



Hemiptera community and species responses to grassland sward islets

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Grassland sward islets are patches of longer vegetation in pastures produced by a reduction in cattle grazing around dung patches. They are known to affect the abundance and distribution of grassland arthropods. Hemiptera, like other groups, are found in higher densities within islets than the surrounding sward. Does this modify the community composition or is there just a density effect? Evidence from a paired (islets, non-islet) study at an Irish cattle-grazed site, would suggest that although a change in the density of species explains much of the patterns observed, some species respond to islets in different ways. Grassland Auchenorrhyncha were dominated by two genera, *Javesella* (mostly *J. obscurella* and to a lesser extent *J. pellucida*) and *Macrosteles* (mostly *M. viridigriseus* with some *M. laevis* and *M. sexnotatus*). The nymphs and to a lesser extent the adults, showed contrasting distribution patterns in relation to islets. *Javesella* were more common in the islets, whereas *Macrosteles* showed little difference between the two sub-habitats. Possible reasons for the difference in sub-habitat choice between these two Auchenorrhyncha taxa are discussed.



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