

DISTRIBUTED ECOLOGIES

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Robert Shepherd

“Distributed Ecologies” posits the urban environment as defined not as a collection of neighborhoods, but as habitats; where habitats are defined as much by their microclimate and seasonal variation - as they are by their housing and shopping districts. These habitats are conceived of as shared environs and index the conflicting needs of the users, regardless of genus or phyla. This heart of this proposal is rooted in redefining animal habitats and a knowledge or natural systems as a part of the public interest; and indexing them against publicly available space. This strategy decouples the zoo from its outmoded definition as a cultural artifact, to an institution which advocates for the care and understanding of natural environment [re:habitats], through this the zoo transitions from public spectacle to public trust.

This strategy could place an animal habitat in every neighborhood in the city. These habitats would serve the public and redefine the zoo as a public amenity pushing forward a knowledge and understanding of natural species as an important factor in an urban environment, and challenging the perception that an urban environment is “without” nature. We imagine these zoologic taxonomies as a kind of branch library for habitats. These branches could seed new development while advocating a broader understanding of the urban environment. Additionally they might: **build communities around natural environments, neighborhoods are redefined as habitats for occupancy, sponsor activities built around understanding and relationships, extend the public space throughout the city, beyond the limits of the “park”.**

Embedding zoologic taxonomies, habitats and migration paths into the fabric of urban space could help to redefine zoning policies not around transit corridors and shopping districts but around seasonal occupancies and habitat restoration. This strategy places wildlife and an understanding of animal habitats as a positive instrument in designing good urban space. These differential zoning policies could: **establish criteria for seasonal zoning, based on migratory paths [as opposed to commercial holidays], exploit instinctual tendencies in natural system, catalyze public space in a new way, redefine neighborhoods as habitats, increase livability across phylum, produce a hybrid urbanism.**

