BIOMETRICS OF *DESCHAMPSIA ANTARCTICA* DESV. ECOLOGICAL AND SYSTEMATIC IMPORTANCE

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Biometrics may contain two blocks of essential information. On the one hand, variability of vegetative organ traits and some traits of generative organs studied in the context of any particular ecological conditions can potentially give information on plant reactions to the influence of environment. In the case of aboriginal vascular plants of Antarctica, biometrics could serve as indicators of the impact of the progressing warming. However the influence of warming is significantly modified by the local mosaics of orographic and microclimatic conditions. In view of this, biometric traits could serve as indicators of warming only in case regular measuring is done on a basic system of study sites established for vascular plants of the region in different ecological conditions. On the other hand, the question of the age of Antarctic vascular plant species in the region (Parnikoza et al., 2007) makes it necessary to study heterogeneity within the modern species *Deschampsia antarctica* Desv. and *Colobanthus quitensis* Kunth. Bartl., as the putative old age of these species should have resulted in their divergence in different parts of their areal. In view of this, biometrics might bear a completely different – taxonomic sense. We have launched a monitoring of Antarctic vascular plants including collection of biometrics in the Argentine Islands archipelago region. The study is supported by the Ukrainian Antarctic Scientific Centre and contributes to the SCAR ‘‘Impact of Climate Induced Glacial Melting on Marine and Terrestric Coastal Communities on a Gradient along the Western Antarctic Peninsula’’ research program.