

Identification of Hedgerows in the Agricultural Landscapes of Mugada within Bartın Province, Turkey

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Abstract : Biotopes such as forest areas rich in biodiversity, wetlands, hedgerows and woodlands play important ecological roles in agricultural landscapes. Of these semi-natural areas and features, hedgerows are the most common landscape elements. Their most significant features are that they serve as a barrier between the agricultural lands, serve as shelter, add aesthetical value to the landscape and contribute significantly to the wildlife and biodiversity. Hedgerows surrounding agricultural landscapes also provide an important habitat for pollinators which are important for agricultural production. This study looks into the identification of hedgerows in agricultural lands in the Mugada rural area within Bartın province, Turkey. From field data and satellite images, it is clear that in this area, especially around rural settlements, large forest areas have been cleared for settlement and agriculture. A network of hedgerows is also apparent, which might potentially play an important role in the otherwise open agricultural landscape. We found that these hedgerows serve as an ecological and biological corridor, linking forest ecosystems. Forest patches of different sizes and creating a habitat network across the landscape. Some examples of this will be presented. The overall conclusion from the study is that ecologically, biologically and aesthetically important hedge biotopes should be maintained in the long term in agricultural landscapes such as this. Some suggestions are given for how they could be managed sustainably into the future.

Keywords : agricultural biotopes, Hedgerows, landscape ecology, Turkey

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