

The 2nd European Congress of Conservation Biology in Prague Conservation biology and beyond: from science to practice

Prague will host the participants of the 2nd European Congress of Conservation Biology (ECCB 2009) from September 1st – 5th, 2009. The Congress is organized by the Europe Section of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB-ES), a global organization of conservation scientists and professionals (www.conbio.org), and the Faculty of Environmental Sciences at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. This important European meeting of scientists and practitioners dealing with nature protection will be held under the patronage of Mr. Stavros Dimas, Member of the European Commission, Mr. Ladislav Miko, Minister of environment of the Czech Republic and Mr. Luigi Boitani, president of SCB.

After the first Congress in Eger, Hungary in 2006, the Congress in Prague offers a unique opportunity to scientists, students, politicians and practitioners to exchange work results, experiences and models for successful implementation relating to nature conservation. Approximately 1.200 delegates from 80 countries are expected to participate in the congress amounting to more than 900 individual presentations (lectures or posters).

The Congress theme, “Conservation biology and beyond: from science to practice” reflects the fact that delivering effective conservation requires a range of actors beyond conservation science. Conservation science needs to cover a broader range of disciplines than just biology to be relevant to practice and needs feedback from application on successes, problems faced and research needs. In addition, conservation biologists often remain poor at communicating the importance of their science to policy and practice; mechanisms for better communication exist but need to be agreed upon and invested in. Messages from the congress are designed for policy and society to more seriously implement nature conservation as a key element for any attempt at achieving sustainable development

The main organizers of the Congress Martin Dieterich (President of the SCB-ES) and Petr Zasadil (Head of the Prague Organizing Committee) comment on the congress topic saying: “Although conservation practice and research have a hundred-year history in Europe, no specific forum exists for the exchange of problems, ideas and results. This keystone congress aids to bring together a wide array of academics, policy makers, students, NGO representatives and media from all over Europe. We believe that this will provide a spring board to develop a strong and integrated European community of conservation biologists.”

NOTICE FOR EDITORS

Conservation biology is a young scientific discipline, originating from the biological sciences. The discipline tries to provide basic information for the protection of biological diversity. Conservation biology has increasingly developed a trans- and interdisciplinary attitude. Societies today face one of the most serious global problems threatening their future well-being - the extinction of species and the deterioration of the environment. The problems associated with the protection of biological diversity are closely connected to other problems the world currently faces – climatic change, pollution and degradation of the environment, pollution, overpopulation, urbanization or economic and social problems. That is the reason why specialists of many scientific disciplines have joined to provide solutions to the contemporary crisis under the head of the new scientific discipline called Conservation biology.

The Society for Conservation Biology is an international professional organization dedicated to advancing the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity. The Society's membership comprises a wide range of people interested in the conservation and study of biological diversity: scientists, resource managers, educators, government and private conservation workers, and students. SCB is a global community with more than 12 000 members world-wide – with representatives from over 140 countries. The Society is organized internationally into seven Regional Sections. These Sections initiate activities relevant to conservation needs on their continents or in the marine environment. The Society provides many benefits to its membership including free online access to publications for members in developing countries, global and regional conferences, and a very popular online job board.

The Czech University of Life Science (CULS) was founded and recognized as one of the traditional European centers of excellence in agriculture, forestry and environmental education, the CULS has grown substantially over the years. The number of enrolled students, freshmen and undergraduates, has more than tripled in less than 15 years. Nowadays, there are ca 20 000 students at the University.

The Faculty of Environmental Sciences was established on July 1st, 2007. The Faculty consists of 6 departments. Research activities concentrate on the management of protected areas, endangered species protection, ecosystem management, solving the conflicts between economic and nature conservation, environmental protection, water disaster and landscape ecology. At present there are approx. 2.000 students associated with the Faculty of Environmental Sciences.

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More information about the Congress can be found at the web pages: www.eccb2009.org, about SCB at www.conbio.org and about the Faculty of Environmental studies of the CULS at www.fzp.czu.cz.