



IDENTIFICATION RESULTS OF AN ILLEGAL MOSS COLLECTION FROM NE HUNGARY

Egy Északkelet-Magyarországról származó illegális mohagyűjtemény
határozási eredményei

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The area of the Zemplén Mountains is regularly affected by illegal moss collections, due to which official procedures have already been initiated in several cases. In previous cases, the procedures did not examine conservation issues, i.e. damage to species and habitats, but treated the matter as an act against property.

In one case, the procedure was initiated with respect to damage against natural values related to the collection of moss, and this has already reached the court stage. The aim of our recent investigations is to improve the scientific groundwork for expert opinions. In Hungary, according to the nature protection law currently a permit is required for collection in protected natural areas. The forest law prohibits the collection of moss for commercial purposes from tree bark in forest stands. The uptake market for moss material is the flower arranging business, which uses the moss *Hypnum cupressiforme* as a prop for larger quantities of moss wreaths. We present the identification results of about 7 m³ of bryophyte material, which was confiscated by the hungarian authorities in summer of 2018 near the villages Boldogkőváralja, Fony and Telkibánya.

Based on the review and determination of the material confiscated in connection with a criminal offense, it can be concluded that mainly *Hypnum cupressiforme* was collected. Additional species were mixed in negligible amounts in the material.

Most frequently *Paraleucobryum longifolium* and *Dicranum scoparium* infrequently *Barbilophozia barbata*, *Brachytheciastrum velutinum*, *Brachythecium rutabulum*, *Hedwigia ciliata*, *Isothecium alopecuroides*, *Plagiomnium cuspidatum*, *P. rostratum*, *Platygyrium repens*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Ptychostomum moravicum*, *Pylaisia polyantha*, *Syntrichia ruralis* and *Syntrichia virescens* were collected with *Hypnum cupressiforme*. Based on the fieldwork, the most affected habitats are mainly older acidophilous oak stands, which are situated relatively close to the settlements.

The illegal collections originated from the bark of *Quercus petraea* and andesite rock surfaces. The endangered (EN) *Antitrichia curtipendula* (size of cushion ca. 1 m²) was discovered at the site damaged by the collection near Fony village.

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