
Preface

On 22 August 2003, the Pellston Workshop on Population-Level Ecological Risk Assessment convened at the Comwell Conference Center in Roskilde, Denmark. Over the next 5 days, 37 experts discussed a wide range of topics related to assessing risks of chemical and nonchemical stressors to higher levels of biological organization. The workshop had its origin in a very popular debate session on "Protection of Populations in Ecological Risk Assessment" held as part of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) North America (Baltimore, Maryland, November 2001). The content of the workshop was also shaped by a special session on ecological modeling held in conjunction with the 12th SETAC Europe meeting (Vienna, Austria, May 2002) and by an interactive poster session held at the 2002 SETAC North America meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Roskilde workshop continued a trend begun more than 10 years before, toward linking environmental toxicology and chemistry with ecology and other environmental disciplines to create new approaches for quantifying ecological risks. The workshop also followed the move toward globalization of SETAC, in that the steering committee included members of both SETAC North America and SETAC Europe, and the workshop itself included participants from North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia. Workshop planning included a deliberate effort to identify and support 3 highly qualified student participants.

The deliberations of the workshop made it clear that the intention, and often requirement, for protecting populations exist in the laws and regulatory processes of many jurisdictions. Further, the science supporting assessment of risks to population is rapidly developing in North America, Europe, and Asia and is already sufficient to support a diverse array of population-level assessments.

Knowledge bases, tools, and experiences available from the fields of conservation biology and resource management provide a solid foundation from which to learn and build. Greater interaction and collaboration among all of these groups is a necessary ingredient to advancing the science of population-level ecological risk assessment and its use in environmental decision-making.

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