

## **How contribute the Service Areas on Polish motorways to the diversity of flora and vegetation?**

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Motorways as linear objects form a corridor suitable for migration of different species both in the time of construction and during the exploitation. The network of motorways is in Poland still very scarce and counts ca 763 km. There are two not yet finished motorways running in the West-East direction (A2 – 253,4 km, and A4 – 420,4 km) and one in the North-South (A1 - 90 km).

The aim of this study, conducted in 2010, was to analyze the spontaneously occurring plant species and communities in the service areas along above mentioned existing motorways in order to state whether the flora and vegetation show any particular traits and if their composition reflects the specificity of geobotanical region, period of functioning of the motorway and type of the service area. The service areas, the only places along the motorway where travelers can stop, get out of the car and rest, are possible centers for spreading of new elements of the flora. Depending on the management, they also contain some elements contributing to the comfort of resting of travelers (patches of natural greenery, ponds etc.). Therefore the analysis focused on two groups of species: invasive newcomers, possibly spread along motorways and native elements still present despite transformation of habitat connected with motorway construction. The intensive management of service areas leaves only little space for development of plant communities. Their number is very low, but still shows some regularities, reflecting the habitat diversity, type of surrounding landscape and intensity of management.