

Short Report on URBIO 2010

2nd International Conference on Urban Biodiversity and Design

by URBIO2010 Organizing Committee

Outline of URBIO2010

In Japan there is a long tradition of research in urban ecology. Since the early 1970s “Interdisciplinary Studies of Urban Ecosystems in the Metropolis of Tokyo” have been carried out. Therefore it was especially fitting that the second International conference on Urban Biodiversity and Design URBIO 2010, was held from 18 to 22 May in Nagoya, Japan prior to COP10 and the City Biodiversity Summit 2010. The conference was organized by the URBIO 2010 Organizing Committee with financial support from numerous Japanese societies. The main theme of the conference was “Urban Biodiversity in the Ecological Network” with the following two subthemes.

a) Ecosystem Network and Quality of Habitats in and around the Urban Area

The urban ecosystem is unique and its main feature is that it is an open system characterized by great fluxes of information, material and energy with the surrounding ecosystems. Biodiversity in urban areas is determined by turnover of species through immigration and extinction, and the quality of habitats is not only affected by ecological conditions of the habitat, but also by functional and structural connectivity and their relationships.

b) Networking the Activities of Urban People

To improve and optimize urban biodiversity the participation of local people is essential. Activities for conservation and restoration of urban biodiversity are enhanced by establishing networks of human resources. The networks should include the public as well as the private sector; local authorities, urban wildlife groups of NGOs, enterprises, housing associations and other groups. Contact with nature should be a part of everyday life for urban people. Incentives and activities are needed to raise awareness and to encourage practical activities in the public and private sectors to improve urban biodiversity.

Three hundred and forty presentations on theoretical and practical results focusing on these themes were discussed by 460 participants from 30 countries. Seven keynote speeches, oral and poster presentations were made; the keynote papers appear in this special feature, and the proceedings (URBIO2010 Organizing Committee 2010) are available at;

<http://www.jilac.jp/URBIO2010/doku.php>.

Oral presentations were grouped into 16 proposed sessions and 8 general sessions. The themes of proposed sessions were; 1) planning and design of an ecological network in an urban area, 2) comparative studies of cities: links to urban biodiversity and urban design, 3) urban river, its

ecological functions and integrated river basin management, 4) ecological functions of terrestrial-aquatic ecotones in the urban area, 5) urban greening for human health, 6) what should the landscape architects be in pursuing the symbiotic relationship between people and nature?, 7) valuation and monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services in cities, 8) corporate responsibility for urban biodiversity & design, 9) citizen participation and biodiversity, 10) designing low carbon societies in Asia, 11) global warming and urban biodiversity: its status and strategy, 12) landscape planning, management and ecological education, 13) *Satoyama* management and biodiversity, 14) contemporary *Satoyama*: to share urban and rural experiences and knowledge, 15) restoration ecology network in Asia, 16) influence of landscape design on biodiversity. A workshop on the City Biodiversity Index (CBI) was also organized by the URBIO 2010 Organizing Committee.

In addition to conference presentations, the conference held mid-conference excursions to provide an opportunity to discuss with NPO's (Non-Profit Organizations) members at field sites where the NPO's have made continuous efforts to conserve/restore biodiversity. The mid-conference excursion had 9 options with regard to urban green space, shrine forest, *Satoyama*, river and canal in urban area and tidal flat.

Through the conference discussion participants reaffirmed and shared the importance of advancing the following efforts at conserving and enhancing urban biodiversity: Establishment of quantitative evaluation systems for urban biodiversity such as CBI; Mitigation of, and adaptation to climate change; Enhancement of environmental education; Functional aspects of urban biodiversity including cultural and spiritual benefits; Promotion of inter-linkages between business and biodiversity; and Formation of ecological network. Concept of *Satoyama* provided insights into a way of living in harmony with nature and into the management of biodiversity in cities.

As a result of the conference, "Nagoya Declaration - URBIO 2010" was adopted by the participants at the General Assembly of URBIO on 21 May. In this declaration, the participants resolved to tackle challenges for the future of urban biodiversity. The declaration is attached in this special feature, and will be delivered to the City Biodiversity Summit 2010 to be held October 2010.

Outlooks

During the Nagoya conference a first URBIO steering meeting with Advisory Board members of URBIO 2008 and Organizing Committee members of URBIO 2010 met to discuss the outcome of URBIO 2010 and the future of the network. The Japanese Organizing Committee promised to support the URBIO Network especially representing the network during the upcoming events to COP 10 in Nagoya. In the next 2 years the duties of the network e.g. maintaining contact with the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity, preparation and dissemination of URBIO newsletters

and coordinating the preparation of the next Conference will be carried out by the URBIO offices in Germany and Japan.

Especially for young researchers the Network started with an URBIO online discussion forum in 2010 to expand and intensify scientific exchange and discussions. It has also been requested that the network establish further working groups on related themes of urban biodiversity and design.