



Biodiversity Monthly Newsletter

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Biodiversity



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1/31/2013

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Loss of Species Threatens Human Survival, Reports EU News Update

23 January 2013: The new “Science for Environment Policy-Thematic Issue on Biodiversity, Agriculture and Health,” published by the European Commission, features two alerts highlighting how species extinction threatens human well-being.

The Issue discusses the case of cone snails, which are marine mollusks that often inhabit coral reefs and mangroves and are threatened by the rapid degradation and loss of their habitats around the world, and by the impacts of climate change. In Southeast Asia, where more than half of cone snail species are found, around 90 percent of coral reefs are listed as threatened. The update highlights the links between cone snails and human health, noting that one of the toxins isolated from the venom of the cone snail *C. magus* has been synthetically produced as a drug called ziconotide, which serves as a strong pain-reliever. Another cone snail toxin is being investigated for its ability to prevent brain cell death due to head injuries or strokes.

The Issue also reports that, according to a recent study, undiscovered cancer treatments from marine organisms could be worth between US\$563 billion and US\$5.69 trillion, and that showing the economic and social value of marine ecosystem services could help with raising awareness and informing management and policy decisions.

CBD Calls for Submissions on Scientific and Technical Needs for Strategic Plan Implementation

21 January 2013: The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has issued a notification calling for information related to the scientific and technical needs for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

In accordance with decision XI/13 and in preparation for the seventeenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 17), parties and relevant organizations are further requested to submit information regarding: existing policy support tools and methodologies developed or used

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under the Convention and their adequacy, impact and obstacles to their uptake, as well as gaps and needs for further development of such tools and methodologies; the adequacy of observations and of data systems for monitoring the biodiversity attributes addressed in the Aichi targets; and options for assessing the effects of the types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. Information should be submitted before 15 March 2013. Source: **CBD**

Panama and Mauritius Ratify ABS Protocol

21 December 2012: Panama and Mauritius have become the 10th and 11th countries respectively to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Panama ratified the Protocol on 12 December and Mauritius on 17 December of 2012. Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, India, Jordan, Lao PDR, Mexico, Rwanda and the Seychelles have already ratified. The Nagoya Protocol will enter into force 90 days after the 50th ratification. Source: **CBD**

Report Highlights Impacts of Invasive Alien Species in Europe

20 December 2012: The European Environment Agency (EEA) has published a report on the impacts of invasive alien species (IAS) in Europe, aiming to raise awareness and inform all stakeholders, including the general public about the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of IAS.

Circulated as EEA Technical report no. 16/2012 and produced jointly with the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group, the report focuses on the multifaceted impact of IAS. It provides 28 dedicated species accounts to highlight the various effects of IAS, without neglecting the benefits of these species. Threats highlighted include competition, predation and transmission of diseases between alien and native species, the hybridization of alien and native species, and the impacts on ecosystem services, agriculture, human health and infrastructure. The report also provides scenarios where the increased and global movement of people and goods may

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significantly increase the number and impacts of harmful IAS in Europe. In addition, climate change may produce new opportunities for IAS to proliferate and spread.

The report suggests that the best way to deal with IAS is through a combination of preventive measures, early detection and rapid response to new incursions, with permanent management only as a last resort

UNESCO-IHP Book Addresses Water and Cultural Diversity

21 December 2012: The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP) has released a book linked to its Water and Cultural Diversity project, titled “Water, Cultural Diversity and Global Environmental Change: Emerging Trends, Sustainable Futures?” The book, published by Springer, aims to examine the inseparability of human culture and the environment, in particular the unifying role of water in that relationship by addressing the role of water in sustaining diverse human cultures, the role of diverse human cultures in valuing, managing and using water resources, and the consequences of management decisions in maintaining human communities and the ecosystems they inhabit.

In order to address these issues, the book includes essays divided into five parts. The first part on water and cultural diversity includes case studies on the “culture of water,” aiming to present the breadth of human cultural diversity regarding water. The second part examines the role of traditional livelihoods and knowledge in sustainably managing water resources and the impacts of water degradation on ways of life. The third part presents case studies on existing patterns of water resources management, ways in which water management has detrimentally impacted cultural diversity, and ways in which management has improved “biocultural viability.” The fourth part addresses emerging trends and future potentials, while the fifth part identifies future scenarios and calls for water management approaches that support cultural and biological diversity.