

Foreword

The new volume of *Ecological Questions* no. 22 contains nine articles and one short note. Six papers concern forest ecosystems. Two of them present the results of the research on the increasing afforestation rate. Thus, they refer to issues of Vol. 20 of *Ecol. Quest.* One of these papers presents the extent of afforestation on formerly arable lands in Poland and the differences in the contribution of post-agricultural forests in 17 Regional Directorates of Forests. The other paper discusses the effects of afforestation at the landscape level and presents the decision-making principles for land afforestation versus no afforestation. The range of changes in the forest cover in the area of the Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh, assessed by methods of satellite remote sensing, is presented in the third paper written by ecologists from India.

Two further papers deal with ecology of two species of trees as elements of forest ecosystems, including *Betula pendula* analysed as a component of the main forest canopy. The tree layer with this species was a reference point in the comparisons of birch woods occurring in the contaminated urban areas. The other species – *Abies alba* was analysed as a component of understorey growing under the canopy of the main tree layer on the soil with varying compaction.

One of the papers in the forest series describes lichens in timber forests. The diversity of lichen biota was assessed in the whole forest division located in an area of low atmospheric pollution – the middle section of the Polish Baltic Coast.

Two papers present the impact of spontaneous afforestation in the non-forest landscape on the population of two herbaceous species with different systematic affinity and biology, i.e. the endangered and protected species *Lycopodiella inundata* occurring on the peat bog affected by human activity, and the invasive species *Asclepias syriaca* which spreads in the urban ecosystem. The papers show how the reduction in afforestation may protect the population of the former species, whereas the promotion thereof may reduce the development of the latter.

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