

BOOK REVIEWS



Proceedings of the International Conference on In-situ and Ex-situ Biodiversity Conservation in the New Millennium, 20-22 June 2000. Yaacob, Z., S. Moo-Tan & S. Yorath (eds.), 2001. Yayasan Sabah/Innoprise Corporation Sdn. Bhd. & Sabah Museum. ix + 447pp. ISBN 983-808-152-3.

This is a compilation of papers and abstracts of posters presented at the International Conference on *In-situ* and *Ex-situ* Biodiversity Conservation in the New Millennium that was held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, from 20th to 22nd June 2000.

The bulk of this publication consists of 31 papers and 19 abstracts of poster presentations covering a variety of biodiversity conservation and management topics. These range from broad-based strategic conservation issues to specific research projects, and are grouped into six sections. The first section, "Conservation of Biodiversity *In-situ* and *Ex-situ*", features two keynote papers, "Protected Areas In The New Millennium: Challenges And Opportunities" and "Development And Future Direction Of Biodiversity Collections In Southeast Asia". These set the stage for the rest of the proceedings by providing respective overviews of *in-situ* and *ex-situ* approaches to biodiversity conservation.

The remaining papers are organised into the five other sections, viz., "The Importance of Conservation Management of Protected Areas in the New Millennium"; "The Uses of Biodiversity Collections in Taxonomic, Ecological and Environmental Research"; "Managing Protected Areas: Priorities, National Planning and Networking"; "Research in Molecular Systematics of Biodiversity and Local Needs in Southeast Asia"; and "Conservation and Public Participation". Below are some examples of the included papers:

- "The Management Of Protected Areas In Sabah": A summary of the major protected areas in Sabah, the various agencies that manage them, and the legal framework and management approaches used as of the year 2000.
- "Botanical Collections In The Malesian Region – What Has Been Found, Where Is It And Where To Collect In The Future" and "The Role Of Sabah's Zoological Collections In The Conservation Of Protected Areas In Sabah": These papers explain the rationale behind making scientific collections and the value of specimens as permanent records in support of biodiversity conservation research. They also cite several floral and faunal examples in highlighting the paucity of collections in Southeast Asia, and the continuing need for scientific collections.
- "Molecular Collections For Basic Research: Museums, Methods And Morality": Among other things, this paper addresses the often contentious issue of collection, study and exchange of genetic material in *ex-situ* conservation research and management. It also clarifies the roles of museum-based molecular collections, and discusses practical issues involving methods and management of such collections.
- "Molecular Approaches In Local Biodiversity Studies" and "Small is Beautiful: DNA Evolution and Conservation of Minute Snails from SE Asian Limestone Hills": The first paper lists various molecular techniques used in biodiversity studies, and provides examples of studies in Malaysia where molecular approaches are being applied. The second paper is a good example of how molecular techniques can be employed to complement morphological studies in identifying populations or areas for *in-situ* conservation.

Contributors to these proceedings include researchers/representatives from international conservation organisations (e.g., IUCN-The World Conservation Union, World Wide Fund for Nature); government agencies

(e.g., Ministry of Tourism, Environment, Science and Technology, Sabah, Malaysia, and Sabah Forest Department); intergovernmental organisations (e.g., International Tropical Timber Organization); universities (e.g., Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and University of Aarhus, Denmark); and museums (e.g., Sabah Museum, and Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University, USA). Surprisingly, zoos, which often pride themselves on their involvement in ex-situ biodiversity conservation research, are noticeably absent from involvement in these proceedings or in the conference. Nevertheless, this volume still represents an amalgamation of input from several stakeholders, and thus reflects the multilateral approach that is necessary and is now being adopted in biodiversity conservation and management.

This is indeed a timely publication, as it provides a useful update or summary of the latest developments in techniques and approaches used for biodiversity research and management. It would therefore be an ideal reference tool for both the uninitiated as well as the seasoned biodiversity worker here in Southeast Asia.

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