

## **Welcome to Kyoto**

Kyoto was Japan's imperial court from 794 to 1868 AD until a new capital Edo, which was renamed Tokyo, was founded. Kyoto is the only large Japanese city that still has an abundance of the traditional townhouses and old temples and shrines. We hope you will enjoy the inexhaustible charm of Kyoto - its rich natural beauty, culinary culture and arts. Because Kyoto City was a large lake during the Pleistocene, the rich groundwater that is essential for Sake brewing, making bean curd and drinking, is plentiful.

On 11 March 2011, Japan experienced an enormous disaster caused by significant earthquakes and the giant Tsunami, followed by the breakdown of nuclear power plants at Fukushima Prefecture in northern Japan. We Japanese very much appreciate the warm-hearted encouragement and financial aid from all over the world. Kyoto Prefecture suffered no damage caused by these events, and has remained at ordinary radioactivity levels since last March. However, tourists from foreign countries almost disappeared until the last summer even from Kyoto City.

Therefore, we worried about opening the 6<sup>th</sup> International Colloquium on Arboreal Squirrels in Kyoto. We are excited that 59 participants from 11 nations registered: Korea, Taiwan, China, India, Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, Finland, Canada, USA, and Japan. A total of 37 oral presentations, 22 poster presentations, and 5 symposium speeches are scheduled.

Arboreal squirrels are well-suited particularly for field sciences, because they are mostly diurnal compared to other rodents with nocturnal activity. Arboreal squirrels are easily detected in swift motion from tree to tree, flicking tails, colorful fur or white eyelids, and frequently vocalizing. Those features also have attracted citizens, who keep them as pets, or transport and release them at other sites and other countries. In this colloquium, the many presentations on the invasive species problem emphasize that this problem is an important and urgent issue.

The Japan Network of Sciurid Researchers, which was founded in 1996, publishes “SCIURID INFORMATION” twice a year, which is distributed to a total of 230 members including scientists, and conservation NGOs. This network helped in the organization of this important colloquium.

Takeo Kawamichi  
Chief Organizer

## **A History of the International Colloquium on Arboreal Squirrels**

Welcome to the 6<sup>th</sup> International Colloquium on Arboreal Squirrels! The International Colloquium on Arboreal Squirrels is designed to provide a venue where scientists throughout the World can discuss their research on arboreal squirrels as model systems for their studies. The unique focus of this conference on the animal model that is the common link between all scientists provides a wonderful diversity of research presentations from phylogenetic to conservation oriented efforts. The diversity not only creates an interesting mix of presentations for the audience but the multiple approaches that the diversity of researchers brings to the conference facilitates broad levels of collaboration. A number of long-term collaborations have emerged from past colloquia. We trust that you will enjoy the presentation schedule in the coming days while in Kyoto, and hopefully you will be able to build productive collaborative relationships for the future.

Initiated in 1994, the meeting has attracted 50 – 75 scientists at each of first 5 colloquia with representation from 5 continents and at least 25 countries. The conference has changed its name slightly over the years. The first 3 colloquia were named the International Tree Squirrel Colloquium, the current name was adopted for the fourth meeting to better reflect the inclusion of the flying squirrels and other arboreal dwelling-species. The first International Colloquium on Arboreal Squirrels (ICAS) was developed by Drs. Michael Steele, David Zegers, and Joseph Merritt and held at the Powdermill

Biological Station of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in the USA's eastern state of Pennsylvania in 1994. The proceedings were published in 1998 as a volume entitled *Ecology and Evolutionary Biology of Tree Squirrels* (Virginia Museum of Natural History, Special Publication # 6, 384 pp.). The 2<sup>nd</sup> ICAS occurred in 2000 at Silver Creek Falls State Park in Sublimity, Oregon of the northwestern USA when it was decided that the colloquia should meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> year and rotate among continents where possible. The 3<sup>rd</sup> ICAS was hosted in the north of England at Northumberland's Ford Castle and was a joint meeting with the 7<sup>th</sup> European Squirrel Workshop in 2003. The 4<sup>th</sup> ICAS in 2006 found scientists meeting on yet another continent in southern India's Periyar Tiger Reserve located in the Western Ghats of Kerala. The colloquia returned to North America with the 2009 5<sup>th</sup> ICAS held in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. The 6<sup>th</sup> ICAS in Kyoto continues the tradition of international collaboration that includes your attendance in February 2012.

John L. Koprowski

## **Kamloops to Kyoto**

It is hard to believe that three years have elapsed since 5ICAS in Kamloops, BC, Canada, but here we are (as planned) in beautiful Kyoto. What has brought added value to the ICAS meetings is the fact that the locations of the meetings have been so varied, and in doing so, they have truly created a 'global village' of sciurid researchers. The fact that 6ICAS is taking place in Japan will add substantially to this mission. I wish great success to Takeo and Mieko Kawamichi and their organizing team.

Karl W. Larsen