Seminar: Dan Faith - Australian Museum, 11am

Presenter:
Dan Faith, Australian Museum

Time of Event:
Thursday, November 10, 2016 - 11:00

Location:
National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC)
1 Park Place, Suite 300
Annapolis, MD 21401

Title: Biodiversity and its Histories: On the Option Value of Biodiversity

Abstract:
The history of the term “biodiversity” (since 1985) hardly does justice to the earlier discussions of “biotic diversity” that refer to living variation and its values. The pre-history of biodiversity (the history of the term before it was invented) documents strong links to option value: valuing the benefit of living variation in providing unanticipated benefits for future generations. This anthropocentric value is perhaps more compelling than the conventional attribution of intrinsic value, which typically refers to individual elements, not variety itself. The ecosystem services movement has promoted a false history in claiming that “biodiversity” was all about intrinsic value until ecosystem services ideas provided a first link from biodiversity to human well-being. “Biodiversity” sometimes has been equated with whatever aspects of ecology support ecosystems services; biodiversity policy assessments sometimes have focussed only on local ecosystems. A useful general framework for biodiversity reinforces “biodiversity” as all about variety – the counting up of units of some kind (species, traits). Not all units are known, and so must be in inferred using some process model applied to observed objects/elements. Phylogenetic diversity (PD) exemplifies the general framework, with species as elements, evolution as the process, and features as the units. PD interprets the tree of life as a storehouse of possible future benefits. Challenges remain: the conceptual framework of the Intergovernmental Science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services recognises option value of biodiversity, but links PD only to intrinsic value. A useful socio-environmental indicator for IPBES would be one that 1) recognises the relational values supporting conservation of biodiversity option value, and 2) reports on how well this is balanced with other needs of society, including ecosystem services. Reference: Faith DP (2016) A general model for biodiversity and its value. Routledge Handbook on the Philosophy of Biodiversity.

Seminar presented by Dan Faith, Senior Principal Research Scientist at the Australian Museum. Homepage: "Biodiversity and Systematics" http://australianmuseum.net.au/staff/dan-faith [1]

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Seminar

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