



# Urban Wildlife News

The Newsletter of the Urban Wildlife Working Group  
of The Wildlife Society

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Editors: Lowell Adams and Jennifer Cotting

## A Word from the Chair

*David Drake*

*Announcing*

### **Urban Wildlife Ecology and Management: An International Symposium on Urban Wildlife**

The Urban Wildlife Working Group newsletter is published 2 times every year – January and July. It seems like just yesterday that I wrote the Chair’s message for January. The reason I mention how fast it seems that time passes is because 1 (short) year from now the TWS Urban Wildlife Working Group will be helping to support and host an Urban Wildlife Conference June 21-24, 2009 on the University of Massachusetts campus in Amherst. The working title for the meeting is “**Urban Wildlife Ecology and Management: An International Symposium on Urban Wildlife.**” This symposium is intended to build upon previous urban wildlife gatherings dating back to the mid-1980s. As with those conferences, the target audience for the 2009 symposium includes wildlife biologists, city and urban planners, landscape architects, and other professionals. We’re also hoping to attract an international audience, which would provide a great opportunity to compare and contrast urban wildlife management and research in North America relative to other parts of the world.

The symposium co-chairs are Steve DeStefano of the USGS Fish and Wildlife Coop-

erative Research Unit at the University of Massachusetts and Rob Deblinger of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. Steve also chairs the local arrangements committee. Steve and Rob have done a tremendous job of early planning, including reserving a conference venue and hotel space, as well as exploring catering and field trip options. Seth Riley of the National Park Service is chairing and organizing the Program Committee. Lowell Adams at the University of Maryland has also been very instrumental in planning the conference, and has been involved since the first discussions took place regarding the working group hosting an urban wildlife symposium. The program is far from being set, but some tentative ideas for concurrent sessions include regional and local conservation planning, management of and on urban public lands, negative and positive social and economic impacts from wildlife in an urban setting, population dynamics and management of urban wildlife populations, and education of the public living in urban environments about urban wildlife and habitats. We are exploring field trip options, half-day and all-day workshops, and other educational, fun, interactive activities.

As a member of the Urban Wildlife Working Group, this is a great time to get involved in the affairs of the working group, and specifically, the upcoming urban wildlife conference. If you want to help shape or influence the flavor of the conference, now is the time to become active as few concrete plans have been made to date. Please con-

tact Steve ([sdestef@forwild.umass.edu](mailto:sdestef@forwild.umass.edu)) or Seth ([seth\\_riley@nps.gov](mailto:seth_riley@nps.gov)) to help with the local arrangements or program, respectively. Becoming active in the working group or conference planning can help you network, is inspirational to others that you're going beyond your normal duties and responsibilities, and offers a satisfying feeling that you're doing something productive and useful to make the world a better place. Please take time to get involved. Hope you all have an enjoyable summer, and hope to see you in 1 (short) year in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Sincerely,  
David

### **Urban Symposium in Miami**

The Urban Wildlife Working Group is sponsoring a half-day symposium at the 2008 TWS annual conference entitled "**Integrating Wildlife & Resource Conservation and Urban Planning.**" The symposium aims to highlight the diversity of opportunities where wildlife management principles and practices are being successfully integrated into urban development and land use planning. Some of these opportunities include urban open space conservation, green corridors, native planting programs, backyard conservation programs, environmentally-sensitive ordinances and regulations applicable to urban development, and green building programs. The symposium will offer various examples of where these techniques are being implemented. For example, Mr. Gregory Golgowski, the Conservation Director of Harmony Development Co., will discuss how wildlife conservation efforts have been integrated into the site design and ongoing management of the Harmony community in Florida. Other speakers will include biologists, planners, and LEED design experts who will provide

an opportunity for attendees to participate in an inter-disciplinary dialogue about the benefits, challenges, and future opportunities in this relatively young aspect of wildlife conservation. Look for further information in the conference program announcement that is forthcoming from TWS. We look forward to seeing you there.

--Lesley Kordella and Sherry Ruther

### **Urban Ecology Education in Philadelphia**

The Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education is developing a pilot module in the Philadelphia area for its new Master Naturalist training initiative. The Master Naturalist training program is a national initiative that aims to connect people with their local ecosystems through intensive natural science training and local conservation service work. Recognizing the need of many conservation organizations to utilize volunteers to achieve conservation goals, the Master Naturalist program is a venture directed toward providing training for local corps of "master volunteers and service providers" who offer education, outreach and service dedicated to the understanding and management of natural areas within their communities. Master Naturalist volunteers will bring training in local natural history knowledge, interpretation and education techniques, and the fundamental concepts of the scientific method to their conservation service work in public outreach and/or citizen science projects. The Institute hopes to build this program as a partnership initiative because it can benefit other conservation organizations that work on urban ecology issues and use volunteers to meet their conservation goals. The pilot module in the Philadelphia region will focus on the Northern Piedmont ecoregion and urban ecology issues. To learn more about

this program, visit the Institute's website ([www.piceweb.org](http://www.piceweb.org)).

### **Urban Wildlife Committee of the Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission**

In the Summer 2006 issue of *Urban Wildlife News* (Volume 5, Number 1) brief mention was made of the Urban Wildlife Committee established by the Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission. That committee has met regularly during the past 2 years and has been actively soliciting input from public sectors with regard to urban wildlife management. A mail questionnaire survey was sent to county and city departments of recreation and parks in the state inquiring about the kinds of people-wildlife issues the departments deal with, how they deal with the issues, and whether or not departments believe they are effective with their efforts. A similar survey was sent to animal control offices. Results of the two surveys have not yet been analyzed, but the hope is to obtain information that can lead to better management of wildlife in urban areas in the future. If anyone knows of similar committees elsewhere in the United States, please relay that information to Lowell Adams ([Ladams4@umd.edu](mailto:Ladams4@umd.edu)), chair of the Maryland Urban Wildlife Committee.

### **Urban Biodiversity and Design: Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity in Towns and Cities**

Summary of a conference held in Erfurt, Germany  
May 22-24, 2008

Last year I was invited to be a session chair and serve on the advisory board for the Urban Biodiversity and Design Conference. The conference was organized by Norbert Mueller (Erfurt University of Applied Sciences), David Knight (Natural England),

and Peter Werner (Competence Network Urban Ecology) and held in Erfurt, Germany in May 2008. The goal of the conference was to emphasize the importance of cities and towns in discussions about biodiversity and in the implementation of biodiversity policies. The conference was organized to precede the Convention on Biological Diversity that would be held in Bonn in late May.

The conference was organized into five topic areas: biodiversity of urban-industrial areas and its evaluation; cultural aspects and urban biodiversity; social aspects of urban biodiversity; urban biodiversity and climate change; and design and future of urban biodiversity. Each topic area consisted of two to five paper sessions and associated poster sessions. Approximately 250 papers and posters were presented. A list of papers and posters is available on the conference website ([http://www.urbio2008.com/content/topics\\_sessions.php](http://www.urbio2008.com/content/topics_sessions.php)).

The conference was diverse. Participants came from more than 40 countries and the papers and posters reflected the wide range of topics that make up urban biodiversity. Close to half the papers were presented by graduate students and university faculty. These papers reflected an interest in the ecological and social context in which plants and animals occur in cities. Although several were descriptive papers with a management or conservation focus, a number sought to address broader ecological questions about species in urban areas. There were several human dimensions papers that explored questions about property-owner decision making and conservation outcomes, factors influencing residents' engagement in biodiversity issues, and participatory approaches to conservation that incorporate environmental and social justice

issues. A series of presentations by students and faculty from North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa provides an example of some of the work done at universities. Researchers at North-West University are looking at how residential areas that are a legacy of apartheid influence the distribution of grasslands and bird communities. The researchers are using this information and input from residents of the residential areas to recommend management strategies that will retain biodiversity and provide opportunities for economic development.

Many presentations were from people working with NGOs and local governments. These projects were more applied and addressed questions that would be familiar to researchers and managers in the U.S. Bird Life International and other NGOs are involved with urban bird monitoring projects and using these to understand the importance of gardens to local and regional biodiversity. Several local governments, including Johannesburg, South Africa, and

Brussels, Belgium, are involved in detailed inventories of open space and assessing the importance of these areas to biodiversity.

The Urban Biodiversity and Design Conference illustrated the worldwide interest in conservation and management in cities. Members of the Urban Wildlife Working Group need to be aware that we are part of this international effort. The North American approach to urban wildlife management should be more visible to our international colleagues, so participating in and hosting conferences and workshops similar to Urban Biodiversity and Design are important. An exciting outcome of the conference that may interest members of the Urban Wildlife Working Group is the development of an Urban Nature Network for individuals and groups involved in urban biodiversity work. This may be an opportunity to link what we do with a world-wide effort.

--Charles Nilon  
University of Missouri

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