



Preface and invitation for the 88th Annual Meeting of the German Society for Mammalian Biology 1st - 4th September 2014, Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany

We cordially invite all mammalogists to join the *88th Annual Meeting of the German Society for Mammalian Biology* hosted by the Department of Animal Ecology and Systematics (Mammalian Ecology Group) at the Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany. The meeting will take place between *1st and 4th September 2014* at the campus of natural science of the university in Giessen.

"The global challenge to conserve biodiversity is not only a task of policy. Policy needs support – especially from science" (Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel). Therefore, this year we will focus on the *Mammalian Ecology Research: Interrelations, Requirements & Habitats* to promote the protection of biodiversity. The program includes interesting scientific presentations and entertaining social events.

The first session focuses on *Mammalian Ecology in a Variable World*. Many habitats of mammals are subject to regular and/or unpredictable changes. Which challenges are linked with the conservation of large carnivores in our modern landscapes? How can small mammals deal with sudden changes in food availability? Can we really anticipate the influence of the rapid expansion of renewable energies on wildlife populations? These are just some of the questions we will be addressing in this session. After the talks we will take part in a *guided tour to the mammals of the Zoo Frankfurt*. The Zoo Frankfurt is the second oldest Zoo in Germany and exhibits about 4500 individuals of approximately 500 worldwide distributed species. The Zoo Frankfurt promotes the conservation of rare and threatened species by establishing demographically and genetically balanced populations of these species. *Small mammals or the Need for Speed* is the topic of the second session. A small body size has drastic effects on life history of mammals. What physiological challenges do migratory bats face? Wildlife disease in European small mammals – overacted or underestimated? Which behavioral strategies can ensure sympatry? The questions that arise from this topic are varied. Afterwards the *conference dinner* will take place at a castle that was built in 1350 on a rock at the edge of a park, close to the river Lahn. In the rustic atmosphere of the castle we will have a (k)nightly dinner. Additionally, the dinner will be accompanied by a jester creating a medieval atmosphere. According to the tradition of Annual Meetings of the German Society for Mammalian Biology the last conference day will include *free topics from all fields of mammalogy*. One important focus will be the ecological influence of environmental pollution on mammalian biology.

According to the slogan *Over Hill and Under Hill – Landscape Diversity of Middle Hesse* we will visit several stations representing the diverse landscape of Middle Hesse on a post-conference excursion on 5th September. The first stop will be in the canopy of a Middle Hessian forest. We will experience "over hill" in up to 15 m height on a guided tour over suspension bridges through the canopy. Afterwards, we will visit an observation deck which is installed at a fish-ladder that helps migrating fishes to negotiate a dam at the Lahn River. Last, but not least we will undergo a time journey to the Mesozoic at one of the last classical iron ore mines and get an impression of the fascinating world "under hill".

Registration is possible on the conference website www.uni-giessen.de/cms/DGS-2014 until 31st July 2014 at the very latest. The number of participants is limited due to capacity reasons. In case more registrations are received active participants will take precedence. Please note, that the "Landesgartenschau" takes place at the same time in Giessen. Therefore, accommodation should be reserved early on.

Please feel cordially invited to participate in the 88th Annual Meeting of the German Society for Mammalian Biology in Giessen (Germany). We are looking forward to lively discussions in a friendly atmosphere and a valuable exchange of information about the wide range of mammalian ecology. On behalf of the organizing committee.

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