

International GEO Day of Biodiversity to be held in 35 countries in 2010

Hamburg, 11 January 2010 – At a ceremony in Berlin, German chancellor Angela Merkel and Federal Environment Minister Norbert Röttgen on Monday rang in the “International Jahr of Biodiversity.” Proclaimed by the United Nations, the year will be marked by a wide variety of activities in numerous countries, organized to build people’s awareness of how valuable it is to have a high diversity of plants and animals, ecosystems and genetic variety.

The German government’s partners in this effort are GEO and GEO International with a particularly wide-ranging promotion: In 2010, “GEO Day of Biodiversity” will for the first time take place in some 35 countries simultaneously.

The international edition of GEO in 16 of these countries, and their editorial departments will be inviting scientists and the interested public to select places– such as a city part in Helsinki (GEO Finland), the site of a coastal conservation project on the Adriatic (GEO Croatia), and a national park in the La Mancha region of Castile (GEO Spain). Everywhere, participants are being requested to draw up an inventory of the types of plants and animals they find locally.

“We are not looking to set any records,” explains Martin Meister, editor-in-chief of GEO International (Hamburg). “We want to show that there is much more diversity in nature than most of us imagine – but perhaps not for much longer. Anyone who recognises this wealth of biodiversity can see first-hand why it is so worth protecting.”

The main event of this year’s GEO Day of Biodiversity in Germany will take place on June 12 in Freiburg, in cooperation with Region Freiburg and the Netzwerk Artenvielfalt (Biodiversity Network). In Germany, GEO Day of Biodiversity has for years been the largest field research campaign. During the GEO Day activities, species long since believed lost are frequently rediscovered; they are therefore an important contribution to efforts to document and conserve our flora and fauna.

GEO’s editor-in-chief Peter-Matthias Gaede said: “Our goal of organizing the GEO Day of Biodiversity, which is now in its twelfth year, is to take stock of our immediate environment. We want to promote recognition of the importance of biodiversity and build awareness about interconnections in nature.”

The participating GEO International countries in Europe are: Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, the Czech Republic, Turkey and Hungary. Participating countries outside Europe: Brazil, India and Russia. The GEO Days hosted in these countries are backed by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is sponsoring promotions in around 15 developing countries.

Maike Pelikan
GEO Marktkommunikation
Telefon +49 (0) 40 / 37 03 - 21 57
Telefax +49 (0) 40 / 37 03 - 56 83
E-Mail pelikan.maike@geo.de
Internet www.geo.de