The annual excursion of the Nordic Bryological Society (NBS) and the Finnish Bryophyte Expert Group to Kuusamo (Finland) in 2014

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The annual excursion of the Nordic Bryological Society (NBS) and the Finnish Bryophyte Expert Group to Kuusamo (Finland) in 2014

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The Nordic Bryological Society had its annual meeting and excursion on 21 to 24 of August 2014 in Kuusamo, Koillismaa biogeographical province (Ks) in northeast Finland close to Russian border. In total 23 participants attended the extremely rainy excursion. Despite the weather we made nice discoveries of Red Listed species typical for Kuusamo area e.g. Arnellia fennica, Campylophyllum halleri, Conocephalum salebrosum, Palustriella commutata and Philonotis calcarea. Lophozia pellucida was discovered new to Finland from Vasajängänoja. Encalypta alpina and Riccardia incurvata were collected for the first time from Ks. Total of 47 nationally Red Listed and seven regionally threatened species were recorded during the excursion.

Friday 22 August

First location of the day was Korvasjärvi in Liikasenvaara area in Oulanka National Park, in a restricted access border zone between Finland and Russia. We split into
two groups: the majority of the bryologists headed to the south shore of lake Korvajärvi and the rest to north shore. Previous collections from the area were made decades ago, during 1937–1939, by Auer, Kotilainen, Vaarama and Tuomikoski (Eliölajit administrative database for Red Listed species).

The south group went east through a spruce forest to inspect some low dolomite outcrops adjacent to mire. They found several interesting bryophytes, including Arnocellia feynnica (VU), Cyrtomnium hymenophylloides (NT), Plagiopus oederianus and Scapania gymnostomophila (NT). From there they continued south across a mire containing both rich and poor areas. In the more lime affected parts they observed e.g. Barbilophozia kunzeana, B. quadriloba, Campylium stellatum, Catoscopium nigritum, Leiocolea ru-thana, Scorpidium scorpioides and Sphagnum warnstorfii. South of the mire was a herb-rich spruce swamp with spring fens. There we saw e.g. Cinclidium stygium, Meesia uliginosa, Moerckia bibernica s.lat. (VU), Rhizomnium magnifolium, R. pseudopunctatum, Tayloria lingulata and Tritomaria polita. On rocks and humus in a small stream grew Leiocolea bantriensis (NT), L. collaris (NT) and Hygrohypnum species. The north group had a hasty run of 1.5 km to the dolomite outcrops near the north shore of Korvajärvi. From the rather low, sheltered calcareous walls they found abundant Encalypta streptocarpa, Seligeria diversifolia (NT) and Tortella tortuosa.

The other half of the day was spent in locus classicus of Kobresia myosuroides south of Korvasvaara hill near lakes Kotilaistenlampi and Vanhalampi (Liikasenvaara, Oulanka National Park). From Korvasvaara road we found tiny Aongstroemia longipes (EN) growing rather abundant. Accompanying species included Leiocolea badensis (VU) and Riccardia incurvata (NT, new to Ks province). Next stop was a periodically drying pond where grew e.g. Callicne genistella, Pseudocalliergon angustifolium (VU) and Scorpidium cossonii. The slopes of Korvasvaara were filled with calcareous springs and spring brooks with Cratoneuron filicinum, Palustriella commutata (VU), P. decipiens (NT), P. falcata (NT) and Philonotis calcarea (EN). Amblyodon dealbatus (VU), Catoscopium nigritum, Leiocolea spp., Lophozia grandiretis (EN), Oncophorus virens and Tritomaria polita were growing on the banks. After inspecting some springs we split into two groups: half of us headed for gorge Kettukuru NWW of Vanhalampi pond and the rest continued to study calcareous fens and spring brooks. In the end, Kettukuru was actually not studied because before our group could get there they found something better: a narrow calcareous ravine under rapids Sirkkakoski. Conocephalun salebrosum (VU), Cratoneuron filicinum and Pellia endiviifolia (NT) were abundant in a small brook flowing at the bottom of the gorce. The quickest ones had even some time to investigate rocks near rapids Kiutaköngäs. They found e.g. Fissidens viridulus (RT) and Pseudoleskeella nervosa. It was raining more or less the whole day.

In the evening we microscoped our specimens and enjoyed of the expertise and great company.

Saturday 23 August

On Saturday morning we split into three groups: one went to Jäkälävuoma (‘the gorge with lichen’), one to Lammasvuoma (‘the gorge with sheep’) gorge and the last to Kallioniitynkuru–Vasajängänoja gorge in Salla commune. The first two locations are situated in Juuma area in Oulanka National Park, Kuusamo commune and the third some 25 km northwest of these in Salla commune. Jäkälävuoma was thought to be the best and the most scenic bryophyte location so that bus was full in no time. Rest of us divided between the two other less studied calcareous locations. During the day it was mostly raining, occasionally very heavily.

On the way to Jäkälävuoma gorge we passed calcareous fens where e.g. Brachythecium turgidum, Bryum weigelii, Catoscopium nigrifrum, Meesia uliginosa, Onco-
phorus virens, Palustriella falcata (NT), Scapania hyperbo-
rea, S. paludicola and Splachnum vasculosum grew. In the
canyon, we started directly to search for dolomite rock
walls and found some Campylophyllum halleri (NT), Gy-
ottium hymenophyloides (NT), Encalypta rhapto-patla
var. leptodon (DD), Gymnostomum aeruginosum (NT),
Hypnum recurvatum, Orthothecium strictum (NT), Pres-
sia quadra\, Plagiopus oederianus, Scapania gymnosto-
moplia (NT), Timmia austriaca and a lot more. Higher
up grew large cushions of Bartramia halleriana. In scree
and on stones we saw Anastrophyllum saxicola, Grimmia
longirostris, Mylia taylorii (NT) and Tetralophozia seti-
formis. At a base of a rock wall with seepage flow grew a
lot of Conocephalum salebrosum (VU). In a small forest
lake grew a thick carpet of Warnstor\, trichophylla and
lots of Rhizomnium magnifolium. On the way back to
the parking lot, we passed the river Kitkajoki in Vattumutka
(‘the bend with Rubus idaeus’). Here at block Hya-noem-
blystegium flaviatile, Fontinalis hypnoides, Dichodontium
pellucidum, Dicheloma falcatum, Campyliadelphus elodes
(VU).

In Linnasvuoma, we discovered Arnellia fennica
(VU) and Gyottium hymenophyloides (NT) to be fairly
common. Other species we collected included e.g. Campy-
lophyllum halleri (NT), Encalypta alpina (NT, new to KS
province), Hypnum recurvatum, Orthothecium strictum
(NT) and Timmia austriaca. Besides the cliffs we visited
small mire W of Kallioportti and refound an abundant
population of Hamatocaulis vernicosus (VU) and a nice
patch of Moerkia hibernica s. lat. (VU).

The river gorges of Kallioniitynkuru and Vasa-
jängänoja north of Oulanka National Park exhibit re-
markable range of different bryophyte habitats from
20 m high calcareous rock walls to seasonally wet cal-
careous ponds. Both gorges host large populations of
Arnellia fennica (VU), Orthothecium intricatum (NT),
Scapania gymnostomophila (NT) and Timmia comata
(VU). Also Gymnostomum aeruginosum (NT), Hymeno-
stylium recurvirostrum(NT), Mannia pilosa (NT) and Or-
thothecium strictum (NT) were present in both gorges.
On the former grows also Athalamia hyalina (NT), Sel-
geria donniana (NT), S. brevifolia (VU), S. tristichoides
(VU). Anomodon viticulosus, A. longifolius, Encalypta
streptocarpa and Neckera complanata represent southern
element of moss flora in Kallioniitynkuru. Seasonally
wet ponds in Vasa-jängänoja gorge have extensive mats of
Pseudocalliergon angustifolium (VU). From Vasajängänoja, we found Lophozia pellucida (VU) as new to Finland. It was growing on moist dolomite wall mixed with Arnelia fennica. Both gorges have also a rich vascular flora e.g. on walls of Vasajängänoja gorge grows a large population of threatened Arenaria pseudofrigida. These gorges are not still fully explored, but their current bryophyte records with many endangered or rare species strongly motivate their protection and inclusion to the Oulanka National Park.

In the evening there was the annual meeting of NBS, some more microscoping and organizing specimens collected in soggy paper bags. All day outside in the rain and having sauna on top of that took its toll on most but some stayed to microscope until midnight.

Sunday 24 August

About half of excursion participants headed home after breakfast but the rest of us made an excursion to Ruka fjell. First we tried unsuccessfully to find the doubtful Lophozia debiliformis (DD) from its only known locality in Finland. Afterwards we went so see some misty scenery from the top of Ruka fjell and found e.g. Diphyscium foliosum (NT) and Marsupella sprucei (EN).

We then continued to Saaruansuo E of Ruka to see some common Sphagna. For example, S. warnstorfii, subsecundum, subnitens, subfulvum, teres and riparium were found only some five meters from the road. On a tree branch in the river there was a little of Campylophyllum sommerfeltii.

We ended the excursion to some random rapid we just located from the map. The rapid was never reached by most of us because of the unstable ditch and a fence blocking our way but we didn’t mind. There was after all that interesting ditch there.

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References


