

Web Ecology

New opinion paper by E.-D. Schulze published in Web Ecology

The new article by Prof. Dr. E.-D. Schulze, recent winner of the Haeckel Prize of the European Ecological Federation on forest management and biodiversity (<http://www.bgc-jena.mpg.de/bgc-processes/staff/detlef.schulze/index.html>), has been published in Web Ecology on 7 March 2014: <http://www.web-ecol.net/14/3/2014/we-14-3-2014.html>

Although central Europe is an industrialized region, forests are still an important source of renewable resources. For example, in Germany more than 30% of total area is covered by managed forests. Our temperate forests also harbor a fascinating diversity of organisms. In central Europe more than 15,000 species depend on forests. Forest management has affected forest biodiversity over centuries, changing landscapes from being highly diverse ecosystems to biodiversity-poor systems. Furthermore, the recent increase of energy prices has increased the economic pressure on our forests for extracting firewood. Compared to central Europe, forests in Romania and other southwestern regions are still diverse. Is this difference in forest biodiversity between these two regions based on differences in the management systems?

Can central European forestry learn from foresters in Romania?

Prof. Dr. E.-D. Schulze and coworkers compare in a recent opinion paper published in Web Ecology the management systems of Germany and Romania. Their main hypothesis is that differences in the management practice have contributed to the observed differences in biodiversity between the two regions and that a comparison between central and southeastern Europe could help us to understand effects of management and history. The authors argue that win-win situations appear possible for central European forests, by using a management approach like "cut and leave", which includes clear-felling on limited areas, possible replanting, but then minimal or no human intervention for the remaining rotation cycle. Previously clear-felling has been condemned as being unsustainable or even described as deforestation, and the general public disclaim clear-felling for emotional reasons. Although further research on this topic is urgently needed, the ideas and insights by Schulze and coworkers may help to open new avenues of unbiased discussions on forest management to maintain high levels of biodiversity in our intensively managed forests.



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