

The invasion of *Atriplex micrantha* in the Czech Republic

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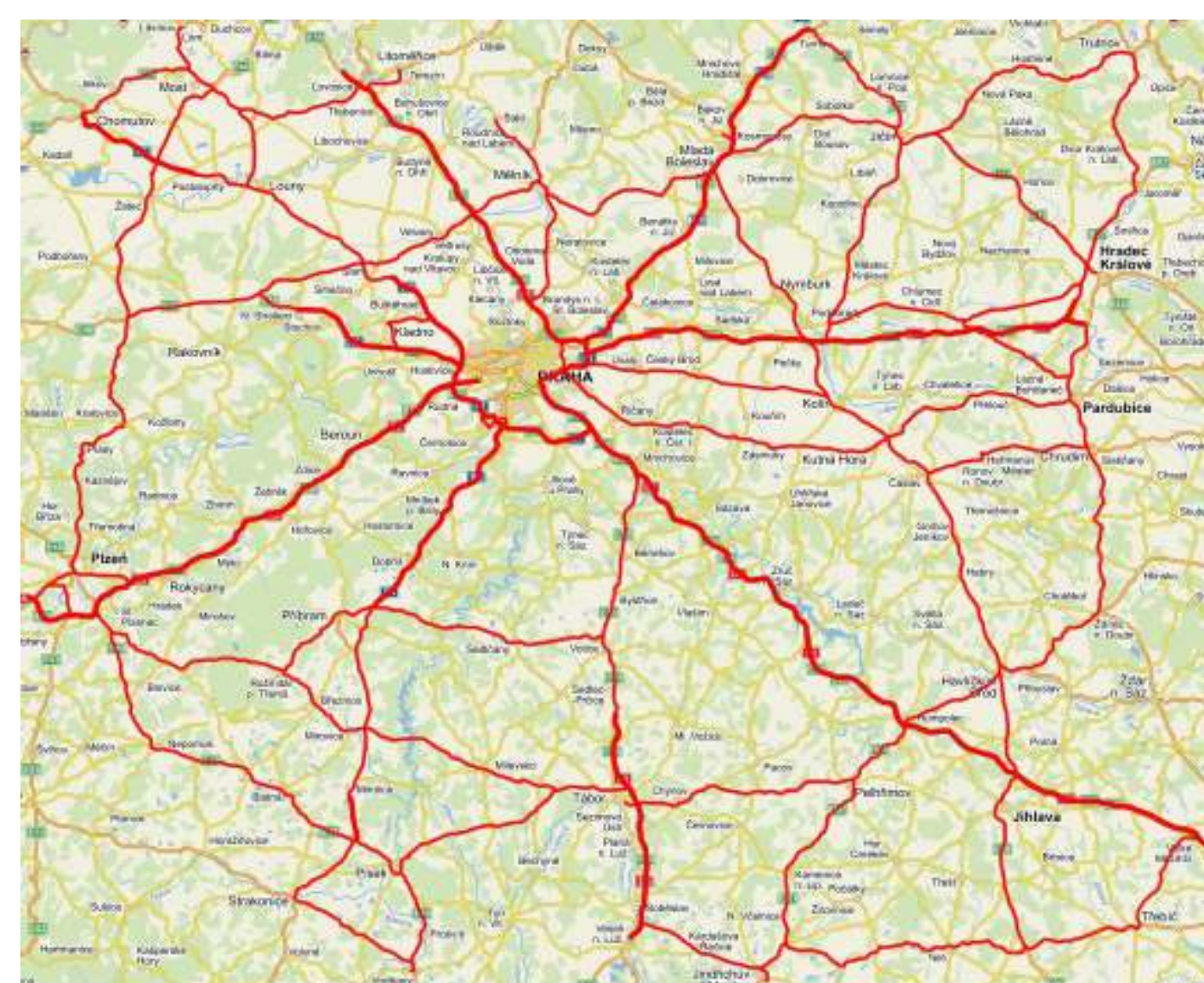
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INTRODUCTION

Atriplex micrantha C.A. Mey. In Ledeb. (syn. *A. heterosperma* Bunge) is native in Central Asia. Steppes and semi-deserts are its natural habitats, the species is tolerant to drought and salinity. Adventive range of occurrence covers central and western Europe, North and South America. During 80th of 20th century *A. micrantha* started to spread along highways in Germany. Traffic helped *A. micrantha* to spread to neighbouring countries. In the territory of the Czech Rep. the species was recorded for the first time in 1967. Similar records from late 60th and 70th represent casual occurrence of *A. micrantha* as a wool adventive on waste places and disposal sites. In 2014, first study was published on *A. micrantha* occurrence in north-eastern part of CZ. At this time, *A. micrantha* was already widespread along the highways, especially in central reservation (median strip).



OBJECTIVE

The aim of our study was to monitor the occurrence of *Atriplex micrantha* along highways in Prague Region.

METHODOLOGY

Six main highways and motorways in Central Bohemia were observed (Prague region) in September 2015.



RESULTS

A. micrantha occurred in high numbers. Frequent occurrence in large area of the country indicates that the spread was fast and took place probably during the last decade.

Since the very beginning of its spread, *A. micrantha* has been neglected and omitted by scientists. We have no data about the early phases of its invasion. There are several reasons for this: Central reservation of highway is hard to reach, for safety reasons it is normally not possible to collect specimens there. Without closer look, *A. micrantha* can be misidentified as *A. sagittata* or when ripen as *A. oblongifolia*.

We can predict future spread of *A. micrantha* along the roads and consequently its occurrence along the arable land. It can become common ruderal species in peri-urban zones. We do not expect it to become arable weed in the near future.

