Introduction to special section on respiratory biology

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The First International Congress of Respiratory Biology (ICRB) took place August 14–16, 2006, at the Seminaris Congress Hotel in Bad Honnef and at the Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms University in Bonn, Germany. The goal was to bring together researchers worldwide who work on respiration and to create a forum for them to interact. The emphasis was on promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and creating vertical networking—from molecule to ecosystem—within respiratory biology. Other goals were to lay the groundwork for further such meetings and for founding an International Society of Respiratory Biology.

The ICRB was organized around 22 symposia, each with 5–23 speakers, and took place in four parallel sessions. In addition, there were three plenary lectures and one keynote lecture. Delegates from 25 nations attended: approximately 200 with advanced degrees and 50 graduate students.

Because of its stated goals, Integrative and Comparative Biology was chosen for this publication, and the authors were asked to depart from the traditional practice of publishing individual symposium contributions. Instead each should, in a single publication, summarize, integrate, and expand entire symposia, incorporating new information published since the Congress as well as new insights based on the integration. There are contributions from more than 90 coauthors and represents a cross-section based on—but not limited to—the whole 3-day meeting. The result is a unique view into the breadth and depth of respiratory biology today.

Access to abstracts from the ICRB and contact with the organizers are possible through the website http://www.respirbiol.org.