

Military training areas are used by armed forces as training territories. These areas are exposed to intensive anthropogenic disturbances. It may seem paradoxical that a number of studies had shown that on those particular areas is often present remarkably high biodiversity and numerous species of conservation concern. In this respect, military training areas are more valuable than most parts of surrounding landscape and thus form true biodiversity refuges. Particularly important are those areas for open habitats species. There are two main causes of uniqueness of military training areas. First, they are closed for any human activities not connected to military training. Because of this, these areas were not exposed to negative influences such as agricultural intensification or urbanization. Second, military activities create very heterogeneous habitat mosaic. This allows coexistence of many species with different ecological requirements. However, biota of military training areas is currently endangered due to abandonment by armed forces caused by downsizing national troops. The end of unique disturbance regime caused by military training leads to gradual homogenization of landscape mosaic and therefore to population decline of habitat specialists. Subsequent commercial development of these areas is another source of threat.