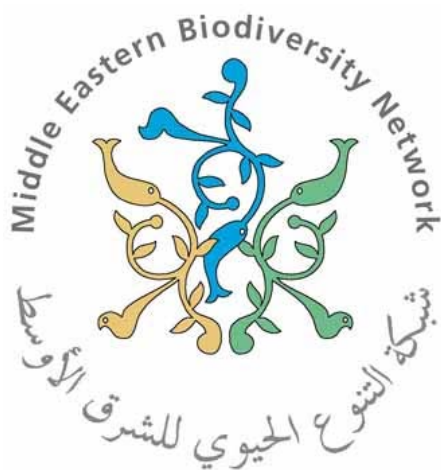


Proceedings of “First Middle Eastern Biodiversity Congress” published

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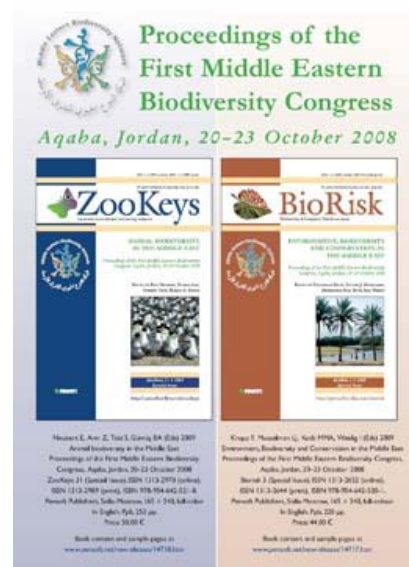
Middle Eastern Biodiversity Congress
 Aqaba – Jordan, 20-23 October 2008

The countries in the Middle East have ratified the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, with obligations to document and conserve the flora and fauna on their territories. In recent years, numerous projects focusing on sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity have been initiated. However, the scientific and academic baselines are often lacking. The “Middle Eastern Biodiversity Network” (MEBN), founded in 2006 by six universities and research institutes in Iran, Jordan, Germany, Lebanon and Yemen was designed to fill this gap. From 2006 to 2008, the Network was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The overall goal of the MEBN is to strengthen, within a multi-faceted network, the capacity of countries throughout the Middle East in documenting and analysing the Region’s biodiversity, promoting sustainable resource use, and conservation. Given the transboundary nature of biodiversity issues a regional approach is required. Consequently, networking was the preferred solution. A wide range of activities are carried out in the framework of

the Network, including regional capacity building in establishing professionally managed nature museums, developing university curricula in biodiversity, conducting scientific research, and organising workshops and conferences on Middle Eastern biodiversity. In the framework of the MEBN, the Senckenberg Research Institute and Museum of Nature, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and the Marine Science Station, Aqaba, Jordan jointly organised the “First Middle Eastern Biodiversity Congress”, which was held in Aqaba, Jordan from 20 to 23 October 2008 with more than 300 participants. In December 2009, the proceedings of the congress were published in special issues of two international, peer reviewed scientific journals.

1) Krupp, F, Musselman, LJ, Kotb, MMA, Weidig, I (Eds). 2009. Environment, Biodiversity and Conservation in the Middle East. Proceedings of the First Middle Eastern Biodiversity Congress, Aqaba, Jordan, 20–23 October 2008. Biorisk 3 (Special Issue). ISSN 1313-2652 (online), ISSN 1313-2644 (print). Pensoft Publishers, Sofia-Moscow, 165 × 240, full-colour. In English. Ppb, 226 pp. Price: 44.00 €

Contributions address a wide range of themes, including success and limits of re-colonisation of the Mediterranean with tropical marine species, biodiversity networks, ecological challenges of rapid urbanization in the United Arab Emirates, habitat mapping for protected area design, diversity of cyanobacteria in hot springs, variability and diversity of phytoplankton in the Gulf, diversity and distribution of lichens, a complex *ex situ* – *in situ* approach for conservation of endangered plants, and the Key Biodiversity Areas Programme implemented by Nature Iraq with various examples of phytoplankton, fish and bird studies.



2) Neubert E, Amr Z, Taiti S, Gümüş BA (Eds). 2009. Animal biodiversity in the Middle East. Proceedings of the First Middle Eastern Biodiversity Congress, Aqaba, Jordan, 20–23 October 2008. ZooKeys 31 (Special Issue). ISSN 1313-2970 (online), ISSN 1313-2989 (print), ISBN 978-954-642-521-8. Pensoft Publishers, Sofia-Moscow, 165 × 240, full-colour. In English. Ppb, 252 pp. Price: 50.00 €

This special issue of ZooKeys contains a collection of 15 papers addressing a variety of themes and taxa, including an introduction to the Middle Eastern Biodiversity Network, the diversity of macrozoobenthos in the Gulf, intertidal scale worms, terrestrial isopods, terrestrial mollusks of Turkey, the insect fauna of the United Arab Emirates, biodiversity and zoogeography of weevils, a new species of tooth-carp, mapping terrestrial reptile distribution, phylogeny and taxonomy of vipers, bird migrations, effects of farming on birds, and mammals in Turkey and Syria.

These special issues will be of value to anyone interested in biodiversity research and conservation, particularly to scholars of zoology, biogeography, and ecology, as well as decision makers in the Middle East. All papers are open access and can be downloaded free of charge at "www.pensoft.net".