

Nov. 17, 04
Asian Ecology Section

In the 2003-2004, the AES focused on the issue of biological invasions, and played a critical role in co-organizing two important international symposiums on biological invasions. Our objective was to provide productive forums for discussing research, management, and policy about bioinvasions between eastern Asia and North America. The two symposiums held in China and US offered great opportunity to bring Asian and American scientists and managers together to address the topic of common interests.

The first symposium, entitled "Beijing International Symposium on Biological Invasions: Species Exchanges Between Eastern Asia and North America: Threats to Environment and Economy" (BISOBI), was held in Beijing on June 6-8 of 2004. The BISOBI symposium had 107 participants, of which 62 were from within China and 45 from overseas countries such as Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The symposium had 48 oral presentations (including the keynote speeches by Dr. Harold Mooney of Stanford University and Dr. Richard Mack of Washington State University) and 37 poster presentations.

The second symposium, entitled "Biological Invasions: Species Exchanges between Eastern Asia and North America," was held during the ESA Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon, on August 2 of 2004. As a regular half-day ESA symposium, it was composed of eight talks, including three by Chinese ecologists, Dr. Ming Dong from Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Dr. Shuqing An from Nanjing University, and Dr. Bo Li from Fudan University.

These symposia increased research activities and collaborations, and influence policy making on the subject of biological invasions in Asian countries, which constitute a critical link in the fight against biological invasions caused by the trans-pacific exchanges of alien plants and animals across the Pacific Ocean. We are pleased to see that these two events have received significant attentions in the scientific community, as both symposiums were reported in a Science article, "Expanding trade with China creates ecological backlash" (Science 306:968-969, Nov.5, 2004; see attachment). In addition, with the support of the Journal of Biological Invasions, AES is working on a special issue for both symposiums, which will be published in August 2005.

Respectively submitted by

ShiLi Miao, the current Chair
Harbin Li, the past Chair

AES played a critical role in co-organizing two important international symposiums on biological invasions on the subject.

The issue of biological invasions by non-indigenous plants and animals is of great ecological importance because such invasions may become major global threats that alter landscapes, reduce biodiversity, and endanger national economies. Eastern Asia and North America share a wide range of similar environments and related biota, which may result in each region being more susceptible to the immigrant species from the other region than from many other parts of the world. Exchanges of alien plants and animals across the Pacific Ocean are increasing markedly as commerce between these two distant

regions has soared in the past few decades. As a result of this commerce, an unknown number of accidental and deliberate immigrant species have and will arrive in both regions; some of these alien species will form invasions. Thus, there is an urgent need to promote effective international communication, collaboration, and cooperation between ecologists, policy-makers, and quarantine officers in both Eastern Asia and North America, so that the experience, research results, and resources of investigators may be shared for combating these common environmental and economic threats.