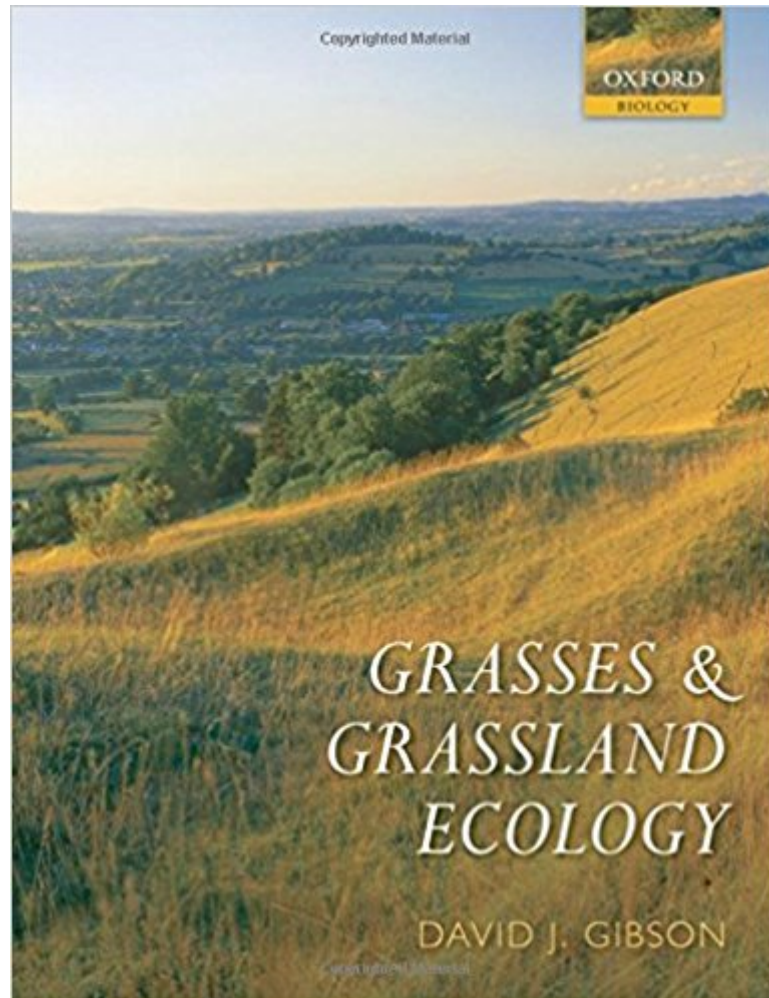




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# Grasses And Grassland Ecology



## Synopsis

Grasslands, in particular managed pastures and rangelands, are widespread, covering approximately 40% (52 million km<sup>2</sup>) of the Earth's land surface. They are dominated by members of the Poaceae - the fourth largest plant family with over 7,500 species, and also the most widespread. Grasslands constitute a major biome on all continents except Antarctica and also represent the most important food crop on Earth with corn, wheat, maize, rice and millet accounting for the majority of our agricultural output. *Grasses and Grassland Ecology* provides an ecologically orientated introduction to this influential group of plants, summarizing the most recent scientific research in ecology and agriculture in the context of the older, classic literature. Ten chapters cover the morphology, anatomy, physiology and systematics of grasses, their population, community and ecosystem ecology, their global distribution, and the effects of disturbance and grassland management. This comprehensive and accessible textbook is suitable for graduate level students as well as professional researchers in the fields of plant ecology, rangeland science, crop science, and agriculture.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An accomplished textbook that offers readers a carefully crafted, well-structured, and very readable expose of grasslands, their significance, function, and management. Gibson covers a very broad suite of subject material, which I consider one of this work's major strengths. There is great deal to like about this book. I would gladly recommend it to any student, landholder, policymaker, or

restorationist whose interest or passions are drawn to the beauty of grasslands."--Paul Gibson-Roy, University of Melbourne, *The Quarterly Review of Biology*"One of the great values of the book is the many ways it serves students of grasses and grassland ecology by providing detailed accounts of the biology of grasses and grasslands. I could not be more enthusiastic about this book and its valuable contents. It is well conceived, all materials are presented from a deeply insightful ecological perspective and it is a unique combination of relevant content. It is a vital, consolidated resource for the research ecologist, graduate students in plant biology, as well as the field biologist working particularly with natural grassland ecosystems and is a highly recommended text that should serve as a guide to grasses and grassland ecology for many years to come."-- John B. Taft. *Transactions of the Illinois State Academy of Science*

David Gibson, PhD was born and raised in Cuckfield, England. He obtained his BSc in botany from the University of Reading and went on to take a MS in botany from the University of Oklahoma, USA and a PhD from the University of Wales. Gibson has published over 90 papers in scientific journals, most dealing with grasses or grasslands. His previous book *Methods in Comparative Plant Population Ecology* was published by Oxford University Press in 2002. He is an Editor for the *Journal of Ecology*, and Associate Editor for the *Journal of Vegetation Science*, and a Professor of Plant Biology in the Department of Plant Biology and the Center for Ecology at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, USA.

Although this book is written on an academic level, suitable for use as a textbook for grassland ecology courses, I did not use it as a textbook. Instead, I am simply fascinated by grasslands, and I think anyone who has an interest in grasslands would benefit from reading it. I grew up in the Midwest United States (Kansas) and have a deep appreciation for the beauty of prairies. It has always amazed me that so many people are more concerned with the destruction of forest biomes, particularly rainforests, when it is actually grasslands that have (and continue to be) destroyed for human uses at a higher rate. Grasslands cover 40% of the earth's land surface, yet only 4.6% of grasslands are protected. This is lower than any other biome, including rainforests. And this is exactly why everyone should read Gibson's book. The book provides a comprehensive look at every aspect of grasslands, including their distribution, evolution, diversity, management, and much more. This is an academic book, packed with data tables, graphs, and citations, making it very suitable as a textbook. But the content is accessible to anyone who would like to learn more about grasslands. Each chapter starts with an interesting quote and ends with a

concise summary of the content. If you are like me, having a more general (less academic) interest in the content, you may have a tendency to skim over the abundant charts and data tables, but the text is very readable, and the chapter topics are well organized, gradually building upon your growing foundation of understanding. If you love grasslands, if you would like to better understand their diversity and complexity, or if you are concerned about their conservation, you should read Gibson's book.

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