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"Biodiversity and Traditional Land Use in South-Central Sweden: The Significance of Management Timing"

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Dahlström, Anna, Tommy Lennartsson, and Jörgen Wissman. "Biodiversity and Traditional Land Use in South-Central Sweden: The Significance of Management Timing." *Environment and History* 14, no. 3 (Aug., 2008): 385–403. doi:10.3197/096734008X333572 . During the last 50–100 years, large numbers of species associated with semi-natural grassland have declined. One reason for this is the considerable reduction of grassland area. Another possible explanation is the loss of historical management practices. This study addresses changes in the timing of management and its implications for biodiversity, and combines historical data on management timing (eighteenth century) with data on reproductive phenology of vascular plants and butterflies. All data are from south-east and south-central Sweden and demonstrate a considerable loss of grassland area, but an even greater loss of historical management practices. Historically, 21–32 per cent of the semi-natural grassland area was subject to late season management (from early July onwards) by mowing or late-season grazing. In 2005, management had ceased in 97–99 per cent of the historically managed grassland, and current management was dominated by all-season grazing. 0.2 per cent of the grassland area was managed by mowing in 2005. Historically, at the time of mowing, 50–80 per cent of the butterfly species and 20–95 per cent of vascular plant species had completed their reproductive cycles, the proportions increasing with the later onset of management. The results suggest that the reduced use of late management is a major cause of the observed decline of grassland organisms. All rights reserved. © 2008 The White Horse Press

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