

NEWS

Abstracts of the 7th annual congress of the Gesellschaft für Biologische Systematik (GfBS, Society for Biological Systematics)

Günter Bechly*

Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Rosenstein 1, D-70191 Stuttgart, Germany

The Organisms Diversity and Evolution Electronic Supplement (<http://www.senckenberg.de/odes/04-06>) comprises the short communications of 54 oral presentations and 45 posters from the 7th annual congress of the GfBS (see <http://www.gfbs-home.de/>), held in Stuttgart, 14–17 September 2004. The congress with 137 participants was organised by the Natural History Museum (Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde) Stuttgart (SMNS), and opened by Minister Prof. Dr. Peter Frankenberg (Baden-Württemberg Minister for Science and Arts), Prof. Dr. Johann-Wolfgang Wägele (President of the GfBS), and Dr. Habil. Johanna Eder (Director of SMNS).

The main topics of the congress were (i) the calibration of molecular clocks (invited lecture by Prof. Dr. Susanne Renner: “Die Probleme und Möglichkeiten simultaner, multipler Eichungen von molekularen Uhren”), (ii) changes of biodiversity in time (invited lecture by Prof. Hans Kerp: “Der Rhynie Chert, eines der ältesten und meist vollständig erhaltenen Ökosysteme”), and (iii) the evolution of diversity of species in island—and refugial habitats (invited lecture by Dr. Helmut Schmalfuß & Dr. Thomas Raus: “Insuläre Biodiversität in der Ägäis”).

In addition, many oral and poster presentations on different topics of biosystematics were given, covering

taxonomic aspects of bioinformatics (GBIF), biogeography, palaeontology, morphology, biodiversity research and biodiversity collections, as well as the following major organismic groups: fungi, horsetails, ferns, various angiosperms, ‘protozoans’, and the metazoan groups Porifera, Nematoda, Mollusca, Annelida, Arthropoda, and Vertebrata.

Special meetings of museum curators and of the group of young systematists were held during the congress. A workshop was held on software for phylogenetic tree reconstructions (Dr. Heiko Schmidt, NIC, FZ Jülich) and the construction of SuperTrees from heterogeneous data sets (Dr. Olaf Bininda-Emonds, TU Munich). Guided tours in the SMNS (Museum am Löwentor and Schloss Rosenstein) and the Stuttgart Zoological and Botanical Garden Wilhelma were offered to the participants of the congress.

Prof. Friedrich Ehrendorfer (University Vienna) was appointed honorary member of the society and gave the public lecture “Hybridisierung erhöht die Artenvielfalt in der Evolution”. The society’s Bernhard Rensch Prize was awarded for the first time, and a prize for the best poster presentation was awarded as well.

The organisers of the congress wish to thank the staff of the SMNS and all other persons involved for their help during the congress.

E-mail address: bechly.smns@naturkundemuseum-bw.de
(G. Bechly).