



BBC-Bristol

Mainstreaming Biodiversity

A series of events aimed at

connecting biodiversity research at Bristol

Workshops, Discussion Group and Field Trips

New research areas in law, ethics, sociology, biology, chemistry and physics are opening up as society considers how to support a growing and increasingly consumptive human population in the face of mounting environmental stresses. All too often, biodiversity conservation is seen as an additional burden at the end of a long list of economic and social needs, when ironically biodiversity is the foundation of all economies, societies and life. Following on from Cabot's co-hosting of Radio 4's Shared Planet, the 'Mainstreaming Biodiversity' events will explore placing biodiversity at the forefront of our decision making and what relevant research avenues we at the University of Bristol can pursue.

'Mainstreaming Biodiversity' will include three workshops (see below) as well as a supporting discussion group and a local biodiversity themed walk. Each ½ day workshop will include an introductory talk, 2-3 shorter research talks and round table discussions on current research and new opportunities. The discussion group will broaden understanding of the workshop topics and further foster potential research collaborations. While the general aim of this series is to strengthen research links, a specific aim will be to develop a publication with vignettes from a broad array of disciplines about the necessity of mainstreaming biodiversity.

The workshops will be held in the autumn of 2014, leading up to the Bristol Green Capital events of 2015. Places at the workshops will be limited to 20 so please get in touch with the relevant workshop coordinator, listed below, if you would like to attend. The discussion group meets the second Tuesday of every month from 1-2 pm, see below.

Workshops

1. 'Defining Biodiversity' - October 7

What is biodiversity? The broadness of this topic, and the difficulty in defining consistent metrics for use in advocacy or regulation makes biodiversity protection difficult. This workshop will explore the interdisciplinary challenges of defining and prioritising "biodiversity", particularly in an ecosystem or functional context, by exploring scientific definitions of biodiversity and contextualising them within wider social, ethical and institutional environments. Coordinated by Jon Bridle (jon.bridle@bristol.ac.uk) and Margherita Pieraccini (m.pieraccini@bristol.ac.uk).

2. **'Food Security and Biodiversity' – October 21**

With a projected population of 9 billion people by 2050, how can we ensure food security, while maintaining the biodiversity on which such food production depends? This challenge is already critical, and will be exacerbated by anthropogenic climate change, altering both anthropogenic and natural ecosystems. This workshop will explore how these issues are being addressed at Bristol and explore key issues such as our dependence on fossil fuels for agriculture, rising meat consumption, and the sustainable harvesting of natural populations as well as managed agricultural systems. Coordinated by T Davies-Barnard (t.davies-barnard@bristol.ac.uk).

3. **'Geo-engineering Impacts on Biodiversity' - November 4**

With little evidence that society will reduce greenhouse gas emissions soon, 'geo-engineering' strategies for managing climate change are receiving increasing attention. The impacts of such mitigation strategies on the biosphere must be a fundamental consideration in any implementation. This workshop will highlight the array of geo-engineering research at Bristol and explore the key biodiversity-related questions we are well placed to answer. The discussion will be based around 2 geo-engineering issues: 1. The physical impacts of such measures on biodiversity and 2. Identifying and mapping the various ethical issues of geo-engineering research for local and global communities. Coordinated by Erica Hendy, (E.Hendy@bristol.ac.uk) and Pru Foster (pru.foster@bristol.ac.uk).

Discussion Group

The reading and discussion group will be held on the second Tuesday of every month from 1-2 pm in room G7 of the Wills Memorial Building. Contact: Pru Foster (pru.foster@bristol.ac.uk).

Field Trip

We will go for a local walk or two to explore and discuss some of Bristol's biodiversity including the endemic Bristol onion and the multiple species of *Sorbus* trees that are found only in the Avon Gorge.