

Nature conservation patterns in Swedish urban landscapes.

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MANUSCRIPT

Abstract

Nature conservation is about to change from being small-scale and reactive, towards a more large scale and proactive planning. With increasing human influence on ecosystems world-wide, it is necessary to also include human dominated systems, such as cities, into protected areas. However, urbanisation creates landscapes with different characteristics and prerequisites compared to for example forests and agricultural landscapes. Therefore it is necessary to reconsider what, why and for whom to preserve nature in cities. In order to examine how these issues are addressed in current urban nature conservation, this study analysed 1869 nature reserves in 209 municipalities with different degrees of urbanisation in southern Sweden. The nature reserves were analysed concerning number, size, age, land cover composition and purpose of appointment. The results showed that urban nature reserves in southern Sweden are larger but fewer, than nature reserves in less urbanised landscapes. Furthermore, they have a higher diversity of land covers and are founded upon more, and more socially oriented purposes. The main challenge to future urban nature conservation is to develop strategies that are integrated into the urban context, e.g. the land use history, the land cover proportions, the current dominance of social purposes and the high exploitation pressure on urban nature.

Keywords: nature conservation, nature reserves, urban landscapes