

ReadMe - V_snowbed_ground_cover_experimental

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1 Protocol

Ground cover in all herbivore and large herbivore exclosures as well as control plots has been assessed following the COAT protocol

'protocol_plant_measurements_snowbed_experiment_varanger.'

2 Description of the dataset

The dataset includes three different types of files and all files are saved as ;-separated txt-files:

- One data file per year (`_YEAR.txt`)
- One coordinate file with coordinates of all sites (`_coordinates.txt`)
- One auxiliary file with information about which sites are included in the study design (`_aux.txt`)

2.1 V_snowbed_ground_cover_experimental_YEAR.txt

These files contain ground cover of the following categories:

```
[1] "Dicranum sp"           "Lichen"  
[3] "Moss carpet alive"    "Moss carpet dead"  
[5] "Polytrichum sp"      "Small rodent activity"  
[7] "Soil or stone"        "Sphagnum sp"  
[9] "Standing dead crop or litter"
```

Example of the first rows of the data files:

```
sn_region      sn_locality      sn_section sc_type_of_sites_ecological  
1 varanger vestre_jakobselv bearalveaijohka      snowbed  
2 varanger vestre_jakobselv bearalveaijohka      snowbed  
3 varanger vestre_jakobselv bearalveaijohka      snowbed  
      sn_site      sc_plot_treatment t_year      t_date v_observer  
1 vj_be_sn_1 all_herbivore_exclosure 2019 2019-08-06      hb  
2 vj_be_sn_1 all_herbivore_exclosure 2019 2019-08-06      hb  
3 vj_be_sn_1 all_herbivore_exclosure 2019 2019-08-06      hb  
      v_number_of_pins v_functional_group v_abundance v_comment  
1          25          dicranum_sp          12      <NA>  
2          25           lichen          4      <NA>  
3          25 moss_carpet_alive          7      <NA>
```

Description of the columns included in the data files:

Column name	Description	Possible values
sn_region	Study region	varanger
sn_locality	Locality (within region)	vestre_jakobselv
sn_section	Section (within locality)	bearalveaijohka, gaasevannan, torvhaugdalen, tranemyra
sc_type_of_sites_ecological	Habitat type	snowbed
sn_site	Unique Site ID	e.g. vj_be_sn_1, vj_be_sn_17, vj_to_sn_14, vj_to_sn_6
sc_plot_treatment	Plot treatment	all_herbivore_exclosure, control, large_herbivore_exclosure
t_year	Sampling year	e.g. 2019
t_date	Sampling date	YYYY-MM-DD
v_observer	Initials of observer	e.g. kab (Kari Anne Bråthen)
v_number_of_pins	Number of pins per PF plot	25, NA
v_functional_group	Ground cover category	dicranum_sp, lichen, moss_carpet_alive, moss_carpet_dead, polytrichum_sp, small_rodent_activity, soil_or_stone, sphagnum_sp, standing_dead_crop_or_litter
v_abundance	Number of pins with presence of e.g. Dicranum sp.	[numeric]
v_comment	Comments	[character]

2.2 V_snowbed_ground_cover_experimental_coordinates.txt

This file contains the coordinates of all sites included in the study design. Coordinates are given in decimal degrees and UTM 33 (WGS 84).

Example of the first rows of coordinate files:

```
sn_site    e_dd    n_dd    e_utm33  n_utm33
1 vj_to_sn_3 29.11003 70.29710 1026762 7860451
2 vj_to_sn_6 29.08956 70.30502 1025806 7861136
3 vj_to_sn_13 29.07985 70.31023 1025315 7861619
```

2.3 V_snowbed_ground_cover_experimental_aux.txt

This file contains further information about the dataset such as the years when sites were first included in the study design and when sites were excluded from the study design.

Example of the first rows of auxiliary-files:

```
sn_region      sn_locality      sn_section      sn_site
1 varanger vestre_jakobselv bearalveaijohka vj_be_sn_1
2 varanger vestre_jakobselv bearalveaijohka vj_be_sn_1
3 varanger vestre_jakobselv bearalveaijohka vj_be_sn_1
      sc_plot_treatment year_first year_last v_comment
1                control      2019      NA      NA
2 large_herbivore_exclosure      2019      NA      NA
3  all_herbivore_exclosure      2019      NA      NA
```

* year_last is NA if the site is still included in the study design

3 Data cleaning and formatting

Rawdata is cleaned and formatted in three steps:

1. Data cleaning: All rawdata files entered in excel-templates are cleaned and saved as txt-files using the script `01_reformat_PF_rawdata_from_pads_snowbeds.R`. The script checks for correct spelling, correct format, outliers and missing observations, adds other necessary columns (e.g. region, locality and habitat) and saves the data as txt-files. Each file is processed separately and possible mistakes are corrected in the script.

In particular the script checks for:

- **sn_site:** Correct spelling of all site names and missing observation. Missing observations will be included with NA for abundance.
- **t_date:** Correct format (yyyy-mm-dd), dates in other formats are reformatted.
- **v_observer:** Correct format (initials and lowercase letters), observer is reformatted e.g. if full names were used.
- **Species and functional group names:** Correct spelling, all species names will be converted to abbreviations (e.g. vac_myr).
- **v_abundance:** Outliers in abundance, 'x' will be replaced with 0.1, empty cells will be filled with 0 and weird entries (e.g. if there was a problem with the keyboard) will be corrected.
- **v_comment:** Correct spelling and format (lowercase letters and english). Comments are edited or translated if necessary.
- The columns **sn_region**, **sn_locality**, **sn_section**, **t_year** and **t_season** are added.

A comment is added if corrections go beyond simple typing mistakes and lead to differences between rawdata and cleaned data.

2. Data formatting: All cleaned files are compiled and formatted using the script `02_make_formated_PF_files_for_dataportal_snowbeds.R` . The script formats the data according to the requirements of the COAT dataportal and produces one file for each dataset derived from observational plant measurements in heath and meadow sites:

- `V_snowbed_vascular_plant_abundance_experimental_YEAR.txt`
(point intercepts on functional group level)
- `V_snowbed_plant_species_composition_experimental_YEAR.txt`
(presence and abundance data of all vascular plant species)
- `V_snowbed_ground_cover_experimental_YEAR.txt`
(abundance of for example Litter, Mosses, Lichen and small rodent activity)
- `V_snowbed_shrub_height_experimental_YEAR.txt`
(height of all shrubs except *Salix herbacea*)

3. Quality check: A final quality check is performed on each dataset. All variables are checked and observations are plotted together with the years before.