http://mjbs.num.edu.mn
http://biotaxa.org./mjbs
Volume 16(1), 2018

Mongolian Journal of Biological Sciences

ISSN 1684-3908 (print edition)
MJBS
ISSN 2225-4994 (online edition)

http://dx.doi.org/10.22353/mjbs.2018.16.04

Original Article

New Populations of *Artemisia shrenkiana* Ledeb. and *Limonium gmelini (*Willd.*)* Kundze at the Edge of Their Geographical Ranges in Western Transbaikalia (Southern Siberia)

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Abstract

Key words: habitat, plant community, *Artemisia schrenkiana*, *Limonium gmelini*, Transbaikalia
Article information:
Received: 16 May 2017
Accepted: 30 Aug. 2018
Published online: 10 Sept. 2018
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This article contains information on ecology and phytocoenology of Transbaikalia border line populations of the Central Asian xero-halophytic species, *Artemisia schrenkiana* and *Limonion gmelini*. These species were noted in the composition of halophytic Achnatherum steppeficated meadow in the Ivolginskaya Valley of the Selenga Middle Mountain Range. The authors believe that the species are extinct of Pliocene desertified-steppe landscapes of Transbaikalia. The identified species add data on habitats and phytocoenotic association of these valuable medicinal and ether-bearing fodders. Detailed composition of essential oils in *Artemisia schrenkiana* Ledeb in Western Transbaikalia is identified.

Cite this paper as: Namzalov, B. B., Zhigzhitzhapova, S. V., Namzalov, M. B.-Ts., Radnaeva, L. D. & Semenova, E. V. 2018. New populations of *Artemisia shrenkiana* Ledeb. and *Limonium gmelini* (Willd.) Kundze at the edge of their geographical ranges in western Transbaikalia (Southern Siberia). *Mong. J. Biol. Sci*., 16(1): 29-35.

Introduction

Halophyte vegetation (Salineta) is one of the oldest biomes of the intermountain hollows in Transbaikalia (Southern Siberia), which develops on the saline habitats around lakes as well as river terraces. Within this vegetation, communities with dominance of *Achanatherum splendens* (Trin.) Nevski occupy the special position in the system and known as a relic tall grass (*Tussoki*) according to Kamelin (2005). The relic *Achnatherum* meadow communities are genetically related with Paleogene temperate and Subtropical Asian floras, and contain some original xerohalophyte floristic elements. Among them, *Artemisia schrenkiana*, a very rare species, and *Limonium gmelinii* previously unknown in Transbaikalia are found recently in a plain of the Indoga river in Western Transbaikalia.

The aim of this research is to study ecology and phytocoenology of *Artemisia schrenkiana* and *Limoniom gmelinii* in meadows of Western Transbaikalia, as well as to identify of the essential oil composition of local populations in *A. schrenkiana*.