



The community of community ecologists met in Budapest

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The 1st International Conference on Community Ecology took place in Budapest, 28-29 September, 2017. The number of participants was over 120, representing 30 countries. This meeting was supposed to launch a series of symposia and, very probably, the next event will be held in Bologna in 2019. Opening this conference series followed the establishment of the journal with a delay of 17 years. But it is timely as the Editorial Board is searching for fresh blood: we need to define again the focus of the journal, refine what we mean by community ecology and discuss whether and how to adapt to new trends. In the arena of thousands of journals and millions of publications, it is not easy to remain characteristic, profitable, fast, attractive, entertaining, reliable, accurate and helpful – all at the same time.

Molecular approaches and high throughput techniques, supported by computational biology and bioinformatics certainly revolutionize community ecology as well. Yet, we see the growing importance of taxonomy as well as classical mathematical and statistical approaches. Data and theory may come closer to each other and the holistic view on several components of ecosystems also seems to progress. The ques-

tion is what community ecology is and what kind of material should Community Ecology publish. A simple opinion is that community ecology is everything with $n > 3$ species. More complex views have been discussed and challenged over Editorial Board meetings and there is absolutely no compromise. This is healthy and inspiring from a scientific point of view but suboptimal from a PR point of view. And the journal must be advertised, well-read and well-cited – not to mention that it is also to be supplied by well-written manuscripts.

Three prizes were given to the best young scientists and one of the three winners decided to publish her paper in this conference issue (Pereira). The conference was quite successful thanks to many young colleagues, excellent keynote speakers, the emergence of new research ideas and the friendly atmosphere. This collection of papers is the memory for the future generations – it defines what was actually meant by community ecology in 2017, in Hotel Mercure Budapest Buda. This is not a complete account, however, since many contributions appear in our sister journals devoted to the same subject.



Group photo showing the participants in front of the conference venue.

In this issue, we start with the contribution of Sommer and colleagues, on the position and role of fish in the food chains of the marine food web. Following this general paper, a more focused article by Silva Garcia and colleagues presents the dietary and spatial overlap between mullet species. Closing this set of papers on trophic interactions, Gamez and colleagues present an interesting study on host-parasitoid-predator multi-trophic communities. In the next block, four papers deal with forest invertebrate communities, focusing on beetles and spiders in forest gaps (by Bali and colleagues), beetles living on tinder fungi (by Andrésí and Tuba), carabids in Scotch pine forests (by Kedzior and colleagues) and beetles and spiders in pine forests (by Kosewska and colleagues). Two papers are explicitly dedicated to spatial processes in ecological communities: Rico and colleagues provide a report on viral metacommunities and Pereira discusses some new technical details in the research on habitat connectivity.

In the nice overview of Feoli and colleagues, we can read about progress in statistical vegetation science. Finally, a short communication by Fort is focused on incomplete parameters in population dynamical modelling.

We hope that this small selection of papers gives a useful summary of the diversity of the field and also indicates the most popular research directions in our community. We are looking forward, with great interest, to seeing what will be similar and what will change in the next meeting planned in Bologna, Italy in 2019.

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