

STATE OF *THYMUS* COENOPOPULATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN SIBERIA

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Abstract. *Background.* The study of species coenopopulations and their stability in a particular area is a necessary stage when searching for ways of rational use of natural resources. The species of the genus *Thymus* in the southern Siberia is widely distributed. This species is found in the communities of mountain and lowland steppes, forest steppes and forests. The objective of this work is to explore the ontogenetic structure of *Thymus* coenopopulations in the southern Siberia and estimate the current state of this species. *Materials and methods.* Using the conventional methods particular features of life forms have been studied and biormorphs of 15 species of thyme have been selected; 22 coenopopulations of 10 species, which are distinguished by biormorph and the extent of distribution, have been investigated. *Results.* This research has shown that in the southern Siberia the species of the genus *Thymus* is formed in six life forms (vegetative-immotile form for the shrub and semi-shrub, vegetative-semi-motile form for the shrub and semi-shrub, vegetative-motile form for the shrub and semi-shrub) and three types of biormorphs (monocentric vegetative-immotile biormorph, implicitly polycentric vegetative-semi-motile biormorph, explicitly polycentric vegetative-motile biormorph). A relation between biological features of the species and the type of characteristic ontogenetic spectrum has been shown. Biological specific features of implicitly and explicitly polycentric species identify the left-sided type of the characteristic spectrum, of monocentric species, the type of spectrum is determined as centered one. The difference between the majority of ontogenetic spectra of specific coenopopulations from the typical spectrum is due to polyvariety of species development (alteration of the biormorph in the same species, a change in the prevailing propagation direction, reduction in the duration (or absence) of the generative period) and characteristics of the arranged ecotope system. *Conclusions.* For the thymes of different biormorphs the factors of habitats and specific features which influence the stable state of their coenopopulation are identified. It has been ascertained that *Thymus* coenopopulations in the southern Siberia are in a stable state or tend to be in this state. A comparative analysis of the data obtained made it possible to put forward some patterns of population behavior of thymes which can be extrapolated into another species of the genus *Thymus* with similar types of biormorphs.

Key words: coenopopulation, ontogenetic structure, biormorph, ontogenesis, *Thymus*, southern Siberia.