Combining local and academic knowledge to define and assess wild food plant sustainable foraging in Norway
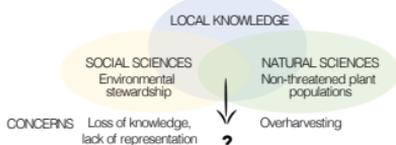
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Background

- Wild food plants = nutrition, health, identity, wealth, …

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

SOCIAL SCIENCES
Environmental stewardship

NATURAL SCIENCES
Non-threatened plant populations

CONCERNS   Loss of knowledge, lack of representation   Overharvesting
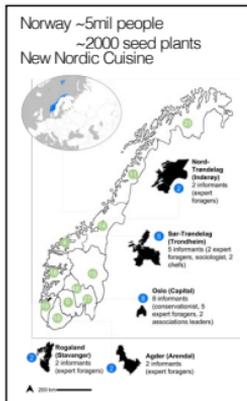
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- **What is sustainable wild food plant foraging?**
- **Is foraging sustainable in Norway?**

Methods

- 19 interviews with experts, 219 responses to online questionnaire
- Combined sustainability assessment per plant (ecological traits, IUCN Red List Norway, foraging practices)
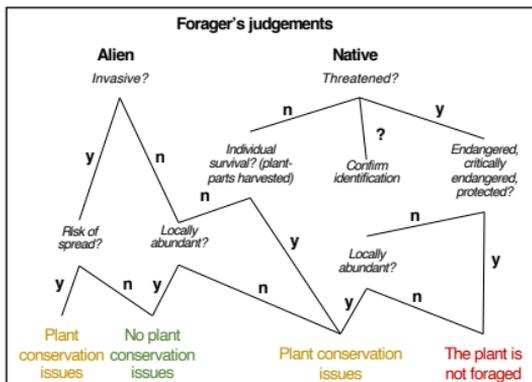
Norway ~5mil people
~2000 seed plants
New Nordic Cuisine

Dill (Reykjavik, Iceland). Photo by SA Friðþjófsson.

Nord-Trøndelag (Indøry)
2 informants (expert foragers)

Sør-Trøndelag (Trondheim)
5 informants (2 expert foragers, sociologist, 2 chefs)

Oslo (Capital)
6 informants (communicator, 5 expert foragers, 2 associations leaders)

Rogaland (Stavanger)
2 informants (expert foragers)

Agder (Arendal)
2 informants (2 expert foragers)

200 km

Results

- Sustainable foraging = knowledge and practices to maintain forager-plant relationships over time (societal, ecological, health dimensions)
- Flowchart to assess sustainability

Forager's judgements

- Of 267 wild food plants foraged, for **220 no conservation issues were raised**, for **24 conservation issues were raised**, and **one should not be foraged**. The rest could not be assessed because ethnotaxa ≠ species
- The most often foraged plants are common and abundant species, local ecological knowledge and moral judgements guide foraging vulnerable plants

Discussion

- Combining foragers' judgements with plants' ecological traits and distribution at larger scales
- Co-defining sustainable foraging through a framework of biocultural reciprocity
- Validation of local knowledge on contested cases might be desirable
- New communication and education tool

Conclusions

A transdisciplinary approach to foraging sustainability can address:
- Taxonomic issues (local / academic)
- Scale issues (local / national)
- Disciplinary issues (social / ecological)

Ramsløk (Allium ursinum L.) foraging and flowers. Photo by P Karlsen.