

Mediterranean-montane grasslands with *Sesleria tenuifolia* in wind-exposed habitats in the hinterland of Rijeka Bay (Croatia)

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INTRODUCTION – So far, six grassland communities have been described in the north-western area of the Dinarides. The predominant species in these communities is the narrow-leaved moor grass (*Sesleria tenuifolia* Schrad. s. l., syn. *Sesleria juncifolia* Suffren). Here we present a new community from the provisory complex of "*Seslerietum tenuifoliae* s. l.", which we have called *Campanulo marchesettii-Seslerietum tenuifoliae* ass. nova (pasture with narrow-leaved moor grass and Marchesetti's bellflower), and which was found on wind-exposed mountain habitats in the hinterland of Rijeka.

MATERIAL AND METHODS – Phytosociological research was conducted in the wider area of the mountains in the hinterland of the city of Rijeka on elevations between 500 and 1,000 metres, where several vegetation relevés were recorded using the methods of the Zürich-Montpellier School of Phytosociology (Braun-Blanquet, 1928). Here we present 13 vegetation relevés that describe the new community well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION – In the 13 analysed relevés, a total of 106 species were recorded (16-49 per relevé). The newly described community differs from other communities that are syntactically related and similar in physiognomy, as it represents a set of species that comprises *S. tenuifolia*, *Campanula marchesettii* Witasek and *Knautia* cf. *fleischmannii* (Hladnik ex Reichenb.) Pacher and *Allium ericetorum* Thore. The grassland of narrow-leaved moor grass and Marchesetti's bellflower is developed and used as pasture for sheep, mostly in the hop hornbeam and littoral beech forest belt.

CONCLUSION – The newly described community can be easily differentiated on the spot from other similar communities, which makes it easy to recognise and map. The intensity of use of the grassland of narrow-leaved moor grass and Marchesetti's bellflower has been significantly reduced over recent decades. As a result, some of its elements have been left to secondary succession, which in the area is rather slow due to the frequent occurrence of the *bura* wind. The community has a potentially important role in the protection of nature as a habitat for rare, protected and endangered species.



Sl. 1. Typical habitat for as. *Campanulo marchesettii*-*Seslerietum tenuifoliae*: *bura* wind-exposed ridge beneath Mali Platak.



Sl. 2. Marchesetti's bellflower– a typical species of the new community.



Sl. 3. Overgrowth of as. *Campanulo marchesettii*-*Seslerietum tenuifoliae*.



Sl. 4. Habitats with narrow-leaved moor grass exposed to the *bura* wind today mostly serve as pasture for horses.



Sl. 5. Grasslands exposed to the *bura* wind are important for the protection of rare flora – greater pasque flower (*Pulsatilla grandis*).