

# Editorial: Invasive species know no borders – neither does research in biological invasions

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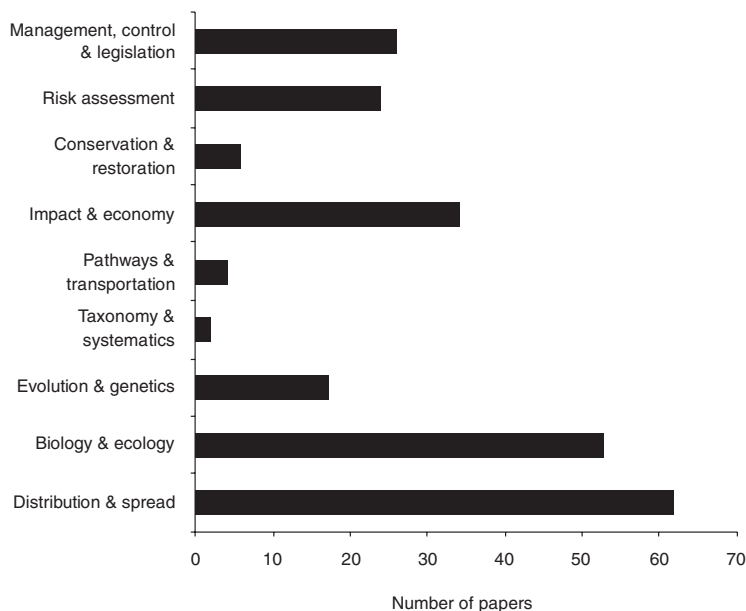
The 5th European conference on biological invasion “Neobiota” was held in Prague, Czech Republic, from 23 to 26 September 2008 ([www.ibot.cas.cz/neobiota](http://www.ibot.cas.cz/neobiota)). This series of conferences, organized biannually, results from activities of the Neobiota group, which is a European initiative, but its geographical focus has been gradually extending from initially including only Germany to Central Europe to the whole of the continent (Kowarik 2009). The Prague conference went even further, illustrating that research in biological invasions has no administrative borders, as invasive species have none. The conference brought together 280 participants from 40 countries. For the first time all continents were represented, with 38 participants from outside Europe. Forty-seven talks and 183 posters were presented. Such an attendance is a large enough sample of researches to illustrate what are the most intensively studied topics of invasion ecology in Europe, but to some extent also globally.

Among the papers presented (Fig. 1; see Pyšek & Pergl 2008 for an overview of abstracts), the majority addressed distribution and spread, including databases, mapping, use of GIS and modelling (27%), and various aspects of the biology and ecology of invasive species (23%). Seventeen papers (7%) dealt with genetics and evolution of invasive species, and 90 papers addressed, in one way or another,

practical issues of environmental and economic impact (15%), conservation and restoration (3%), risk assessment (11%) and management, control and legislation (11%). That 40% of presented papers dealt with some practical aspects of biological invasions indicates that the basic science is increasingly contributing to solving problems associated with biological invasions in Europe (Hulme et al. 2009).

As indicated by the overarching theme of the conference “Towards a synthesis”, the focus was on the extent, to which are we able to achieve a synthesis of current knowledge on biological invasions, across taxonomic groups and environments, and also across a range of approaches, from molecular tools to macroecology. Papers included in this volume are only a sample of papers presented at the conference (see Pyšek & Pergl 2008), yet the broad sections of this volume indicate that policy issues associated with invasive species (Section I) need to build on a good science (Section II), which is appropriately translated into management (Section IV) and would not be possible if not based on primary data monitoring the occurrence of individual species (Section III).

At the conference, there was a student competition for best posters, sponsored by CABI Publishing and Springer. The following students received prizes: Deborah Scharfy (How different are native and inva-



**Fig. 1:** Frequency of topics addressed by papers presented at the 5th Neobiota conference in Prague, 2008.

sive plant species in their impact on ecosystem processes in Switzerland?), Taiadjana Fortuna (Effects of native and invasive plants on the development of a specialist herbivore and its gregarious parasitoids) and Paola Ugoletti (A comparison among five *Impatiens* species with different invasive capacity).

Special thanks go to the invited speakers (Tim Blackburn, Steven Chown, Piero Genovesi, Marcel Rejmánek, Tom Stohlgren), the local organizers (Vojtěch Jarošík, Lenka Moravcová, Adam Petrušek, Irena Perglová, Hana Skálová and Josef Soukup), and the logistics crew (Martin Hejda, Jana Moravcová, Jana Müllerová, Michal Pyšek, Barbora Pyšková, Klára Pyšková and Zuzana Sixtová). The organizing institutions (Institute of Botany, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Průhonice; Faculty of Science, Charles University Prague and Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague) are acknowledged for logistical support. Financial support from The Ministry of the Environment of

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