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ISBN 978-3-7667-2366-7



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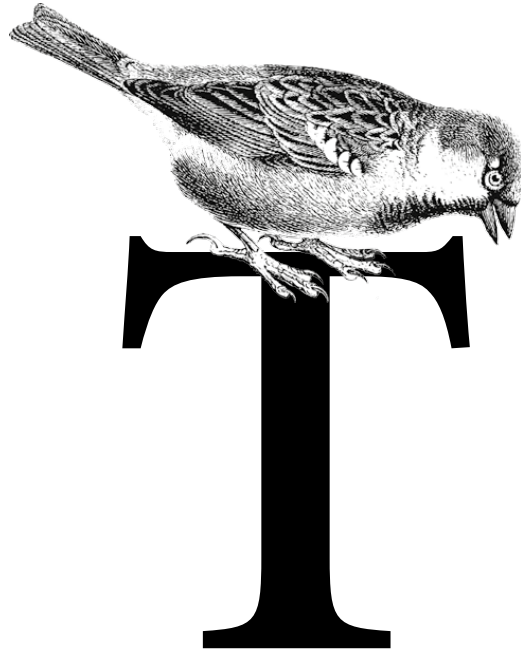
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aming the Shrew

In Germany, urban nature conservation mainly focuses on protecting habitats for plants and animals. Animal Aided Design takes this traditional approach to the next level: It provides designers with tools that allow them to put the beast into the middle of the planning process. By that, animals – which are often difficult to integrate in landscape architectural projects – become true stakeholders in the urban realm.

THOMAS E. HAUCK, WOLFGANG W. WEISSER

Urban ecological research has shown that the built structures of cities, usually thought of as being distant from nature, offer numerous habitats for animals across a range of urban structure types. Inner courtyards typical of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the shared green spaces in residential estates of the 1950s to 1970s, gardens, schoolyards, and sports complexes as well as other green spaces, all of these offer room for urban biodiversity. However, this huge potential space for biodiversity is only rarely used specifically for furthering urban biodiversity. Instead, cities tend to eliminate many of the niches that animals inhabit in the urban realm, be it through densification, i.e. the commercial or residential development of previously unbuilt areas; by maximizing the energy-efficiency of buildings, resulting in reduced breeding or hibernating opportunities for animals such as birds or bats; or by using public spaces more intensively. As a consequence, urban biodiversity is shrinking, shown by the decrease in population densities of synanthropic birds (birds living in close association with humans) in Germany or of the house sparrow in Great Britain.

In Germany, urban nature conservation is primarily geared towards protecting and interlinking existing habitats for plants and animals. The planning concept behind this approach views the urban realm as a fabric in which green spaces, so-called patches that constitute the habitats of various species, are embedded in a matrix consisting of the rest of the city. This matrix is considered to be hostile to animals. Typically, patches are remaining natural habitats, water bodies, riparian areas, but also parks, or the trackbeds of abandoned railway lines. The intention of most conservation planning is to interlink

these patches, creating a network by implementing additional patches or some 'corridors'. However, given the continued decrease of animals in cities, the focus on patches seems to be insufficient. Instead, maintaining and increasing urban biodiversity requires measures that move beyond care and protection of existing patches. It appears necessary to turn towards the urban matrix itself and combine the construction of urban environments for humans with the creation and development of suitable environments for plants and animals. Such an approach requires that the dogma of the city-nature dichotomy be overcome, in which cities are viewed as a human realm to be protected from nature and opposed to a natural realm that does not include humans. Overcoming the dogma allows us to take a planning perspective that perceives the built structure of the city as constructed urban nature and consequently views any proposal to alter and design it as a true planning issue. In terms of methods to be applied, it seems reasonable to tap into the tradition of proactive urban nature conservation. This tried and tested practice comprises the sowing and planting of care-intensive and aesthetically pleasing types of vegetation, the construction of nesting and breeding sites, and the settlement, or conservation, of urban-friendly animal and plant species through targeted feeding. Such bottom-up conservation measures are usually carried out by conservation associations and supported by citizens who are not professional biologists. However, due to the fact that this is a decentralized and often spontaneous form of activity, bottom-up nature conservation is hardly able to make a systematic and plannable contribution to settling and maintaining stable species populations. Furthermore, singular measures, such as the installation of nest boxes or

"bee hotels", are often insufficient because they only partially fulfil the needs of the targeted species; nest boxes, for example, only fulfil the requirement of a nesting place. Other essential needs such as food supply or cover from predators go unnoticed and are left to chance.

Using the method of Animal-Aided Design (AAD), we have attempted to endow the proactive bottom-up approach in urban species conservation with a systematic city planning strategy. Above all, AAD aims to synchronize the planning for animals with the planning processes known from urban and landscape planning, and from architecture and landscape architecture. AAD provides an interface between the biologists or conservationists who aim at conserving species, and the experts who design the urban space, i.e. architects, landscape architects, urban planners, civil engineers, or traffic planners. The goal of the cooperative planning process is to explicitly plan the settlement of animals in both urban open spaces and built-up areas, and to integrate this into the overall design.

The question of which animals should live in a particular area provides the starting point of the planning process. In other words, species selection, like other programmatic planning decisions, takes place at the beginning of the design planning phase. The selection principles are to involve the different parties in the selection process and thereby guarantee that participation takes place before any decision has been made or the building work is completed. Once target species have been selected, the needs of the particular animals can be included in the design. The toolbox of landscape architecture and urban development disposes of sufficient instruments at the appropriate levels of scale to be able to develop a catalogue of measures that

cater to the needs of the selected species. Conversely, AAD can inspire the design itself. Various design proposals that were developed through AAD show that it is worth the effort to treat the special needs of animals, i.e. their habitat requirements – nesting place, food, mating places –, as an additional starting point for the design process.

In Munich's Brantstrasse, for example, the municipal housing developer GEWOFAG is currently realizing the first residential housing project that uses AAD, in cooperation with the AAD research group and the State Association for Bird Conservation (LBV). The research project for integrating AAD into the housing development has been financed by a three-year research grant from the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection. The research group is part of the Centre for Urban Nature and Climate Adaptation at the Technical University of Munich. The project consists of two residential buildings comprising 99 flats and two day-care centres for children. The buildings are being erected in an open space between existing blocks of flats from the 1950s. Under standard planning procedures, the animals that used to live in the green space that is now being covered with buildings (hedgehogs, sparrows, etc.) would have lost their habitat. The purpose of using AAD is to ensure that the newly built structures as well as the remaining open spaces continue to fulfil the critical needs of the existing species. In addition, AAD allows to create new habitats for other species from adjacent areas. Based on mappings conducted in 2015 and consultations held with GEWOFAG and LBV Munich, the following species were selected to be targeted by the AAD measures: European green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), common pip-

istrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and the European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). The team created species profiles and identified critical habitat factors for the selected species; it also researched biologically relevant characteristics of these species in cooperation with other experts, in order to feed this information into the species profiles. These profiles served as the basis for integrating the critical needs of the species into the design and detail planning of the buildings and open spaces. This took place in close cooperation with the client, the architects bogevischs buero, and the landscape architects michellerundschalk. The planning of the above-ground construction and open spaces accommodates the following elements: "barrier-free access" as well as breeding, day and winter habitats for the European hedgehog; breeding burrows and habitats for selected bird and bat species in the facades of the buildings; vertical deadwood structures for the European green woodpecker; and a planting scheme that fulfils the habitat functions (especially food) of the selected species. The resident species were protected during the construction phase; this was accomplished with the help of members of LBV, who provided interim habitats for birds, collected the hedgehogs and helped them to hibernate. As the construction in Brantstrasse is being realized, the status of the species that existed in the planning and adjacent areas prior to construction is inspected and mapped in regular intervals. Whether these measures will achieve the desired success for the target species will be determined by an evaluation after completion of the project.

A given species will only be able to live at a particular planning site if the animal's critical needs are met. The designers and planners thus need to be competently informed about the critical needs of the animal in the different phases of

its life cycle in order to factor this knowledge into the planning. AAD conveys the species' needs by means of a species profile containing a life cycle diagram that describes the critical location factors pertinent to each phase. The critical needs include various requirements, such as food supply for both juvenile or adult animals, specifications for nesting or wintering sites, or protection against predators. To assist the planning, the species profiles also include information on plant species that can be used to provide sufficient food or shelter for the animals. The information provided in the profiles allows planners to design the environment of a planning area in ways appropriate for the species.

Even so, the list of critical location factors is nothing more than a form of assistance for the design task. The actual creative challenge consists in devising appealing and innovative design solutions for the entirety of the critical location factors as part of the overall design proposal. Once the design process has been completed, the planners should be in the position to mark the places in the preliminary plan where the particular critical needs of the species are met; the plan thus makes the entire life cycle visible.

Contrary to concepts that view nature as by definition "unblemished" by any design activities, AAD is based on the idea of designing a new image of nature or, respectively, "reconstructing" an image of nature that already exists and conveying it to an observer or user for the purpose of aesthetic experience. AAD integrates living beings, here animals, in a design context, similar to how plants have been integrated in garden design and landscape architecture for a very long time. In setting up guidelines for the individual species and creating the actual designs, the various participants of the plan-

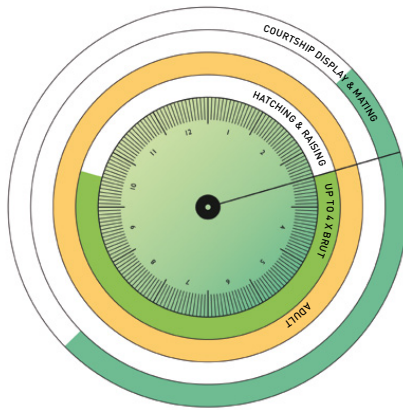
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ning process are the ones who make the crucial decisions. Yet, like any technology, AAD is not neutral in its ideas and design principles, but instead based on certain basic premises. These are 1. the premise that nature is fundamentally something that can be made, 2. the premise that the evolution of nature is open-ended, and 3. the idea that nature can be experienced aesthetically through games and experiments. These ideas can be summarized under the concept of individualistic nature conservation, based on a similar approach in ecological theory. AAD, therefore, is not primarily a method to protect already existing parts of nature or a form of conservation of natural monuments. Rather, it is a method for initiating open-ended settlement processes of animals that have moved into the urban realm. Since the repercussions and effects of these settlement processes cannot be completely controlled, AAD initiates real-life experiments in order to test and explore the possibilities of settling animals under different urban conditions, the evolution of the populations of these animals, and the possibilities, conflicts, and limits of “cohabitation” of humans and wild animals in the city. How well the target species accept the designed elements will only become apparent after these have been realized. For AAD to hold its place in the daily practice of design and planning two things are needed: firstly, research that determines the critical habitat factors through specific experiments, and secondly courageous municipalities and real estate owners who are willing to try out AAD projects and maintain them in the long term so that it becomes possible to determine how functional the measures are and to verify their effectiveness through monitoring.

Design by Rupert Schelle, Georg Hausladen and Sophie Jahnke

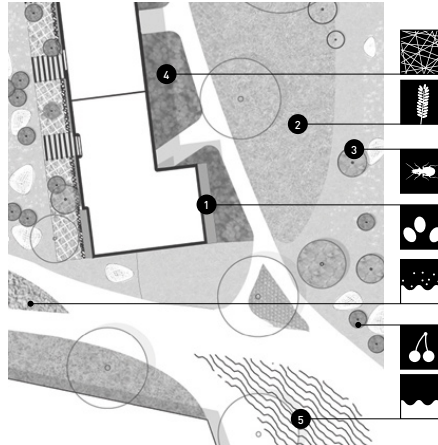
House sparrow *Passer domesticus*



Life-cycle and detailed AAD planning for house sparrow: The different pictograms show where in the urban green space particular critical needs of the species are met. For the house sparrow, all of these needs are fulfilled within 50 metres of the nest boxes.

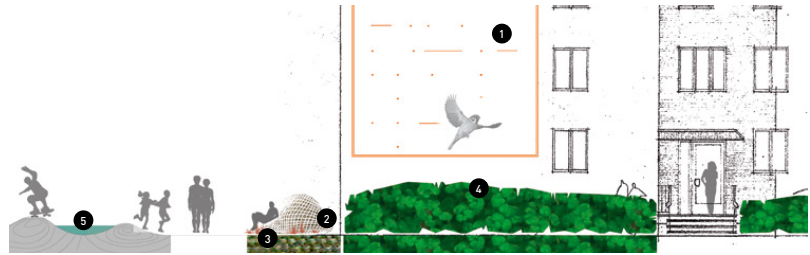
SPECIES-SPECIFIC DESIGN COMPONENTS HOUSE SPARROW

The house sparrow lives in colonies and often breeds indoors. Nesting opportunities are provided in the eastern fronts of the building. As the species has a very small home range, all critical needs such as seeds and insects for food, shrubs for shelter, a water bath, a dust bath and nest boxes are provided within a circle of 50 metres.



- CRITICAL NEEDS**
-  Protective sleeping and resting places in thorny hedges with dense branches at the east facades of buildings (hawthorn, privet, European hornbeam)
 -  Ears of grasses and other seeds of the species-rich fertile meadows and dry-grass expanses in the extended courtyard areas
 -  Arthropods and their larvae on open ground and plants; in particular in areas with sun-exposed dry grass and areas devoid of vegetation; especially important for supplying the fledglings with food
 -  Nesting place in the east façade, integrated in the insulation layer in the shape of a nesting brick, height 3–10 mm, openings 35 mm and 45 mm, distance from adjacent nests 50 cm minimum
 -  Dust bath for parasite control in vegetation-free sand and dust areas, in the sandy play area and the boules court
 -  Fruit of specimen plants for food supply in autumn and winter; species: hawthorn, serviceberry, cornel cherry, crab apple, wild roses
 -  Water bath in puddles artificially created in depressions in the asphalt hill

Detail of layout drawing



Detail of “facade animalisation” (facade greening)



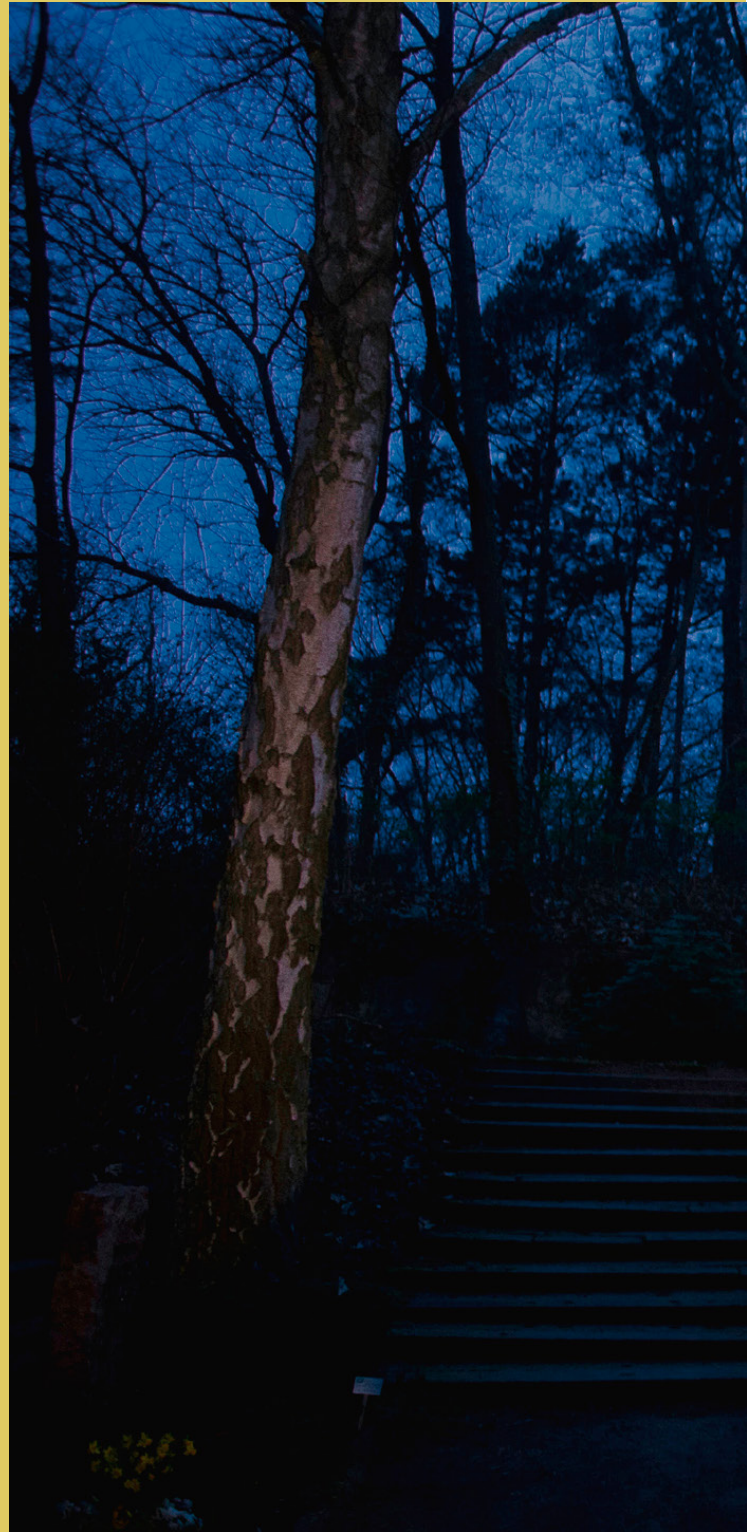
Berlin's Daktari

Wild boar, beaver, peregrine falcon? Berlin has them all! Germany's Capital city is a paradise for wild animals. Yet the city also needs to learn how to share its urban space with wildlife or integrate it into urban planning measures. This is the cause Dirk Ehlert fights for. For his efforts, he was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in September 2017. *Topos* author Susanne Isabel Yacoub spoke with Berlin's former wild animal consultant.

SUSANNE ISABEL YACOUB

topos: Derk Ehlert, you worked for the Berlin Senate Administration for many years as wild animal consultant – in the very centre of the city. In the meantime, you have taken a new position as press secretary and become known as an advocate for animals. How did you arrive at this unusual job?

EHLERT: About 20 years ago people in Berlin began to experience wild animals in ways different from what they had been used to, that is seeing them only in the forest. Instead, the animals were appearing in built-up urban areas. Wild boars were digging up front yards, foxes were crossing inner-city streets. And worried citizens called the Senate Administration in growing numbers. We were forced to react to that. As the city's wild animal consultant, I was able to hire a number of volunteer wildlife rangers who would capture the animals or, for example, assist the police in dealing with injured martens.





Taking action: Derk Ehler fights the stereotypes and prejudice with which many Berliners react when seeing or hearing about wild animals.



topos: How do you defend your clients?

EHLERT: Our main task was, and still is today, to explain to the people of Berlin why animals such as foxes, raccoons, etc. even appear in the city and how they live. We actively engage with the public and try to make people understand and accept that humans are not the only living creatures in the city.

topos: Do the Berliners take a critical stance towards wild animals?

EHLERT: Actually no. Basically they are very open to them. Because of the Berlin Wall they are used to living on a kind of island and having to get along with animals in the city.

topos: So when wild animals became more noticeable in the city, there was a surge of phone calls?

EHLERT: It is important to take citizens seriously. Many felt insecure because they didn't know anything about how wild animals live. Or they were frustrated because there was no one to help them and give advice.

topos: Do more wild animals live in Berlin than in other cities?

EHLERT: Yes, because Berlin is a very green city: 40 per cent of the city's surface area are green and agrarian spaces, wasteland or water surfaces, and allotment gardens. In addition, there are 19,000 hectares of forest land. Certain species were able to develop better here than in other places, not least because hunting rights were restricted exclusively to the Allies and little hunting took place on city grounds.

topos: There is a lot construction taking place in Berlin, the city is being massively densified, wastelands disappear. Are you worried for your protégés?

EHLERT: Any surface area lost to construction causes concern regarding places of refuge for wild animals. But many of today's redevelopment areas are the living spaces of tomorrow and as of yet there still is a reserve of spaces. In the inner city, however, we are slowly running out of refuge spaces as even the smallest vacant lots are being built up. This is where animals

really have to prove themselves as genuine generalists. Otherwise they really could not live in certain areas.

topos: You have invented a beautiful term for the animals who live with us...

EHLERT: Yes, I introduced the term the "Big Five" for the mammals whom we encounter most frequently in Berlin, based on the number of citizen calls: wild boar, marten, fox, rabbit, raccoon. If one considers the particular species that live in our urban area, this group could easily be extended to the "Big Ten", also comprising the beaver, striped field mouse, hawk, sea-eagle and peregrine falcon.

topos: The sea-eagle? How did this bird come to Berlin?

EHLERT: Well, Berlin is situated in the centre of Brandenburg and the prohibition of the insecticide DDT led to a recovery of this endangered species. We are very proud of our two breeding pairs, who for about ten years have profited from ideal living conditions. In winter for example, they live off deer, wild boars and other animals that are failing to survive.

topos: What is your mission? The protection of the animals or the protection of the people of the city?

EHLERT: It is the public relations work, listening to people's concerns and getting them interested in our work. I would like to prepare people for the changes the animals bring about. The images of wild animals we have in our minds, where and how they live, are no longer accurate. Perhaps they never were accurate. The idea that a roe lives in the forest is our view. In reality, the roe inhabits fields and meadows – it is we who have turned it into a forest animal.

topos: So, your strategy is that city dwellers have to tolerate wild animals? Do we really want to keep all wild animals that migrate into the city?

EHLERT: Whether this really applies to all animals remains to be seen. What matters to me is the living together. We need to show understanding for animals, not least because hunting does not bring about a reduction of wild animals.

VITA

DERK EHLERT studied landscape planning at the Berlin *Technical University of Applied Sciences*. In 1999 he was employed by the Berlin *Senate Administration for Urban Development*. He was hunting consultant of the state of Berlin from 2001 to 2007, and wild animal consultant from 2007 to 2014. Since 2014 Ehlert has been the wild animal expert of the City's press office. He has also worked as a freelance instructor for more than 30 years.

topos: Some immigration stories are true success stories in terms of species protection. The beaver is a case in point.

EHLERT: Indeed, as recently as 25 years ago we could only dream of a species that had become extinct in our region, a wild animal like the beaver, re-establishing itself. When the beaver reappeared in Berlin, this was kept secret at the time. Gradually, the beaver reconquered the city and soon made an appearance in every part of Berlin. Where there are neither dikes nor flood protection areas, the beaver cannot wreak much havoc. But if the animal intrudes upon historic park facilities and private waterfront properties, one has to cooperate to find solutions for protecting special trees or replacing a young tree here and there.

topos: In your work, you rely on a high media presence. You have camera teams accompany you. What are you aiming at when you do that?

EHLERT: In certain situations, I purposely take media partners with me in order to demonstrate situations, solutions and correct behaviour in front of a running camera. And it's important for me to involve the next generation of city dwellers, the children. There is no use in sugarcoating the world, but what we can do is relieve people of their fears. Children's books used to teach us that foxes who don't shy away from humans are rabid. We need to change our thinking and understand that this is not the case. In fact, wild animals have learned that they survive more easily if they go near humans because humans feed them.

topos: In Europe, the species we come across tend to be comparatively friendly like the beaver or the fox. Do animals in India or Africa cause more serious confrontations?

EHLERT: All wild animals are potentially dangerous. Even ant bites can be lethal to humans. There is still a lot of educational work that needs to be done and we realize that society is not ready yet. Europe and Africa are different continents and their approaches to these questions are worlds apart. What I can say is this: outside Europe people react with less panic to the appearance of wild animals, people are more relaxed about it. Despite the fact that warthogs are really aggressive and there is little one can do against monkeys.

topos: Are all wild animals in Berlin equally welcome, or do we have to set priorities?

EHLERT: An interesting question. The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation has published a species list for such purposes. Whether that is meaningful and sustainable and will be successful is another story. Invasive species may become a danger to native ones or even displace them. Look at the raccoon for example. Thousands of raccoons are hunted across Germany every year and yet the population is growing.

topos: Other European cities, Paris, London or Zurich, for example, struggle with similar problems. Do these cities have their own experts with whom you exchange ideas?

EHLERT: In the German-speaking countries there are exchanges between Vienna, Berne and Zurich. The Zurich wildlife guard is well-staffed and has been doing very professional work for years. Contacts with London and Paris tend to be incidental, for example when individual people turn to us with their questions. Internationally, we are currently seeing the emergence of a cooperation on the question of how animals can be better integrated into urban architecture. Animal Aided Design is one of several joint projects, co-directed by TU Kassel, TU Munich and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation.

topos: Animal Aided Design. What are your expectations towards such an approach?

EHLERT: Our goal is to achieve a higher degree of integration of wild animals into urban development planning. Structures made of steel do not offer much in terms of living space for animals and glass causes the death of many birds; architects forget that over and over again. The point is to provide assistance to the architects and urban planners of tomorrow on how to deal with different species. This is a complex field as every species naturally has its own demands. What is clear, however, is that cities need to make steps towards the animals if we want to attain a holistic system. It's not going to work the other way round.



Creatures

The

The days of mankind's rule over the city have passed, nature is crawling into our urban areas. In their book, Gavin van Horn, the Director of Cultures of Conservation at the Center for Humans and Nature in Chicago and his co-editor John Hausdoerffer explore how people can become attuned to the wild community of life and contribute to the well-being of all those who inhabit the wild places in which we live, work, and play. They call for the creation of cityscapes that celebrate our kinship with other species.

GAVIN VAN HORN

wild Continuum

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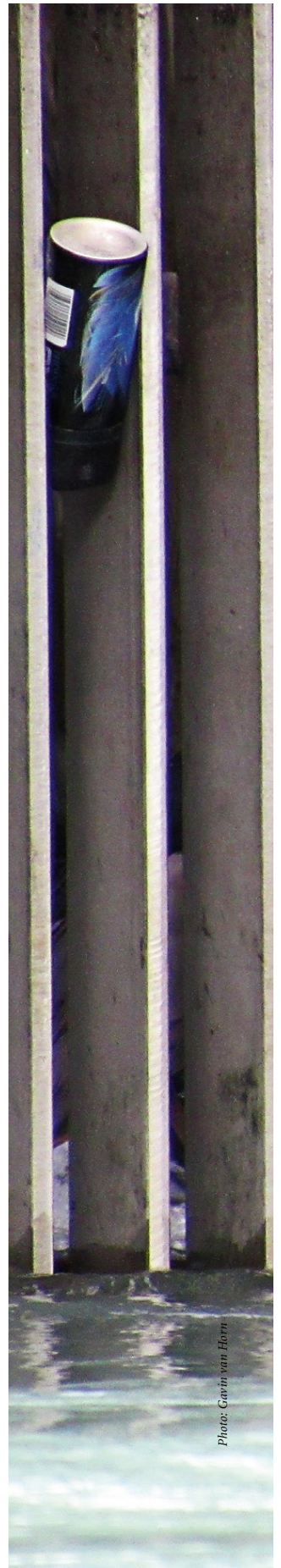


Photo: Gavin van Horn



A bird cautiously eyes its observer while perched above an environment that reflects both human intervention as well as generative processes of "wildness".



A trio of turtles charts its own path along the urban landscape continuum, metaphorical companions within an environment that reflects the recovery of urban ecosystems.

Wildness can manifest in any landscape, and human communities can play a critical role in nurturing diverse and life-generating places.

What is wildness? A jagged, slate-colored mountain, where one can see distinctly where the tree line ends, where the conifers give up on their climb and one can see the snowy summit, sheathed in distant wisps of torn cloud? Or an alleyway between tall buildings, where paint is peeling from backdoors and emerald green moss clings to a rusted gutter pipe; a single lavender flower, pushing from a lightning-bolt-shaped crack in the pavement, blooms in a dollop of sunlight and a bumblebee orbits the flower's petals? What do you think of when you think of wildness?

In *Wildness: Relations of People and Place*, 26 authors from a variety of landscapes, cultures, and backgrounds aim to chart a path across the landscape continuum, sharing stories from the most densely human-populated urban areas to the most remote hinterlands. The book makes what may seem a surprising claim: Wildness can manifest in any landscape, and human communities can play a critical role in nurturing diverse and life-generating places. Whether it is a place, a nonhuman animal or plant, or a state of mind, wild indicates autonomy and agency, a will-to-be, a unique expression of life. Whereas “wilderness” designates an area specifically zoned for protection, wildness represents the generative processes that flow through any landscape as well as our own bodies – or as I sometimes put it, from the gut to the sky.

The Urban Wild

Celebrating the “entire blessed continuum” of wildness, as the lepidopterist Robert Michael Pyle phrases it, is what we, the contributors, attempt to do in the book. This may account for why one section of the book (out of four) is dedicated to the “Urban Wild”. We think the concept of wildness can be a unifying one, an affirmation that we all have access to wildness, at different scales and degrees, and that caring for the wild nearby can lead to caring about the faraway wild places that other people call home. Over half of the world’s population now resides in urban areas, so it stands to reason that if we are to learn to care for our more-than-human communities, a primary context for building such relationships will be in cities.

In the “Urban Wild” section of the book, wildlife biologist Seth Magle takes the reader on a ride through the city to check on the wildlife he monitors, revealing the ways that scientists are beginning to turn toward the city’s “complex, interconnected ecological systems”, which “might be just as or more complicated than tropical rainforests, estuaries, or any other natural biome”. Such an on-the-ground perspective leads Magle to conclude that “maybe, years from now, we will look around these city skylines, once the great villains of our ecology

soap opera, and see a place that humans and rare wildlife are both eager to call home”. If this comes to fruition in urban areas, it will likely be due to cultivating wild places and encounters that provide opportunities for learning, caring, and play. The other contributors to the “Urban Wild” section of the book – Michael Bryson, Michael Howard, Mistinguette Smith, John Tallmadge, and me – each address the varied small-scale acts and mindful practices that foster a sense of human connection to a multi-species urban community. These stories express a sense of hope about wildness in cities and offer perspectives as to how this wildness can be further nurtured. The other sections of the book provide lessons along the wild continuum that are equally applicable in an urban context.

Journey through the city’s wildlife

To raise some of these suggestive themes, it might be best to take a metaphorical and literal journey down an urban river. I recently acquired an inflatable kayak – basically a portable, blow-up, boat-shaped air mattress that, when not in use, can be folded into a backpack. Paddling even short distances on the much-abused yet now-recovering Chicago River allows me to experience a life-giving aquatic corridor that has become a magnet for wildlife.

Photo: Gavin van Horn





The cultivation of urban wild places fosters interactions between multispecies urban communities. Transcending past notions of colonisation, transhuman kinship comes home.

Other animals – including great blue herons, beavers, kingfishers, snapping turtles, and even rare species such as mink – rely upon this waterway for their lives and livelihoods.

Often we watch one another as I float by. They are wise to be wary. As much as I champion the wildness of urban areas, cities often offer visible testimony to a set of values based on control, anthropocentrism, and colonisation. I'm convinced, however, that there are alternative stories to tell about cities – stories that can shift the plot from acquisition and exploitation to inhabitation. Stories in which a city is more than a means to acquire more. Stories in which the city becomes life-affirming instead of life-denying, a generator of biological complexity and diversity rather than simplicity and impoverishment.

Learning from nature

As I arc around a bend in the river, I think of Curt Meine's essay in the "Wisdom of the Wild" section of the book, a section that includes many stories about how close attention to the natural world can be a guide for human endeavors. The conservation biologist and historian Meine writes about the Driftless Area of Wisconsin, where farmers, in order to protect their watershed from the crippling impacts of

soil erosion, have learned to “turn” with the land, adapting their plowing methods and shaping their lives to be more in keeping with this unique landscape. We have a lot to learn in urban areas about attending to the wildness of soil and water, about turning toward the landscape for guidance and working within nature’s cycles and contours.

As I lose myself in the flickering leaves of the cottonwood trees that arch over the riverbanks, I think of Robin Wall Kimmerer’s and Jeff Grignon’s essay entitled “Listening to the Forest” from the “Working Wild” section of the book. They discuss the regenerative forestry management practices of the Menominee Nation, and the ways in which the health and resilience of their pine and maple trees are based on a practice of deep listening – a reciprocity between people and place that ensures the health of both. I wonder how we can better listen in our cities, places where distractions are innumerable. How can we allow the nonhuman voices that surround us a greater role in the shaping of our cities, taking our cues from wild processes and proactively and intentionally creating cityscapes that celebrate our kinship with other species?

As I tip my chin back, let my paddle rest on my lap, I think of Julianne Warren’s (she holds a Ph.D. in Natural Resource Ecology and Conservation Biology) contribution to the book from

the “Planetary Wild” section. “The Story Isn’t Over” is Julianne’s meditation on what wildness might signify in a world of anthropogenic climate, soil, and wildlife crises, including her yearnings for new stories and practices of belonging. Cities are intimately connected to energy uses and outputs – not only in their immediate regions but globally. While we think about the prospects of our shared atmosphere in a world beset by climate change, we would do well to consider the wild forces, carbon cycles, and feedback loops with which our cities are grossly misaligned at present.

I float on, shoulders pinched by a bit of an ache but my spirit refreshed. This corridor through the city brings me into contact with other wild creatures, their curious eyes reminding me that any urban area is part of a larger community of life, part of the wild continuum. As I disembark from the river and fold up my kayak, I can’t help but feel that those wild eyes are upon me, wondering how I will choose to respond. *Wildness: Relations of People and Place* don’t supply definitive answers, but it does provide portraits of hope – stories of human lives and livelihoods that are intentionally woven into their larger wild communities, including the urban areas that provide so many of us with a common habitat for our shared journey.

LITERATURE

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TITLE: *Wildness – Relations of People and Place*

