

Project Update: May 2015

During April and May 2015 three expeditions were undertaken.

The first expedition was in the chalk steppes of Eastern Ukraine. We visited type locations of all three species of *Helicopsis* that were described from here in 2010 and several other *Helicopsis* locations in this region. We collected samples that will help to clarify taxonomic status of these forms, which is necessary to evaluate their conservation status. These species are related here to the natural steppes. Photos from this expedition on my Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153268096287206.1073741832.844757205



Our team in the "Chalk Flora" reserve (Donetsk region) together with its head (right)

The second expedition was in the Lviv (Lvov) region. The closest surviving to type locality population of *Helicopsis instabilis* was visited. Other populations of *Helicopsis* in Lviv region, which were known since 19th century, are extinct. The visited site was very small and related to the steppe on the big rock outcrops. It is not protected and rock is mined by the local citizens in sporadic quarries on adjacent plots (where snails probably live before but extinct). Another threatened snail was also found in the same plot - *Mediterranea inopinata*. We will start necessary procedures and will try to create a small reserve here.

During this expedition also few sites with fens were visited in area where threatened snail *Vertigo geyeri* was found in the beginning of the 20th Century. It is unknown where exactly it was found, but there are not so many natural fens remaining in this area; we visited four. Unfortunately, we found no *Vertigo geyeri* here, so most likely it is already extinct in this area. But on the one plot the two other notable threatened species were found: *Pupilla pratensis* and *Vertigo angustior*. First species is registered for the first time in Ukraine outside Crimea. This fen is also not protected and we will try to fix it. Photos from this expedition on my Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153291482042206.1073741833.844757205



Left: Studying the *Pupilla pratensis* snails, Lviv region. Right: *Helicopsis* sp., Crimea

The third expedition was in Crimea. We visited the type locations of numerous forms of *Helicopsis* in this region and collected some significant data on other Crimean molluscs. Most importantly we checked the location that was an only known site in Ukraine of *Vertigo moulinsiana* and *Pupilla pratensis*. It was very small fen in the mountains on the bank of a stream and two small lakes. I visited it three times in 2009 and 2010. Sadly this fen was completely destroyed during 2014-15 and both species became extinct in Crimea; *Vertigo moulinsiana* is also extinct for Ukraine now. Photos from this expedition on my Facebook page: www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153336002197206.1073741835.844757205