiments can be very hard in Brazil. But it is totally worthy, because doing prescribed burns can be fun! But yes, wildfires can be quite scary, depending on the type of vegetation that is burning. I imagine that these wildfires that happened in the last years in Portugal and California were quite scary!

PM: What is your favourite plant community and why?

I have to admit that all open ecosystems are my favorite! Mostly tropical savannas and grasslands (the type of plant community I work with). They are so rich in species and you can find the most interesting small plants. I learned to “look down” to the ground to find plants and mostly the belowground part of the plant community is very interesting!

MD: How much time do you spend each year for field work? And is there a place in the *Cerrado* that you haven't seen yet?

I wish I could spend much more time in the field. I go to Central Brazil at least 3x a year (it is about 2000 km away from my university!) and we spend at least 5-7 days in the field (in July and January we spend usually 10 days there). We have other study sites and one of them is very close to the university, so we can go and come back in the same day. And there I go more often.

Yes!!! I have never been to the Amazonian part of the *Cerrado* (but we have some experiments there, I am planning to go next year) and other areas in the north-eastern part of Brazil.

Peter Minchin

MJ: I was impressed by the social events during the Bozeman symposium. What is the role of music in the university studies in Montana or the U.S in general?

Thanks. Dave Roberts organized the music events at the Bozeman symposium. I don't know much about music at Montana State University but my university, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), has a very active and highly rated music program (<http://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/music/>). We also have a radio station operating from our campus, WSIE 88.7 FM (<https://www.siue.edu/wsie/>) that mostly plays jazz, R&B, blues, and soul music. Over the past 15 years, several of the students that have done ecological



research in my lab have also done some music courses and played various instruments.

SW: What did you like most about the first IAVS symposium that you ever attended?

The first IAVS symposium I attended was the Working Group for Theoretical Vegetation Science symposium in Uppsala, Sweden in 1985. I liked the relatively small size, so that there was a chance to meet and get to know people, including some of the “big names” in my field. I also liked the mid-symposium excursion, which provided not only an introduction to some of the vegetation types in Sweden but also an informal atmosphere to interact with other participants.

JL: What do you think about the current trends in Vegetation Science after your experience in attending the Symposia and reading IAVS journals?

I think that Vegetation Science is in good shape, with lots of interesting developments. We have many smart young scientists, ensuring a great future for our science. Given my research interests in developing and evaluating methods of data analysis, I am particularly impressed by new approaches incorporating plant functional traits and phylogenetic relationships into vegetation analysis.

DZ: At the Bremen conference, I was truly enjoying your talk about spending your sabbatical by resurveying the Tasmanian vegetation you surveyed when you were PhD student. I wonder, how were your feelings and emotions when you walked the same places you walked those 40 years ago? And now I mean feelings both about changes in vegetation and changes in you personally?

The site of my sabbatical research, Mt. Field National Park in Tasmania, Australia, has been a special place for me since I spent a week-long botany field course there



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Mt. Field National Park in Tasmania.

in 1975 as an undergraduate student. That course, led by the late Prof. Bill Jackson, really solidified my interest in plant ecology as a career. I immediately fell in love with the glacial topography, the flora (with many endemics), and the montane plant communities. I returned in 1976 as an Honours student and did a research project on line transect sampling in dwarf coniferous forest (dominated by two endemic species of *Athrotaxis*) on Tarn Shelf, one of my favourite places in the park with a string of small lakes (tarns) surrounded by vegetation that looks like it has been laid out by a very talented landscape gardener. When I planned my Ph.D. project with Prof. Jackson as my advisor and decided to collect a large data set to test hypotheses about how plant communities vary along environmental gradients, Mt. Field was the obvious choice for a study site. I spent most of the summers of 1980-1982 collecting vegetation data from a network of 438 100-m² plots. I worked mostly alone (without a safety plan) and really got to know the area and its vegetation, working off trails on traverses that covered about 16 km² of the plateau. Returning to resample a large subset of the plots in January–May 2019, brought back many happy memories of my time there almost 40 years ago. The flora, communities, and landscape were like old friends (though quite a few species had changed their names) and this time I worked with an old friend from graduate school, John Davies, who was an excellent companion and colleague. The vegetation was very familiar and did not seem to have changed dramatically. Surprisingly, we found 7 of my original plastic plot markers. Mentally I did not feel much older than when I did the original sampling but my body, especially my knees, made it obvious that I was, in fact, considerably older. Both John and I had to see a physical therapist about knee problems but we managed to persevere and completed the resampling of 234 plots. It was a great experience.

AF: What was the most amazing excursion you ever participated?

That would be the IAVS Excursion to Western Australia in September, 1990 led by Dr. John Beard. My friend and collaborator, Jari Oksanen, whom I had met at the IAVS Working Group for Theoretical Vegetation Science symposium in Vienna, Austria in 1988, was on sabbatical in Australia at the time and also came on the excursion. The 2-week trip spanned the rainfall gradient in southwest Australia, allowing us to see an enormous range of vegetation types, from tall eucalypt forests, through very diverse shrublands, to semi-arid and arid vegetation. It was on that trip that I met Javier Loidi.

MD: You are so skilled in statistical analysis of vegetation data. Do you prefer sitting at the computer doing ordinations, or spending time out in the field?

I have to admit that I love data analysis and modelling but I also love spending time in the field. It is hard to

say which I prefer, since both activities are very enjoyable for me. As a Ph.D. student, I became the second biggest user of the University of Tasmania's mainframe computer (after a guy in physics), developing software for the simulation of community data and performing an extensive comparison of the performance of ordination techniques. The other part of my Ph.D., which I mentioned in answering the question from DZ, was a field-based project for which I collected a large vegetation data set at Mt. Field National Park. As I was preparing for my first field trip, I had unrolled a 50 m nylon rope down the corridor of the Botany Department in order to remove kinks. A Professor of Genetics saw me as I passed his office and joked "Hey look. Peter Minchin is in the field. Once he is more than 20 m from a computer he calls that field work".

Javier Loidi

MJ: What is your favourite text book of botany, ecology or vegetation science, which you would recommend to young IAVS members?

I have been always influenced by the Strasburger's text-book of Botany, an ever renewed text book that started in 1894 and still has a recent version re-edited by modern specialists. It has been translated to many languages from the original German and has a comprehensive concept of the plant



science, encompassing all aspects of Botany sensu lato: physiology, morphology, systematics and phylogeny, ecology, etc. Nowadays it exceeds the requirements of the current programs of the botanical subjects in the academic curricula, but still is somehow a little encyclopedia of the plant science. Concerning vegetation science I still stick to the book Phytosociology by Braun-Blanquet, which is a complete treaty of Plant Ecology although it is a bit old. Another two books of great interest in this field are: Archibold, O.W. -1995- Ecology of world vegetation. Chapman & Hall. and Gurevitch, J., Scheiner, S.M. & Fox, G.A. 2002. The ecology of plants. Sinauer.

SW: What did you like most about the first IAVS symposium that you ever attended?

The first I attended was in 1977, which was held still in Rinteln (Germany) and was organized by Reinhold Tüxen. It run basically in German but I was impressed by the international vocation of that meeting. In spite

of all the difficulties of that time (cold war and Iron Curtain), huge efforts were made to make possible all colleagues, particularly those from the eastern countries, to attend and participate. Such a broad internationalist spirit in the frame of a friendly atmosphere and the intense scientific dedication, convinced me that it was worth to join such organization, ... although there was no social dinner and meals were not included in the fee.

DZ: I am always impressed by your broad knowledge not only about vegetation, but also about history and politics. What is your favorite activity outside the professional career of vegetation ecologist?

Thank you. There are two areas that arouse a special interest in me: nature and the social sciences, in particular history. When I was a teenager and I was about to decide which of the two I was going to dedicate my professional life to, my father, as a result of his own experiences, gave me some advice: "don't dedicate yourself to politics, it's too dangerous ..." and I listened to him and dedicated myself to the study of Biology and nature, which I congratulate myself greatly because I have had enormous satisfactions in my life as a botanist and vegetation scientist. Nevertheless, history and politics continue to exert an irresistible attraction on me and I do not resist reading with passion the books and articles that fall into my hands; I have a predilection for reading historical novel. In addition, I find it very rewarding to walk in the countryside, particularly in the mountains.

PM: What is your favourite plant community and why?

This is the most difficult question, because I like them all. Perhaps it is the European Atlantic heathlands that have the greatest attraction for me, because I have devoted much study and effort for many years. Temperate deciduous forests attract me a lot too; their color in the different seasons is captivating to me.

AF: I have the impression you already have been everywhere, and that you have visited all vegetation types! Is there one in particular that you have never visited but you really want to?

It is not so much, but it is true that I have visited many places in the world and have known its vegetation. However, there are many ecosystems that I know little or nothing, such as the Arctic tundra, the steppes of Central Asia, the New Guinea with its forests and mountains, the northern Andes paramo or the southern forests of Patagonia and Tasmania

MD: How many languages do you speak (I sometimes have the feeling that you know them all)?

I have always dreamed that there was a pill that, when taken, you would understand all the languages of the world and you could communicate with everyone. I have always had a great desire to communicate with my peers around the world, feeling an unstoppable

curiosity for other nations's cultures. As there is no such pill, there is no choice but to learn languages. The atmosphere of my home of origin is already bilingual because it speaks Basque and Spanish, so I had to deal with both languages. Of course, the proximity to France made French a very popular language, and I got used to understanding and spoiling it. English has been the language I have studied most in my life and in which I find more resources in my expression, it is like the pill of my international dreams. Then I studied German when I lived in Germany during my stay with Tüxen, and, although I have few opportunities to exercise it, I try not to forget what I learned. Finally, there is the series of Latin languages close to Spanish: Portuguese, Italian and Catalan, which are relatively easy for us because of their linguistic proximity. So it is not so much.

Martin Diekmann

MJ: What are your favourite destinations for mountain walking?

At least once a year I go to the mountains, being a change to the flat landscape of my home town Bremen where the highest elevation is the local rubbish dump. I like the mountains for their stunning views, variety of different ecosystems and high plant species richness. My favourite location in the European Alps are the Dolomites in South Tyrol where I spent many summer holidays in the surrounding of Bolzano. The weather here is often fine, the floristic diversity fantastic and the food delicious.

SW: What did you like most about the first IAVS symposium that you ever attended?

My first IAVS symposium was the meeting in Warsaw in 1990 where I was allowed to present a poster. I remember the friendly atmosphere and that I for the first time met many famous people I knew from books and papers, but



had never met in person. Another lasting memory was my visit to the Białowieża National park with its beautiful and impressive forests.

JL: What do you think about the current trends in Vegetation Science after your experience in attending the Symposia and reading IAVS journals?

What I have always liked about IAVS symposia is that they offer such a large variety of topics in special and open sessions. Often I sit in a lecture and think „What a great idea, I could have thought about this myself“. As I work with permanent plot data and time series



© J. Loidi



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Beautiful montane grasslands in the Basque country – Javier's home.

analyses I especially welcome the foundation of the „Historical Vegetation Ecology“ working group.

DZ: One of my early references I was reading was your review paper about Ellenberg indicator values (Diekmann 2003), and it truly influenced my future thinking. I wonder, do you remember when did you encountered Ellenbergs for the first time, and how did it happen that ended up writing a review paper about them? And more personally – do you “like them”, or you merely consider them as a (possibly useful) tool for vegetation ecologists?

One of the greatest things with vegetation ecology is that it trains you to use plants as indicators for the environment. If you know your vegetation well, you can tell a lot about a site’s soil, its pH, water and nutrient availability, or about its management. To capture the ecological responses of plant species in numbers is simply a brilliant idea, and my particular interest in Ellenberg indicator values arose when I moved to Sweden and realized that some species behaved differently with respect to pH compared to their responses in my home country Germany. That triggered some projects and papers about the ecological responses of plants along environmental gradients, which were based on true measurements but also compared these responses to the Ellenberg numbers and what this implied for their usage. After having worked so much with this topic I knew the literature well, which finally gave rise to the review paper. For me, Ellenberg numbers are no truth, but an indispensable instrument for vegetation science, especially when working with historical data.

PM: What is your favourite plant community and why?

I have lots of favourite plant communities, including those I have worked with: different types of forest, alvar and other dry grasslands, and acidic grasslands. However, if I have to choose, nothing compares to a species-rich broad-leaved forest in spring, with a still rather open canopy full of fresh green leaves and a dense carpet of colourful vernal geophytes, preferably on a sunny day!

AF: How was your time as the President of the IAVS?

My time as a IAVS president was great! I enjoyed working with so many nice people in the Governing Board and Council. The IAVS is MY society in the sense that it is this association I want to engage with and spend my time in. Over the past 2-3 years I sometimes felt that the time that my university work with teaching, research and administration leaves me for additional activities is too short to do a proper job.

Monika Janišová

SW: What did you like most about the first IAVS symposium that you ever attended?

My first IAVS Symposium was in Swansea 2007. I remember I was impressed by these three things in particular: 1) the friendly atmosphere and the openness of experienced scientists to communication with young people; 2) the wonderful excursion in the National Park Brecon Beacons; and 3) dancing vegetation scientists during the perfectly organized social dinner.

JL: What do you think about the current trends in Vegetation Science after your experience in attending the Symposia and reading IAVS journals?

Each time I attend the IAVS Symposium I am impressed how diverse topics are covered by the Vegetation Science. One cannot follow all developments, but I realized a significant increase of contributions on vegetation history, vegetation change and vegetation dynamics. This is probably connected with the rapidly changing world since the last several decades and the necessity to understand the vegetation response and to project the future developments. In Bremen I was impressed by a strong focus of many contributions and the general discussion on applied topics and the willingness of most Symposium participants to contribute to environmental solutions. And I welcome this trend very much.

DZ: In my eyes you are a prominent “grassland lady”; I wonder, is there some grassland type or grassland dominated by certain species, and a locality where you always like to see it, which is especially close to your heart?



Thanks. I really love species-rich grasslands of all types, not only because they are pleasant to sit, lie down, have picnic or relax, but also because they are colorful, odorous, not boring at all, and because they are a challenge for a vegetation ecologist to reveal all the species and their mutual relationships. Unfortunately, species-rich semi-natural grasslands are rapidly declining and I am sometimes afraid that I gradually will lose my study objects. Since several years I study Carpathian traditionally managed meadows and pastures. During my trips to Romania and Ukraine I am never disappointed.

PM: What is your favourite plant community and why?

A species-rich semi-natural meadow, such the one in Ponoara, Apuseni Carpathians, Romania (the picture below). Because it is beautiful, fragrant and full of life.

AF: I had the best time going to the field with you and learning so much about plants in the Carpathians! Is there a vegetation type that you want to visit and learn more about?

Yes, I was very impressed by *kwongan* vegetation, which we observed during the IAVS excursions in SW Australia. I would like to return to some places, such as Lesueur or Stirling Range National Parks. I also would like to see the South African *fynbos* one day, which is another extremely species-rich shrubland or heathland vegetation with fascinating plants, that that look like they're from another planet in the eyes of the European. And if I would have an opportunity, I would like to come back to *cerrado*, nowhere in the world have I seen more beautiful trees than those that resisted repeated fires in *cerrado*. And more lush floods of flowers, and more funny plant shapes, ...

MD: Where do you get your inspirations for compiling such a nice material for the IAVS Bulletin?

Most of the inspiration comes directly from the vegetation and the vegetation scientists: when I look at them, I immediately have a bunch of questions. Fortunately, I usually find someone to answer ☺.



Grazed and manured meadows in Romanian Apuseni Carpathians are rich in species including orchids, such as *Anacamptis pyramidalis*.

About travel awards to annual symposium by IAVS Global Sponsorship Committee

By David Zelený and Alessandra Fidelis

Since 2013, the International Association for Vegetation Science every year allocates some money to support students and researchers in financial needs to participate at the IAVS Annual Symposium. This year, at the 62nd IAVS Symposium in Bremen, we met with awarded participants to explain where the travel award money come from, how the GSC committee selects whom to award money to, how we actually decide the amount awardees receive, and some details that are usually hidden between lines of the official documents. Here is the summary for those who may not have been able to join but are interested in how the thing works, and also for those who plan to apply for this travel award in future.

First, some statistics. In 2019, we had a nice budget of 30,000 EUR to pay for the travel awards. We received 71 valid applications from participants in 33 countries, mostly from graduate (master or PhD) students (35) and postdocs (18), but also from researchers and professors (9+3), an undergraduate student (1) and others (5). We were able to award 31 applicants (24 graduate students and 7 postdocs) with travel awards ranging from 290 to 1700 EUR (966 EUR on average). Awarded participants are from 15 countries, with the highest number from Brazil (9), Taiwan (3), South Africa (3), UK (2) and New Zealand (2). In addition to the travel awards funded by IAVS, the conference organiser, Prof Martin Diekmann, solicited funding of 6500 EUR from The Foundation Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung (Bremen, Germany), to enable six other applicants to receive financial support: two from Egypt, and one each from Ghana, Indonesia, Ukraine and Philippines. As a result, 37 out of the 71 original applicants received an award to travel to the IAVS Symposium in Bremen, resulting in a success rate of slightly over 50%. This information is not a secret: you can find it in the annual report of GSC committee, posted on IAVS website www.iavs.org, and reprinted in this issue of Bulletin (pages 19-20).

How does the selection work? The Global Sponsorship committee has currently six members from all continents who are all professional researchers in the field (<http://iavs.org/Governance/Committees.aspx>). After we collect all the applications, we first determine any

conflict of interest: no committee member should evaluate participants in her/his lab or university, no previous students, colleagues or friends. We then divide the applicants randomly so that each applicant gets reviewed by at least three committee members. Each committee member will read the CV, motivation letter and abstract, and grade these between 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) in the category *CV + motivation letter* (why the applicant wants the money and what is her/his professional background) and *Abstract* (is it scientifically sound and does it fit the conference scope?). We also evaluate the *professional stage* of each participant, whether she/he is undergraduate or graduate student (grade 5), postdoc (3) or researcher and others (1). Evaluation in each of these three categories have weights (CV + motivation letter = 2/5 of the total evaluation, Abstract = 2/5, professional age = 1/5). So, for example, if you as an applicant get the score 3 and 4 in the category CV + motivation letter and Abstract, respectively, and you are PhD student (= 5), your overall mean is $(3 \times 2 + 4 \times 2 + 5 \times 1) / 5 = 3.8$. We then rank applicants by the overall score, forming the basis for selection. For each applicant, we calculate the estimated cost as a sum of the early bird registration fee in the appropriate category (student vs regular), estimated accommodation cost (in a single-bed budget hotel near the venue with private bathroom), and also the cost of the travel (we calculate the budget airfare from the country of residence to the conference with minimum stopovers). As you can see, we calculate most of the financial costs ourselves, to be as fair as possible (for example because the applicants requests for accommodation fee are often very variable, from a bed in an eight person dorm, to a four-star single person apartment). If you indicate that you secured another source of money, we subtract this amount from the award; this may appear to be a disadvantage (you get less money), but at the same time, that you got extra funding from elsewhere speaks in your favour to us, and may increase your evaluation in the CV + motivation letter category. It is important that you indicate clearly which category of expenses you require and which you don't (e.g. you need only registration, but don't need accommodation as you will be staying in a friend's

house, or don't need travel because you will drive with a colleague). All money saved on an individual applicant will be used to fund the next in the ranking, so please be honest so that we can award as many applicants as possible. Also, if you eventually managed to secure funding from other sources (grant project, other foundation) and you don't need the support (or part of it) anymore, please let the chair of GSC know as soon as possible, so the money can be used for others (we will not tolerate double reimbursing of the same cost from different sources). Another important point is that if you are from a high-income country, you receive only 70% of the estimated sum, to give an extra advantage to applicants from middle- and low-income countries. If you applied in previous years and obtained a travel award from GSC, you can still apply again (and we really support to you to do so!), but you will get only 70% of the funding (this applies if you have been awarded funding within the past two years, but not before). These "discounts" are not additive, so if you are a repeated awardee from a high-income country, you receive 70%. Finally, we count how much money we have, draw the line, and select "awarded" applicants (those who get money directly) and applicants "on the waiting list" (those who get money if some of the awarded applicants cannot use the funds). All money is reimbursed via the IAVS Business office after the conference is finished from the receipts submitted by the awardee. Usually, the registration fee will be paid directly by us to the conference organizers. Most importantly, read the instructions carefully and submit all documents as requested. It often happens that the applications are missing some of information requested, and we had to contact the applicants to fulfil her/his application, which can be time-consuming. As a consequence, the final decisions takes a little longer to be announced.

Finally, where does the money come from? The main annual income of our Association is from the Journal of Vegetation Science and Applied Vegetation Science. Wiley, the publisher, shares with the Association the revenues generated by both journals from subscriptions, and the Association then uses this money for various activities. During the discussion at the meeting, we had a couple of questions related to travel grant applications and processing, and some questions also emerged from the email exchange with awarded (or not awarded) participants. Here we answer some of them.

If I specify that I need less money (e.g. I am willing to pay some money from my pocket), does it increase my odds to be selected? No, not really. The evaluation is mostly based on criteria not related to how much money you request (whether you are "cheap" or "expensive"). The only exception is perhaps if you indicate that you got extra money from other sources, which speaks in your favour as extra motivation. In-

deed, paying money from your personal sources is a sign of solidarity, since part of the budget otherwise paid to you by Association can be used to fund more applicants.

Is it possible that IAVS will pay for my flight ticket in advance? No, unfortunately not. We can pay for the registration fee (you don't need to pay for it), but not for accommodation and travel. We did so in the past, but we have had experience of an applicant who obtained money for the flight ticket but did not show up at the conference, and there was no way for the Association to get the money back. All this can happen for perfectly understandable reasons, but we need to make sure that the money we spend is spent wisely and fairly.

Is it possible to make the process of selection more transparent? We try this (this is also the reason for this article), but of course, every time there will be some detail which we did not foresee. Please, read the instructions published on the award website of the Annual Symposium. You may also read some of the old GSC reports at the www.iavs.org reprinted in older Bulletin issues, to get an idea of how the process works. If in doubt, contact the GSC chair with further questions.

Would it be possible to give less money to each applicant in order to support more applicants? Some associations do this (e.g. International Biogeography Society supports a flat fee of 500 USD to all selected applicants). We discussed this also at the meeting but concluded that this is perhaps not the way to go. The reason is that for some applicants the flat fee would not be enough to participate at the symposium at all, and they may not be able to come even if they get the award; in contrast, for some others it may be more than enough to go. We still need to keep in place some mechanisms to differentiate the applicants, e.g. if you are a student living in Germany and travelling to the conference in Germany by train, or you are early career researcher from Africa without a budget and travelling by plane. This is why we spend quite some time on evaluating each applicant and making selection criteria as transparent as possible, and we think this is the best approach at the moment.

It's the first time for me to travel for such a meeting, can you please book my accommodation and pick me up at the airport? Sorry, but the committee members are unable to provide such services. We process the applications and make sure that the rules are fair and applied correctly, but we are not able to provide any technical support for the awarded applicants (some of us may not even be present at the symposium that year). For accommodation, you may the contact local organisers, who may be able to help you (there are usually some accommodation options provided). For travel assistance, you need to organise this yourself or seek the assistance of a travel agency.



© F. Fassnacht

Young scientists working group in Bremen, Germany, July 2019.

IAVS Business Office Report

July 2018 – June 2019

Summary FASEB continues to transition operational processes and departments to streamline services. Last year, we partnered with RAFFA/Marcom LLC and transitioned our accounting and financial management system into an online system which speeds the process of approvals and payments via Bill.com. With minimal training, reports can also be generated on demand through our Sage Intacct system. We've recently transitioned to Microsoft Office 365 and moved all our servers to the cloud. This enables staff to work remotely from anywhere there is WIFI. Most recently, FASEB director, Frank Krause, sent notice to the leadership of all client societies to inform them of additional transitions for the upcoming year.

1. Business Office Activities

- Governance
 - i. Attended all Governing Board calls and monthly leadership calls with President and Secretary. Followed up on Business Office action items.
 - ii. In collaboration with Governing Board, coordinated and prepared Council election ballot.
 - iii. Assisted Governing Board with distribution and collection of Council votes via Survey Monkey.
- Membership
 - i. Produced and distributed journal strip list for publications.
 - ii. Coordinated efforts to confirm membership for award applicants.
 - iii. Created and sent three renewal notices, resulting in 48% renewals (3% higher than last year).
 - iv. Sent various email announcements related to renewals, news and other items of interest to the membership (see **Attachment 1** for open and click through rates of each).
- Bulletin
 - i. Coordinated efforts between editor and FASEB designer to produce and distribute two issues of the Bulletin. Transitioned designing responsibilities from FASEB to independent contractor. Distributed two additional Bulletin issues from independent contractor. Completed DOI applications.

- Website
 - i. Performed website updates as requested or as necessary.

2. Annual Symposium Activities

- 2018 – Bozeman, MT, USA (Post Meeting Activities)
 - i. Processed reimbursement requests for travel awardees, GB, working groups and editors.
 - ii. Produced and disbursed Certificates of Attendance and Certificates of Presentations upon request.
 - iii. Uploaded committee and working group reports to respective website pages.
- 2019 – Bremen, Germany
 - i. Assisted Awards Committee chair with notification letters.
 - ii. Forwarded invitation/VISA letters to Martin.
 - iii. Sent eblast communications to membership.
 - iv. Assisted in the request of committee and working group reports. Set up Dropbox folder with permissions.
 - v. Attended symposium and worked Registration Desk
 - vi. Assisted awards committee chair liaison with on-site review and grading of Young Investigator's poster and oral competition.
 - vii. Coordinated award certificates and gifts.

3. Finance

- Operations
 - i. Managed finances, paid approved invoices/reimbursements and processed wire transfers.
 - ii. Reconciled foreign & US bank account transactions.
 - iii. Completed annual DE corporation report.
 - iv. Prepared draft year-end financial statements.
 - v. Prepared and distributed 1099s.
 - vi. Worked with tax preparers to file extension and tax forms required by the IRS.

4. Future Projects

- Membership Committee collaboration
 - i. Work with Membership Committee to review and implement feasible recommendations.
- Considerations

- i. FASEB has added a new database and content management system provider called [MemberClicks](#) to our service offerings. MemberClicks is an integrated system for managing membership, registrations, website, email marketing and online communities. Great

opportunity to provide a website refresh, using select choices of templates. <https://www.memberclicks.com/portfolio>. Presentation was given to President and Secretary along with pricing considerations.

ATTACHMENT 1

Email Statistics

Date	Email Name	Total Sent	Bounces	Opt-outs	Opens	Clicks
7/12/19	IAVS 2019.3 Bulletin	1650	20	0	579 35.1%	260 44.9%
5/17/19	2019-2023 IAVS Council Election Results	1640	19	0	749 45.7%	10 1.3%
5/9/19	Bremen Reminder	1648	30	0	671 40.7%	74 11.0%
4/26/19	IAVS 2019.2 Bulletin	1633	23	0	699 42.8%	312 44.6%
4/15/19	2019 IAVS Election	658	3	0	369 56.1%	119 32.2%
3/20/19	Deadline for Abstracts Submissions and Travel Award is this Sunday	424	2	0	218 51.4%	44 20.2%
3/18/19	28th EVS	409	1	0	205 50.1%	31 15.1%
3/15/19	Provide Information on Your Thesis for Vegetation Scientists Worldwide	408	1	0	229 56.1%	24 10.5%
3/7/19	2019 Abstracts are open - Bremen Circular	1560	24	0	634 40.6%	71 11.2%
2/19/19	Eurasian Grassland Conference 2019	539	3	0	266 49.4%	41 15.4%
E 2/15/19	2019 Bremen is Open	543	1	0	291 53.6%	75 25.8%
2/15/19	Non-Member 2019 Bremen is Open	1013	18	0	359 35.4%	57 15.9%
2/7/19	2019 Call for Nominations	539	1	0	293 54.4%	56 19.1%
1/24/19	IAVS 2019.1 Bulletin	1556	22	0	653 42.0%	315 48.2%
1/16/19	2019 Bremen	1560	26	0	695 44.6%	72 10.4%
12/13/18	Call for Abstracts â€“ Special Issue in Journal of Vegetation Science	1569	40	0	670 42.7%	20 3.0%
12/11/18	IAVS 2018.3 Bulletin	729	10	0	377 51.7%	226 59.9%
10/5/18	Dark_Diversity_Network	2034	183	0	351 17.3%	84 23.9%
8/30/18	Reminder: Historical Vegetation Ecology	1572	23	0	655 41.7%	36 5.5%
8/14/18	Historical Vegetation Ecology	1571	23	0	712 45.3%	65 9.1%

Global Sponsorship Committee Report

In 2019, there has been some turnover in the **membership of GSC**. Current members are: Alessandra Fidelis (Brazil), Lauchlan Fraser (Canada), Alireza Naqinezhad (Iran), Peter C. le Roux (South Africa, newly appointed in 2019), Camilla Wellstein (Italy, newly appointed in 2019) and David Zelený (Taiwan, from 2019 appointed as a chair of the committee).

GSC approved several proposals by IAVS working groups:

- The proposal by the Executive Committee of the European Dry Grasslands Group (EDGG) for travel grants for the Eurasian Grassland Conference in Graz, Austria/Slovenia and Italy in May-June 2019). The allocated budget was 3500 EUR. Of the twelve applicants, nine were awarded as specified in the rules proposed by the Executive Committee of EDGG.
- The proposal by the Executive Committee of the EDGG for travel grants for the field workshop to Armenia and Switzerland. The allocated budget was 5600 EUR (4000 EUR allocated for the workshop and 1600 EUR from the EDGG savings). Of the 14 applicants, all have been awarded based on the rules proposed by the Executive Committee of EDGG.
- The proposal of the European Vegetation Survey (EVS) steering committee for travel awards to support the 2019 European Vegetation Sur-



© H. Culmsee

Mid-Symposium excursion 2019 to the Cuxhaven coastal heathlands.

vey Meeting in Madrid, with an allocated sum of 7500 EUR; 12 applicants applied, from which 11 were awarded, following the criteria set by the EVS Steering committee.

We updated the **selection criteria** for the Annual Symposia awards and made them more explicit and transparent. The current criteria are as follows:

- 1) Applicant must be a member of IAVS.
- 2) The applicant can be a student or researcher.
- 3) If the applicant has already received the grant for IAVS Symposium in the past two years, she/he can apply again but will receive only 70% of the total approved amount.
- 4) Applicants from high-income countries will obtain only 70% of the approved funding.
- 5) Evaluation by committee members is based on a) motivation letter (+CV) and b) abstract. The evaluation is done on scale 0 (poor) to 5 (excellent).
- 6) The final evaluation is including also professional age criteria: graduate (MSc or PhD) student = 5, post-doc = 4, researcher/professor/other = 2. This will be added to the table in the end.
- 7) The final calculation is based on the average from abstract + motivation letter/CV + professional age, with the following weights: abstract 2/5, motivation&CV 2/5, professional age 1/5.
- 8) The awarded budget is not based on the budget requested by the applicant, but on the budget estimated by GSC committee (estimated cost of flight ticket, early bird registration fee, budget accommodation – 1 person budget hotel room nearby the conference venue). Conservative criteria are applied: the applicant will not get a

budgeted allocation that she/he did not request (e.g. if accommodation was not requested in motivation letter, it would not be awarded); on the other hand, if applicants requested a lower amount for an expense than we estimate the true cost to be (e.g. for accommodation), we use our estimate to make the award comparable to that received by others.

- 9) The total award (after discounts) should cover at least the price of the registration fee.

For the **62nd Annual Symposium** of International Association for Vegetation Science, held on July 14-19 in Bremen, Germany, IAVS allocated 30,000 EUR for travel awards. We received 71 valid applications from 33 countries, mostly from graduate (master or PhD) students (35) and postdocs (18), but also from researchers and professors (9+3), an undergraduate student (1) and others (5). We were able to award 31 applicants (24 graduate students and 7 postdocs) travel awards ranging from 290 to 1700 EUR (966 EUR on average). Awarded participants are from 15 countries, with the highest number from Brazil (9), Taiwan (3), South Africa (3), UK (2) and New Zealand (2). In addition to the travel awards funded by IAVS, the conference organiser Dr Martin Diekmann solicited travel award funding from The Foundation Manfred-Hermesen - Stiftung (Bremen, Germany) of 6500 EUR. Participants who were selected according to GSC criteria who also met the requirements of The Foundation (participants from low-to-middle-income countries and submitted abstract with a conservation focus) were awarded travel grants from this source (six applicants: two from Egypt, and one each from Ghana, Indonesia, Ukraine and Philippines). As a result, 37 of the 71 original applicants received an award to travel to the IAVS Symposium in Bremen.

David Zelený



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Mid-Symposium excursion 2019 to the island of Spiekeroog.

Publications Committee Report

July 2018 – June 2019

1. Publications Committee

The IAVS Publications Committee currently consists of Peter Minchin, Chair (US), Bob Peet (US), Hans Henrik Bruun (DK), Jessica Gurevitch (US), Tomáš Herben (CZ), Michael Manthey (DE), Norman Mason (NZ), Laco Mucina (AU), and Martin Zobel (EE).

2. State of the Journals

Both the *Journal of Vegetation Science* (JVS) and *Applied Vegetation Science* (AVS) continue to do well. Extensive data on circulation and sales, readership, article downloads, content management, impact metrics, and several other topics are given in the 2018 Publisher's Report.

Availability

The total number of institutions that purchased a license for JVS and AVS increased substantially, from 5,573 in 2017 to 6,316 in 2018 (an increase of 13%). As in 2017, the majority of institutions purchased a Wiley license, which gives access to a range of Wiley titles, rather than a traditional subscription. There was also an increase in the number of institutions accessing our journals through an EBSCO subscription, from 1,578 in 2017 to 1,678 in 2018 (an increase of 6.3%).

In 2018, Wiley's philanthropic initiatives gave low-cost or free access to current content in JVS and AVS to 7,911 institutions in developing countries. This represents a 3.2% increase from 2017 (7,669 institutions).



© M. Janišová

IAVS Symposium 2019 participants near the symbol of the city of Bremen - Bremen Musicians.

We are happy that Wiley's generosity allows so many of our colleagues and their students in the developing world have access to our journals.

Institutional and individual print subscriptions continued to decline in 2018 and the average print run currently stands at approximately 114 copies per issue for both JVS and AVS. These numbers are still high enough that Wiley will continue to offer print as an option for at least the next few years.

Authorship & Readership

Our journals continue to be highly international in both authorship and readership. The 106 articles published in JVS in 2018 had corresponding authors from 29 countries, with the largest numbers being from the US (32), Australia (9), Canada (8), Germany (7), South Africa (7), and Sweden (7). The 63 AVS articles published in 2018 had corresponding authors from 25 countries, with the highest numbers from the US (14), France (7), Czech Republic (6), Germany (6), and Spain (5).

The international nature of our readership is shown by the statistics for article downloads and online traffic by country. The top ten countries for online downloads of JVS in 2018 were US, China, Germany, UK, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Spain, and Czech Republic. For AVS, the top ten countries for downloads in 2018 were US, China, Germany, UK, Australia, Brazil, France, Canada, Italy, and Spain. In 2018, the number of article downloads from Wiley Online Library, EBSCO, and other third-party databases (e.g. JSTOR), remained similar to 2017 levels for both JVS (c. 180,000) and AVS (c. 69,000). The average increase in downloads from 2017 to 2018 across all Wiley journals in the Ecology subject area was 11.8%. We will work with Wiley to determine

strategies to increase growth in downloads of articles from our journals.

Revenue

For JVS, the total net revenue received by IAVS from Wiley in 2018 was £122,248, which is an 8% decrease from 2017 (£ 132,818). Net revenue for AVS in 2018 was £23,365, which is a 13% increase over 2017 (£ 20,662). Revenue received from our journals continues to be the major source of income for IAVS.

Impact Factors

The 2-year IF for 2018 was 2.944 for JVS and 3.568 for AVS. These are both increases from the corresponding 2017 values. The big jump in IF for AVS was influenced by a large number of citations of the Mucina *et al.* paper on the vegetation of Europe and we expect to see a decline in IF once the 2 year citation window for this paper is passed. In 2018, JVS had a 5-year IF of 3.392 and AVS had a 5-year IF of 3.022.

Production time

In 2018, average days from receipt of a final manuscript to print publication dropped by 2 days for JVS and increased by 19 days for AVS, compared to 2017 values. With the move in March 2019 of the Editorial Office for JVS and AVS from the outsourced company Editorial Office Ltd. to in-house production in Wiley, we anticipate that increased efficiencies will lead to drops in handling and production time for our journals. Under the new arrangements, Wiley has committed to maintain the average number of days between the receipt of final versions of accepted papers at Wiley to Early View publication at 27-30 days, which is about half the current time.



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Sand dunes with *Ammophila arenaria* on the Spiekeroog island.

Journal of Vegetation Science

Year	Volume	Number of issues	Number of pages	Number of articles	Average days from receipt at Wiley to Early View publication	Average days from receipt at Wiley to print publication
2018	29	6	1085	106	52	131
2017	28	6	1266	121	52	133
2016	27	6	1323	130	51	146
2015	26	6	1234	119	40	153
2014	25	6	1509	146	40	226

Applied Vegetation Science

Year	Volume	Number of issues	Number of pages	Number of articles	Average days from receipt at Wiley to Early View publication	Average days from receipt at Wiley to print publication
2018	21	4	732	63	55	164
2017	20	4	718	66	51	145
2016	19	4	1010	74	54	143
2015	18	4	738	73	48	163
2014	17	4	796	75	43	202

3. Partnership with Wiley

New Publisher – Carol Clark

Our relationship with Wiley remains excellent. In 2018, Wiley assigned us a new Publisher, Carol Clark (caclark@wiley.com). Carol is the main point of contact for the Chief Editors, Vice President for Publications and other IAVS officers. She oversees the running of the IAVS journals, including finance, ethics, policy and online product development. We have an excellent working relationship with Carol. The Vice President for Publications and Chief Editors meet regularly with her via Skype.

Strategy Meeting

On 14 December 2018, the Chief Editors (Milan Chytrý, Alessandro Chiarucci, Meelis Pärtel, and Valerio Pillar) and the Vice President for Publications (Peter Minchin) attended a 1-day Strategy Meeting at the Wiley offices in Oxford, UK. The purpose of the meeting was to refine the overall vision, goals, and shorter-term objectives for JVS and AVS. Four areas were identified as crucial for success:

1. **Increasing Output.** Attract more high-quality submissions by targeted marketing. Increase discoverability and hence readership of our journals and citations of their papers. Attract Editorial Board members from areas such as China, Central America, and South America. Also increase author representation from these areas.
2. **Improving Efficiency.** Move our journals to an in-house Wiley editorial office (this was done from March, 2019). Improve author experience by simplifying the submission format, reducing reviewing and publication times. The aim is to reduce production time to an average of no more than 30 days.
3. **Engaging with Open Research.** Explore ways to transition JVS and AVS from the current subscription model to full Open Access in the medium-term future.
4. **Diversifying Revenue.** Help increase membership, authorship, and readership in key emerging areas, such as China.

Move to In-house Editorial Office

Following the Strategy Day, it was agreed to transfer the Editorial Office for JVS and AVS from an outsourced company (Editorial Office Ltd.) to an in-house facility at the Wiley offices in Oxford. This was done in March, 2019. Decision letter templates have been revised and the manuscript handling workflow altered to use the automatic procedures available in the Scholar One system. The goal is to significantly reduce the time taken in all stages of manuscript handling (reviewing, revision, production, and publication). The Chief Editors and working with Sarah Bremner in the Wiley editorial office to maximize the efficiency of the process.

Open Access

The publication landscape is changing, with a move away from the traditional subscription-based funding of journals towards Open Access (OA) publishing, where funding is primarily from Article Publication Charges (APCs) paid up-front. The advantage of OA is that published articles are freely available to all, not just to those whose institutions can afford subscriptions. The challenge is to set levels of APCs and establish mechanisms for funding APCs (e.g. by institutions or research funding bodies), so that authors can afford to publish their work. The incoming Governing Board and Publications Committee will need to carefully consider how JVS and AVS may eventually transition to OA.

Renewal of the IAVS contract with Wiley

The current publishing contract with Wiley is due to be renewed in 2020. It will be a major task of the incoming IAVS Governing Board and Publications Committee to negotiate a new contract that best serves our interests.

4. Other IAVS-related Publications and Issues

IAVS Bulletin

Monika Janišová, has continued to do a great job as editor of the IAVS Bulletin. The Bulletin is e-mailed directly to IAVS members and also made available through the IAVS website. Over the past year, there have been delays in publication due to increased production time by FASEB. The incoming Governing Board will need to explore ways to overcome these problems.

Future of Phytocoenologia

Phytocoenologia has been published since 1973 by Schweizerbart and Borntraeger science publishers “in collaboration with the International Association for Vegetation Science”. Since 2014, publication has been under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Schweizerbart and Borntraeger and IAVS. Over the past several years there has been increasing dissatisfaction with the service provided by Schweizerbart and Borntraeger. Subscription prices are high and many libraries have cancelled their subscriptions. Despite the MoU, substantial discounts have not been given to

IAVS members. The editorial software system is archaic and inefficient and many errors are made, which inflates handling times and times to publication. Open Access articles are not flagged as such in databases such as Scopus. Schweizerbart and Borntraeger has been unresponsive to advice and requests from the Chief Editors and there has been no progress in addressing these problems.

At the 2018 annual meeting in Bozeman, IAVS Council unanimously approved the following resolution:

“... the Council authorize the Governing Board to work with the Phytocoenologia editors to take actions including discussion with Wiley and Borntraeger regarding these issues and then report back to Council. If there are major financial implications the Governing Board will report back to Council and allow two weeks for approval of any expenditure.”

In January, 2019 Martin Diekmann received legal advice that the name, copyright, and past content of Phytocoenologia is most likely owned by Schweizerbart and Borntraeger, so that if IAVS wanted to move the journal to a new publisher and retain the name and access to past content, it would need to negotiate a purchase from Schweizerbart and Borntraeger.

Wiley, publisher of JVS and AVS, confirmed at the strategy meeting in December 2018 that it has no interest in publishing a journal to replace Phytocoenologia but has given IAVS permission to pursue other means of having it published. In February 2019, the Chief Editors of Phytocoenologia contacted Pensoft, which publishes many online journals. Pensoft expressed great interest in becoming the publisher of Phytocoenologia (or a new journal with a similar scope and probably the same editors) as a totally Open Access journal. Printed copies could be purchased on request. Various models for setting the Article Publication Charge (APC) are available and IAVS would be able to devise a system that should make publication in the journal accessible to all our members.

Following discussions between the Chief Editors of Phytocoenologia and the IAVS Governing Board, an e-mail was sent to Dr. Nägele of Schweizerbart and Borntraeger in February, 2019 informing him of the intention to seek a different publisher. His response was very defensive and did not acknowledge the ongoing problems, let alone suggest ways of overcoming them. The IAVS Governing Board voted to cancel the MoU with Schweizerbart and Borntraeger and Martin Diekmann has informed Dr. Nägele that the MoU is cancelled. The Chief Editors of Phytocoenologia have informed Dr. Nägele that they will cease reviewing articles for Phytocoenologia beyond the 2019 volume.

On 17 June, 2019, the IAVS Governing Board and Publications Committee asked IAVS Council vote via an online survey on the following three-part proposal:

- That IAVS is authorized to contract with Pensoft to publish a new Open Access journal similar in scope to *Phytocoenologia* and with a working title of *Vegetation Classification and Survey*.
- That the IAVS Publications Committee, in collaboration with the Chief Editors of the new Open Access journal is authorized to draw up a schedule of Article Publication Charges (APCs) that will raise the annual fee of 3000 EUR plus the 650 EUR per article charged by Pensoft and provide a modest annual profit to IAVS, while providing discounts to IAVS members, those from low-income countries or those who are in financial hardship, and members of the editorial team for the new journal. The Publications Committee and Chief Editors would be free to devise whatever schedule of APCs they considered appropriate.
- That the IAVS Governing Board is authorized to pay Pensoft the once-off start-up fee of 3000 EUR, together with any shortfall in fees for the first two

years of operation of the new journal, to a maximum of 15,000 EUR per year. Though the schedule of APCs will be designed to cover all fees, there may be a transition period as the new journal becomes established during which some financial help from IAVS may be needed.

The result of the vote was as follows: 36 of the 42 current members of Council voted, with 32 approving the proposal, 1 opposing it, and 3 abstaining. **The proposal was therefore approved by a large majority (76% of Council membership) and so publication of the new Open Access journal with Pensoft will begin as soon as possible.** The incoming Governing Board and Publications Committee will need to work closely with the Chief Editors of the new journal to finalize a name for the journal and determine a suitable schedule of APCs. Reviewing of papers for the new journal will proceed, with a view to having the first volume published in 2020.

Peter R. Minchin

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Symposium participants looking for a new record in species density at a small scale in front of the Symposium venue in Bremen, Germany, July 2019

Report of Chief Editors

Journal of Vegetation Science (JVS) and *Applied Vegetation Science (AVS)* are published in regular bimonthly (JVS) and quarterly (AVS) intervals thanks to dedicated work of our international team of Associate Editors and Editorial Board members, and the Editorial Office and Production run by Wiley. Both journals not only advance theory and applications of vegetation science, but also generate a substantial income for the IAVS.

After a decrease in 2018, the impact factor (IF) increased in 2019 for both journals: from 2.658 to 2.944 for JVS and from 2.331 to 3.568 for AVS. JVS is in the first quartile in the fields Plant Sciences and Forestry, and in the second quartile in Ecology. AVS is in the first quartile in all three fields. The IF of AVS is the highest ever, and for the first time, AVS has a higher IF than JVS. However, this is to a large extent due to a high citation rate of the paper Mucina et al. (2016) *Vegetation of Europe*, therefore we expect that in 2020 when this paper will no longer be counted for the IF calculation, the IF of AVS will decrease again below 3.0.

Many changes have happened in our cooperation with Wiley. Since September 2018, Wiley assigned the new Publishing Manager, Carol Clark, to the IAVS journals. This change was very positive, resulting in a dramatic improvement in our communication with the publisher. On 14 December 2018, the four Chief Editors and the IAVS Publication Officer Peter Minchin participated in a Strategy Day in Wiley's office in Oxford. We discussed various strategies for further development of the journals with Wiley staff, considering the current tendency in the publication business of shifting from the traditional subscription-based funding model to the open-access model. The IAVS Governing Board was informed about Wiley's ideas related to the funding model, but no decision has been made, i.e. both journals continue to be published under the subscription-based model. We also discussed various potential ways to improve our editorial process using new technologies and optimizations of the editorial workflow. A major change resulting from the discussions at the Strategy Day has been the transfer (from March 2019) of the JVS/AVS Editorial Office from the outsourced company Editorial Office Ltd directly to the Wiley office. Our former Editorial Assistant Karen Mitchell at the Editorial Office Ltd was replaced by Sarah Bremner based in Oxford. Following this change, we considerably revised our decision letter templates and general manuscript handling workflow to make more use of the automatic procedures available in the Scholar One system, with the goal of achieving faster manuscript handling. Due to the complexity of these changes, we are still working on the adjustments of some specific procedures.

In the last two years, both journals were published slightly behind their regular publication schedules, partly due to delays in Production, partly due to sometimes insufficient number of accepted papers to fill in the issue. We agreed with Wiley that we need to return to the regular publishing schedule. We achieved this goal with the July 2019 issues of both journals, but at the cost of publishing slightly thinner issues.

The JVS/AVS Blog was launched in August 2018. It is edited by David Zelený, assisted by Viktoria Wagner and Peter Minchin. The option of publishing a Plain Language Summary or a Behind the Paper contribution related to the accepted papers became quite popular among the JVS/AVS authors. Within 10 months of the existence of the blog, the authors of accepted papers published 18 Plain Language Summaries, five Behind the Paper contributions, and one Book Review. We also use the blog for announcing Editorial News, especially the appearance of new issues, but also information about Editorial Meetings and Editors' Awards. We also use Twitter accounts of both journals and the IAVS Facebook group to disseminate topical information about the journals.

We welcome any feedback on our work from the IAVS members.

*Milan Chytrý, Alessandro Chiarucci,
Meelis Pärtel and Valerio Pillar*



© M. Janišová

Island of Spiekeroog, Germany



the 63rd IAVS symposium: vegetation in the Anthropocene

We invite you to the 63rd IAVS annual symposium in Vladivostok, Russia, the last pristine temperate region in the northern hemisphere. Vladivostok is located within the middle (or cool) temperate zone characterized by temperate deciduous broadleaved and mixed forests; this area may be known to the international public as Ussuri taiga, after the Oscar winning movie 'Dersu Uzala' by Akira Kurosawa.

Venue

The conference will be hosted by the Botanical Garden-Institute of the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU). FEFU comprises nine schools and 18 academic departments and is home to over 40 000 students. As the university is somewhat isolated by its location on Russkii (Russian) Island, the symposium will be held at a university facility located the city center – the Pushkin Theatre.

This facility can easily accommodate 400+ participants, and has space for four parallel sessions. Far Eastern Federal University was established in 1920 from the Eastern Institute, which was created in 1899 to support a variety of types of relationships with Asian countries, including economic, political, military, scientific and educational. The venue is on the doorstep of historical buildings of the Eastern institute.

The university owns student dormitories in the Russkii Island, which can be a good alternative to hotels for budget accommodation. Transportation to the symposium venue will be provided.

Vladivostok

Vladivostok (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladivostok>) was established in 1860 as the eastern Russian harbor and naval base and remained closed to foreigners until 1991. It has a rich history and its own very special spirit that makes it different from other Russian cities. In the beginning of the 20th century Vladivostok had the world's strongest marine fortifications. It was also the location of the first European business in eastern Russia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kunst_and_Albers). Overall, it is a place where all nations can find the foot-



The Pushkin Theatre, venue of symposium, now



... and soon after its building



Golden Horn Bay of Vladivostok.

Scientific program

This symposium focuses on understanding the depth of the transformations that have changed the Earth's vegetation, the degree to which the vegetation of novel ecosystems will be able to serve to needs of an increasing human population, and how to best fit vegetation science theory and methodology to this new situation. Specific themes include:

- Diversity and functioning of natural and artificial vegetation
- Traditional and new drivers of ecosystem transformations
- Ecosystems before humans
- Ecosystems under human impact
- The value of relictual vegetation
- Species migrations
- How vegetation science can contribute to sustainable development for humanity
- The effectiveness of existing theory and methods for the future study of the world's flora and vegetation

We anticipate that this symposium will create a common ground not only for vegetation scientists, but also for geophysicists, biochemists, paleobiologists and anthropologists.

Call for special session proposals

The Local Organizing Committee invites proposals for Special Sessions. We specifically encourage proposals

linked to the main theme of the symposium with the added benefit that these have the potential to attract the attention of policy makers to rapid, ongoing vegetation changes and the consequences of these to society and economies.

Please submit proposals (half to one page) by email to Pavel Krestov, pavel.krestov@icloud.com

Proposals should include the following information:

Title: The title should allow conference attendees to understand the focus of the Special Session.

Abstract: Provide a brief abstract of no more than 3000 characters in which you explain the rationale of the topic, especially why it is relevant to vegetation science and how it is linked to the main theme.

Speakers: Provide a short list of proposed speakers who are willing to contribute to the Special Session.

Deadline for proposals: 31 December, 2019, notifications of acceptance / rejection will be provided by the beginning of February.

Registration and abstract submission

Registration and abstract submission will be opened by the end of November 2019 through a link on the symposium website (http://geobotanica.ru/symposium_2020/registration_2020.html).

As in previous years, there will be travel awards for which you can apply. The deadline will be the same as for the abstract submission, which is 30 March, 2020.

Important dates

- 15/11/2019 - detailed itineraries for excursions will be provided
- 30/11/2019 - registration, abstract submission and excursion forms will be provided
- 31/12/2019 - deadline for special session submissions
- 01/02/2020 - notifications of special session acceptance/rejection
- 30/03/2020 - deadline for abstract submissions
- 30/03/2020 - deadline for submissions of travel grant applications
- 30/03/2020 - deadline for submissions of documents for invitation

Intact broadleaved—Korean pine forests are among the world richest forest ecosystems



Field excursions

Russia is rather big. The typically homogenous northern vegetation explodes with a variety of unbelievable colors, plant combinations, adaptations and traits. During this symposium we hope to give you the opportunity to see very different aspects of the vegetation of Russia. The region of the Russian Far East is the best part of Russia to see intact temperate forest ecosystems, vegetation diversity in conditions of continuous permafrost and vegetation in volcanic areas. Our intention is to

offer pre-and post-symposium excursions in four different areas: The North Caucasus (group leader Vladimir Onipchenko), the Altai Mountains (Nikolai Ermakov) and Kamchatka (Pavel Krestov) and the Sikhote-Alin Mountains near Vladivostok. Because of long distances to be covered by all excursions, we will reserve a minimal time period for each excursion of eight days, except for in Sikhote-Alin, where it will be possible to plan 2, 4 and 7-day excursions.

Pre-Symposium excursion 1

CAUCASUS

Leader Prof. Vladimir G. ONIPCHENKO

starting point: Mineralnye Vody (UTS +3) (Минеральные Воды)
airport: MRV (IATA)
start date and time: 12 July, 2020, 08:00
end date and time: 18 July, 2020, 18:00



The excursion will cover different types of mountain vegetation in two areas: 1) the oceanic west Caucasus with montane dry grasslands, broad-leaved forests, coniferous forests, subalpine shrubs and tall-herb meadows, alpine grasslands and meadows as well as sub-nival rocky vegetation, 2) the central Caucasian continental vegetation near the highest European peak -Elbrus (5642 m) with dry grasslands, petrophytic vegetation in dry valleys, pine and birch forests, subalpine and alpine vegetation. The excursion will include several areas in Kabardino-Balkaric Republic (Baksan valley) and Karachai-Cherkessian Republic (Kuban, Teberda, Arkhyz). We also will visit the National Park «Prielbrus'e» and Teberda Biosphere Reserve.

Flights: from Moscow (Domodedovo) to Mineralnye Vody; 2 hours 25 minutes; three companies: S7, NordStar and Ural Airlines. It is advisable to take return tickets and continue to Vladivostok from Moscow. Price of return tickets for the fall 2019 is 6 500 roubles.

Pre-Symposium excursion 2

ALTAI

Leader Prof. Nikolai B. ERMAKOV

starting point: Gorno-Altaysk (UTS +7) (Горно-Алтайск)
airport: RGK (Gorno-Altaysk)
start day and time: 12 July, 2020, 08:00
end day and time: 18 July, 2020, 18:00



This is one of the most important biodiversity centers in Northern Eurasia. The wide range of altitudes, climate humidity and continentality result in many zonal vegetation types. The excursion route will follow a geographical transect crossing the ultra-humid, humid and arid geographical sectors of the mountain system. Participants will have the opportunity to visit the natural communities of North Asian and European-Siberian dark coniferous and light coniferous forests, the zonal types of West Palaeartic and Central Asian meadow-steppes, typical steppes and desert-steppes, as well as various types of high mountain vegetation. We will see the remarkable landscapes of the Katun river valley, Kuraiskaya and Kosh-Agachskaya intermontane basins and the surrounding high mountain ridges.

Flights: from Moscow (Vnukovo and Domodedovo) to Gorno-Altaysk; 4 hours 20 minutes; two companies for direct flight: Pobeda and S7. It is advisable to take oneway ticket from Moscow, after excursion the bus will be provided to Novosibirsk, and continue to Vladivostok from Novosibirsk (check Aeroflot and S7). Price of oneway S7 ticket from Moscow to Gorno-Altaysk for 11 July, 2020 is 21 200 roubles.

Post-Symposium excursion 1
KAMCHATKA
Leader Prof. Pavel V. KRESTOV

starting point: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky (UTS +12)
airport: PKC (IATA)
start date and time: 26 July, 2020, 8:00
end date and time: 02 August, 2020, 18:00



One of the most extreme corners of the world's boreal zone with a variety of vegetation you would never expect at these latitudes elsewhere in a world. These include beautiful *Betula ermanii* forests that survive what may be the deepest snow in Northeast Asia, endless *Pinus pumila* thickets, tall-herb (really tall!) meadows and a variety of tundra types adapted to continental and oceanic conditions. The major highlights are volcanoes; 300 are dormant and 30 are active. Some of them are very active now. We will visit two major groups of volcanoes: the Klyuchevskaya group (includes Klyuchevskoy Volcano itself, Bezmyanny, Tolbachik) and the Avachinskaya group (home volcanoes for Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky city. These sites provide superb natural laboratories to study plant succession and thus fascinating field excursion destinations.

Flights: from Vladivostok to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky; 3 hours 20 minutes; two companies provide direct flights: Aeroflot and S7. It is advisable to consider two variants of itinerary: take oneway ticket from Vladivostok, and after excursion take oneway ticket to Moscow and continue to home country, or fly back to Vladivostok, and then to home country. Price of return ticket from Vladivostok to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky in the fall 2019 is 19600 roubles.

Post-Symposium excursion 2
SIKHOTE-ALIN
Leader Dr. Kirill A. KORZNIKOV

starting point: Vladivostok (UTS +10)
airport: VVO (IATA)
start date and time: 25 July, 2020, 08:00;
end date and time: 01 August, 2020, 18:00



The world's wildest place in the 40-50 degrees latitudinal range with ecosystems whose food chains end with the Amur tiger, the world's biggest cat. This region is home to the indigenous Udege and Nanai people, who try to keep their own culture in this changing world. We will see the legendary nearly intact broadleaved-Korean pine forests, the vertical vegetation zonation ending with *Pinus pumila* thickets and mountain tundra on the tops and a variety of vegetation types characteristic of this beautiful area. We will visit the National park Bikin, Sikhote-Alin Biosphere reserve, Hanka Lake and look at North Korea across the state boundary.

Prices for excursions will be set by the end of November, 2019. Registration for excursions will open on 01 December 2019 through a link on the symposium website (http://geobotanica.ru/symposium_2020/excursion_2020.html). Before 15 November, 2020, we will provide detailed itineraries for each schedule of excursion.



For the mid-symposium excursions on July 22 we will offer various field trips to areas and habitat types typical for the lowlands, mountains and coasts in southernmost of the Russian Far East, including:

- **Hanka lake lowlands**, with a variety of landscapes dominated by wet meadows, eutrophic ponds, relic Scots pine forests on the ancient lake terraces [key species are *Quercus mongolica*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Juniperus rigida*, *Calamagrostis langsdorffii*, *Carex laxa*, *Euryale ferrox*, *Iris ensata*] (easy).
- **Islands of the Peter The Great Bay**, with typical island vegetation at different stages of succession after anthropogenic degradation (burning) and comparison with intact island forests [key species are *Quercus mongolica*, *Leymus mollis*, *Lathyrus maritimus*, *Dracocephalum charkevichii*, *Carex kobomugi*, *Ixeris repens*, *Trifolium pacificum*] (easy).
- **Limestone rock outcrops on the Lozovy Mt. Range**, with typical vegetation of calcareous rocks [key species are *Daphnophora davurica*, *Sanguisorba magnifica*, *Physocarpus amurensis*, *Sedum maximowiczii*, *Carex duriuscula*, *Cleistogenes kitagawae*] (moderate).
- **Old-growth mixed broadleaved-conifer forests of Ussuri nature reserve** [key species are *Pinus koraiensis*, *Abies holophylla*, *Tilia amurensis*, *Kalopanax septemlobus*, *Carpinus cordata*, *Taxus cuspidata*, *Actinidia arguta*, *Schisandra chinensis*] (easy).
- **Vertical vegetation zonation in the Livadiiskaya Mountain**: mixed broadleaved-conifer forests (*Pinus koraiensis*, *Quercus mongolica*, *Tilia amurensis*) – dark conifer spruce-fir forests (*Picea jezoensis*, *Abies nephrolepis*) – *Betula ermanii* forests – *Microbiota decussata* scrub (hard).
- **Dry grasslands** in the southernmost Primorye Region [key species are *Quercus dentata*, *Pinus densiflora*, *Arundinella anomala*, *Miscanthus purpurascens*, *Chrysanthemum zawadskii*, *Iris uniflora*, *Hemerocallis lilioasphodellus*] (easy).

Getting there

Vladivostok has an international airport located about 30 km from the city center.

The international airport code is VVO.

The three greatest major airport hubs connected with Vladivostok by direct flights are Moscow (8–9 hour flight), Seoul (1.5 or 2.5 hour flights depending on airline company), and Beijing (1.5 hour flight). You also may find it convenient to travel via Hong Kong, Tokyo, Shanghai, Bangkok; all these hubs, who intend to increase the number of direct flights in 2020.

When you seek convenient flights, please check Aeroflot, Korean Air and S7 companies first. They provide very attractive links, especially if you fly with stops for excursions.

May be someone will want to try the Trans-Siberian train. Although we don't want to discourage you, please try, but be advised it is very, very (extremely) boring, and not as cheap as you may think planning the trip.

VISA

All symposium participants must have a valid Passport to enter in Russia. Please contact the nearest Russian Consulate (<http://www.mid.ru/en/maps>) to learn about the visa policy of Russia in relation to your country and to obtain visa, if you need it.

A. For citizens of non EU countries who need the visa to enter Russia

At the Russian Consulate, everyone will be asked for an official invitation from the Russian Immigration Office and an invitation letter from the Organizing Committee of the Symposium. The symposium organizers will provide the letter from the Russian Immigration Office. This will

take about 20 days, and in order to prepare it, we need to obtain from you the following information:

1. Passport data (all information on the first page of your passport including passport number);
2. Length of your stay in Russia;
3. Photocopy of the first page (with photo) of your passport, scanned and sent by e-mail;
4. Exact route of your travel within Russia;
5. Affiliation and organization-employer of participants with full mailing address, telephone and fax;
6. The city with Russian Consulate, where you intend to apply for Russian visa.

B. For citizens of EU countries, except Great Britain, who need the visa to enter Russia

At the Russian Consulate, everyone who intends to visit Russia for academic purposes, will be asked for an official invitation from the Organizing Committee of the Symposium. Again, we need to obtain from you the information, listed in part A above.

C. For citizens of countries eligible to obtain the electronic visa to enter the Far Eastern Federal District

Please find very useful information on the site of MoFA: <https://evisa.kdmid.ru/> and fill the application form following to instructions.

D. For citizens of countries, who do not need visa to enter Russia

Please keep in mind, that immigration control may require the explanations about the purpose of your visit, and we will provide as much details as possible in a pack of documents for you to avoid problems at the border. We suggest you submit all the information listed above in part A.

Earlier submission of required documents will guarantee the timely prepared official invitation letter. As such, our strict deadline for SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS FOR INVITATION: 15 May, 2020.

Why am I a vegetation scientist?

By Javier Loidi

In the days when I studied Biology at the University of Madrid, and in the middle of the student struggles that were opposing the General Franco's regime in its last years, my interest for Nature was awakened. Biodiversity and ecosystems started to attract me strongly. The surroundings of the big city were populated by a rich nitrophilic ruderal vegetation that bloomed explosively every Spring and provided plenty of species to the curiosity of any person interested in the flora. I began to collect plants and determine them, so that after a few months I could name almost all the plants that I found in every walk I had on the university campus. That excited me extraordinarily because I was able to give a name to each of the species that I found, a skill that I had never had before and that I found extremely enjoyable. Naming is the first step to knowing and knowledge is one of the forms of happiness, therefore, the more plants I learned, the happier I felt.

A second step was when I attended the course of Phytosociology, enthusiastically taught by Rivas-Martínez. Grouping the plants I had just learned into communities fascinated me immediately, particularly when these communities were related to site conditions and successional stages. What a perfect combination of biodiversity and ecology!

Those initial feelings and experiences marked me for the rest of my life. Later I was lucky to get a job where I could devote myself to my particular interest, in effect to my hobby. "You are choosing a job that will not make you rich", Rivas-Martínez told me at the beginning of my doctorate, and he was right, but I never regretted having made the decision to dedicate my life to the study of flora, vegetation and the ecosystems.

Studying vegetation creates the insatiable curiosity to inspect the entire world: every country or part of the world deserves to be known and studied. That is why, like many other naturalists, the vegetation scientist is a tireless traveler, his curiosity is never satisfied and he can fall into an endless succession of expeditions to the most varied countries in the world, depending, of course, on the available means (basically time and money).

To satisfy this need, we have in the IAVS the tradition of organizing excursions linked to our annual meetings. As the meetings take place in a different place every year, the colleagues who organize them commit themselves

to also organize a series of excursions in their country or area of influence. They can be long (several days) or short (one day), but they are always led by expert colleagues who have excellent knowledge of plants, vegetation, environmental conditions, geology, conservation problems, the use of earth, etc. A privileged tour with a lot of information that is impossible to achieve in normal circumstances. Within the framework of IAVS, and particularly on long excursions, an atmosphere of friendship is generated between the participants and with the guides, as well as a feeling of appreciation for the country visited. What curious beneficial effect do these excursions have that increase our friendships with each other and increase our love for the country we visited? This is in addition to what we learn about plants and vegetation. Perhaps this has something to do with the feelings of satisfaction that I felt when, at the beginning of my studies, I learned the plants. I believe that knowledge is one of the sources of happiness and happy people are more likely to love.

For all this, I consider myself a privileged person for being a vegetation scientist.



© J. Loidi

Pruned beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) in the Cantabrian Mts.

Veska Haralampieva Rusakova-Anastasova: Obituary

(14.11.1937-5.8.2019)

by *Rossen Tsonev*

Veska Rusakova was born in the town of Dupnitsa (SW Bulgaria). From 1957 to 1962 she was a student within the Faculty of Geography at Moscow State University "Mikhail Lomonosov" studying a Masters degree in Plant Geography. In 1963 she started working at the Institute of Botany – Bulgarian Academy of Science and in 1969 defended her PhD thesis on the theme "Vegetation cover of the upper stream of the Maritza River over the village of Raduil". In 1969, Veska Rusakova was appointed assistant professor, and, in 1986, associate professor in the department of Plant Ecology and Geobotany at the Institute of Botany – Bulgarian Academy of Science. In 1974, she began specializing in the mapping of the vegetation cover in Toulouse, Montpellier and Paris (France). She has had one Masters student and two PhD students.

Veska Rusakova was one of the leading scientists in the areas of plant geography, ecology of plant communities, productivity of forests, and mapping and classification of vegetation, not only in Bulgaria but also in Southeastern Europe. However, her most important contribution is that she introduced the methodology of the Sigmatic School (Braun-Blanquet's School) in Bulgaria. This has allowed rapid integration of Bulgarian phytocoenology on an European scale. Her more than 30 years of research in the highest mountain on the Balkan Peninsula - Rila, resulted in the first monograph in Bulgaria produced according to the Sigmatic School, focusing on the alpine and subalpine vegetation in this mountain (Roussakova, V. 2000. *Végétation alpine et sousalpine supérieure de la montagne de Rila (Bulgarie)*. *Braun-Blanquetia* 25, 1–132).

Veska Rusakova is one of the founders and long-time chairperson of the Bulgarian Society for Phytocoenology – from 1993 till 2018. As a teacher of phytocoenology to younger colleagues from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and other academic institutions, she participated in the publications of the first classification of the Black Sea dunes, the Ponto-Sarmatian steppes, beech forests in Bulgaria, as well as the first critical checklist of syntaxa in the country using the Braun-Blanquet method. With her in-depth knowledge, especially on the vegetation of the high



mountains of the Balkan Peninsula, Veska Rusakova also participated in various practical and applied projects such as the guidance for assessment of favorable conservation status of natural habitats and species in Bulgaria, the establishment of the NATURA 2000 network, and the part for natural habitats in the Red Data Book of the Republic of Bulgaria, Volume 3. Natural habitats and the European Red List of Habitats.

Veska Rusakova passed away on August 5, 2019. However, her scientific work found many students and followers. Her work not only occupies a worthy place in the history of botany and plant ecology in Bulgaria and the Balkans, but also has universal and even political significance. The standardization of the Bulgarian phytocoenology, with the scientific achievements of the countries from European Union, has enabled the correct and scientifically-based implementation of the European policies for the conservation of natural habitats in Bulgaria in the NATURA 2000 network.



IAVS



© H. Culmsee

Mid-Symposium excursion 2019 to the Cuxhaven coastal heathlands.

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IAVS Bulletin Article Submission

Have an idea for an IAVS Bulletin article? Or, would like your picture featured in the next issue? Please email the Editor at: monika.janisova@gmail.com.

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