**Workshop - Progressing from taxonomic to conceptual and applied research in urban ecology**

Lunchtime event 12:30-14:00 Tuesday 18th June

Venue: Aula E, Belmeloro Complex

*Within the science of ecology, urban ecology is defined as the study of structure, dynamics, and processes in urban ecological systems. Urban ecology is the study of the relationships of human and nonhuman organisms in urban areas, the interactions of these organisms with the native and built physical environment, and the effects of these relationships on the fluxes of energy, materials, and information within individual urban systems and between urban and nonurban systems. Urban ecology applies the methods and concepts of the biological science of ecology to urban areas, but requires and integrates with the concerns, concepts, and approaches of social sciences to produce a hybrid discipline. Urban ecological systems include individual organisms, populations, communities, and landscapes, as well as buildings and infrastructure. Urban ecology further recognizes specific urban ecosystems as a part of the global biogeochemical, economic, and human demographic system*. (Pickett & Cadenasso 2012)

The study of the ecology of urban areas began mainly with studies of vegetation of urban habitats during the mid 20th century. Researchers soon began to study other taxa, such as invertebrates. The 1990s saw a number of large-scale projects aimed at investigating the ecological effects of urbanization. As is often the case, these projects tended to generate more questions than answers. One result of this research has been the publication of a copious amount of textbooks on urban ecology, which has now become firmly established as a scientific discipline. At the turn of the millennium, a number of prominent researchers were calling for efforts to develop a body of concepts and theory for urban ecology. Today, we would like to take up that challenge again. Our objective is to (1) reflect together on what has been already achieved in urban ecological research, and to (2) consider what conclusions can be provided for municipalities to help them conserve urban nature and biodiversity. We will also consider (3) how we can make more effective use of the considerable volume of data that has been generated by urban ecological research, from the earliest studies of the mid 20th century to recent work. Finally, we will consider (4) how data from urban ecological research can be used in conceptual and theoretical research.

We hope that the workshop will be attended by people from a diverse range of backgrounds, both scientists and practitioners, encompassing diverse research roles and interests and also municipal representatives familiar with the research requirements of cities.

The workshop will begin with a brief discussion about the context. We will then divide into a number of small groups to work separately on the topics outlined above. One possibility will be for these small groups to go and enjoy lunch together whilst discussing their topic. After the small group work, we will reconvene to discuss the findings of the small group work and discuss these within the whole group. We hope that one of the outcomes of this work will be small and diverse groups that will continue to collaborate on topics related to the themes of this workshop and that this might provide an impetus for future research projects and other scientific outputs.