

Title of the symposium:

Conservation in the city

Detail of organizer(s):

Responsible

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Symposium abstract

In today's human-dominated world, biological conservation must occur in anthropogenic landscapes, including urban landscapes. Indeed, the role of cities in the conservation of biodiversity has recently been recognized. Cities, however, are designed first and foremost to provide human habitat and urban conservation must necessarily integrate human needs with those of other species. Achieving such integration is a key challenge of conservation and may pit the interests of humans against those of other species.

Urban conservation, however, can benefit urban human populations, thus making balancing the needs of humans and other species an opportunity as well as a challenge of such conservation. Recent studies document a number of benefits associated with exposure to biodiversity in cities. These benefits include enhanced mental and physical health and ecosystem service provision as well as mitigation of so-called "extinction of experience" through increased opportunities to interact and build connections with nature thereby increasing quality-of-life and understanding of and concern for conservation. Implementing conservation in urban settings could serve to ensure these and other human benefits and

could help build human populations that better understand and are more supportive of conservation. However, understanding of and methods for integrating the needs of humans and other species in conservation are currently underexplored.

Additional challenges to urban conservation relate to high spatial heterogeneity in urban landscapes and in the human and wild species that inhabit them. This variation means that the physical environment as well as the manner in which urban humans and species interact with it varies dramatically within cities. This heterogeneity complicates efforts to implement city-wide conservation to support not only diverse species, but also diverse human populations. Addressing these challenges in urban conservation requires an understanding of urban environments and of the species and human communities in those systems as well as of the manner in which they vary within cities.

Urban conservation must thus be a multi-disciplinary endeavour, one that relies on input from a variety of perspectives in the social and biological sciences as well as from practitioners such as urban planners and policy makers. This symposium will bring experts from diverse fields together to present research and discuss different perspectives and approaches to urban conservation. A key goal of the symposium is the building of theory and identification of ways in which urban landscapes could be managed to support both human well-being and biodiversity conservation objectives. The format of the symposium will include paper presentations and a panel discussion centered on approaches and challenges to urban landscape management for both conservation and human well-being. Participants from a variety of disciplines and approaches (e.g., geography, ecology, conservation biology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, demography, urban planning, economics, health sciences) and from around the globe are invited to present and discuss their own work and to participate in panel discussions.

How your symposia will improve landscape ecology science?

This symposium will unite participants from a variety of perspectives, combining knowledge from both the human and social sides of urban social-ecological systems in presentations and a discussion surrounding urban landscape management to support biodiversity conservation and human well-being. In so doing, this symposium will build our understanding of both people and biodiversity in urban landscapes. This understanding will help us better understand human-environment interaction in urban landscapes, an area of key importance in today's highly-urban world. Furthermore, bringing together knowledge from diverse perspectives will help us identify ways in which we could integrate the needs of humans and other species in urban landscape management, thereby improving our ability to implement urban conservation in ways that will support biodiversity and human well-being.

Broad thematic areas

Broad thematic areas 1st choice: Urban regions (urban landscapes, urbanization processes, urban metabolism, rural urban systems)

Broad thematic areas 2st choice: Biodiversity conservation

Free Keywords

urban, biodiversity, conservation, human well-being

Outcomes of symposium

Special issue in a scientific journal (to be negotiated)