

World Congress of Herpetology Business Meeting, 21 June 2005. Stellenbosch, Republic of South Africa

#### Agenda Item 1. Opening

Secretary-General (S-G) Ulrich Joger called the meeting to order at 17:37. He began by reviewing the purpose of the World Congress of Herpetology (WCH) organization and the functions of the Executive Committee (EC) and the International Herpetological Committee (IHC).

#### Agenda Item 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

An unofficial account of the business meeting from the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Herpetology in Sri Lanka was published by C. K. Dodd, Jr. & Breck Bartholomew in *Herpetological Review*, 33(1):2-5. As official minutes were never posted on the WCH website, S-G Joger commented on some corrections to the *Herpetological Review* article involving elections of EC and IHC members.

No venues were presented for the 5<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Herpetology (5WCH) at the 4WCH Business Meeting.

#### Agenda Item 3. Report of the Secretary-General.

S-G Joger was elected by e-mail voting of the EC along with Secretary-General Elect (S-GE) Walter Hödl and Treasurer Ronald Heyer in March 2002.

At the time S-G Joger was elected, there were bids for 5WCH from Japan and Singapore, both of which were shortly withdrawn. S-G Joger requested for bids for 5WCH from two countries in Africa (Egypt and the Republic of South Africa) and North America. Three bids were subsequently received: two from Canada and one from South Africa. The EC was asked to vote on a choice between South Africa (for 2005) or Canada (for either 2008 or 2009). The EC voted for holding 5WCH in South Africa. Upon that vote, the two Canadian bid organizers were asked if one or either would host 6WCH. Both organizers concurred. The EC was asked to vote between the two venues and Montreal bid narrowly won over the Vancouver bid.

In January 2004 the WCH was represented at the International Union of Biological Sciences meeting (of which the WCH is a member) held in Cairo, Egypt on 17-22 January 2004, by David and Marvalee Wake. S-G Joger read their report (attached as an appendix to the minutes).

There were no questions from the meeting participants to S-G Joger's request for same.

#### Agenda Item 4. Report of the Secretary-General Elect: Next Venue for the World Congress of Herpetology.

S-GE Hödl began by stating that 5WCH should take place in the New World.

S-GE Hödl described the problems that lead the local organizing committee for 6WCH at Montreal to withdraw their bid on 27 April 2005.

Immediately after the bid withdrawal from Montreal, bids were solicited from other New World venues. At the business meeting, three options were presented: (1) An informal bid was offered by Richard Vogt for Manaus, Brasil for 2008; (2) Patrick Gregory indicated that he could invite the WCH to participate in the joint US/Canadian

herpetology meeting in Vancouver in 2009; and (3) if neither of these venues did not prove viable, other sites could be pursued for a 2010 WCH meeting.

Considerable discussion took place regarding the circumstances and reasons why the joint-meeting approach at Montreal failed. S-GE Hödl reported that he and S-G Joger had sent an e-mail message to Patrick Gregory to clarify whether the same problem would likely occur for the Vancouver venue as for the Montreal venue, as the same scientific societies were involved. This message was sent immediately following the first 5WCH EC meeting of 20 June 2005. A response had not been obtained by the time of the WCH Business Meeting.

A straw vote was held to get an impression of the level of support for the choice of venues if both Manaus and Vancouver were to submit bids for 6 WCH. The persons present overwhelmingly voted for the Manaus venue. There was also support for the position that if Manaus were accepted for 6WCH, then the WCH should seek bids from North America for 7 WCH, vice versa.

#### Agenda Item 5. Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer Heyer reported that the WCH was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia, USA in order to set up a corporate, tax-free bank account for the WCH organization. After the bank account was established, previous Treasurer Roger Avery wire-transferred the entire account balance of 5,623.64 pounds to the USA account. The only significant financial transaction was wire transferring \$4800 US to the 5WCH local organizing committee for start-up costs.

Heyer briefly reported on setting up a Financial Advisory Committee (H. Mushinsky, Z. Rocek, C. F. D. Rocha, A. Savitzky, M. Wake), which came to the conclusion that fund-raising will have a low probability of success if the only activity the WCH undertakes is holding congresses. If the WCH were to be an effective presence and voice for international herpetological issues, then the likelihood of monetary support from herpetological organizations would be greatly improved. One concrete fund-raising mechanism that the Financial Advisory Committee recommended was implemented. The registration fee for 5WCH participants included a \$10 US amount that was designated for the WCH organization, in addition to any profit realized by 5WCH. Based on budget projections available at the business meeting, a substantial profit should be realized by 5WCH which would be sent to the WCH organization bank account.

#### Agenda Item 6. Report of the Auditors.

Auditor Aaron Bauer indicated that he and Auditor Alan Savitzky had found the annual financial reports prepared by Treasurer Heyer to be in order.

S-G Joger asked the meeting participants if they were content with the auditing procedure. No objections were voiced.

#### Agenda Item 7. Report of the Congress Director.

Congress Director Ernst Baard related the history of how he became directly involved with the 5WCH bid, including his role as Congress Director.

The original bid submitted to S-G Joger for the 5WCH bid was based on a Cape Town venue, centered on the new convention center. The EC indicated that the bid was too expensive, involving a registration fee of \$1000 US. The venue was changed to the

University of Stellenbosch, which had restrictions on when a WCH could be held. Congress Director Baard explained why the venue times had to be changed to accommodate both University availability as well as general housing availability in Stellenbosch.

Congress Director Baard indicated that Aaron Bauer took on the role of organizing the scientific program and that Bauer met with the Local Organizing Committee several times (S-G Joger pointed out later in the meeting that the WCH owed Bauer a debt of thanks not only for serving as scientific program organizer, but for traveling to South Africa to meet with the Local Organizing Committee at no expense to the WCH organization).

Congress Director Baard described the role that the professional meeting organization "Conferences et al." played during the beginning and middle stages of the congress organization, but that due to a lack of raising sponsorship funds, the relationship had to be dissolved in late February 2005. Baard made a point of thanking "Conferences et al." for their work performed.

A final, professionally audited financial report should be available by four weeks from the close of 5WCH.

Separate rounds of applause were given to Conference Director Baard and Scientific Program Committee Chair Bauer by the meeting participants.

#### Agenda Item 8. Elections.

S-G Joger began by reading the portions of the WCH Constitution describing the duties of the EC and IHC members.

Outgoing E-C Member Richard Shine conducted the election for both EC and IHC members.

The following were elected to the EC: Adolfo Amezcua (Colombia), Ken Dodd (USA), Tim Halliday (UK), Jean-Marc Hero (Australia), Ron Heyer (USA), Ulrich Joger (Germany), Miguel Vences (Germany).

The following were elected to the IHC: Graham Alexander (South Africa), Natalia Ananjeva (Russia), Ernst Baard (South Africa), Ben Bell (New Zealand), Xavier Bonnet (France), Amos Bouskila (Israel), Bill Branch (South Africa), Miguel Carretero (Spain), Alan Channing (South Africa), William Cooper (USA), Tatjana Dujsebayaeva (Kazakhstan), Patrick Gregory (Canada), Harry Greene (USA), Richard Griffiths (UK), Masami Hasegawa (Japan), Adel Ibrahim (Egypt), Sergei Kuzmin (Russia), Stefan Lötters (Germany), Thomas Madsen (Sweden), Marcio Martins (Brasil), Joe Mendelson (Brasil), Nikolay Orlov (Russia), Marion Preest (USA), Arne R. Rasmussen (Denmark), Miguel Rodrigues (Brasil), Linda Trueb (USA), Jonathan Webb (Australia), Martin Whiting (South Africa), Ermi Zhao (China), Thomas Ziegler (Germany).

#### Agenda Item 9. Future Role of the International Herpetological Committee.

S-G Joger indicated that the IHC has no clear-cut role defined in the WCH Constitution. To remedy this, at 4WCH an IHC Chair and a Deputy Chair were elected, filled by Roger Avery and Jean-Marc Hero, respectively. A major goal of the IHC was to establish a WCH web site that would serve as a communication link between the EC and IHC. A web site was established, but there has not been any posting of items for

discussion, and S-G Joger and Deputy Chair Hero have lost contact with Chair Avery. S-G Joger indicated that the new IHC needed to elect a new Chair by e-mail and come up with ideas for activities.

As a way of continuing the process of defining a role for the IHC, S-G Joger read an e-mail message from Kraig Adler responding to the request of what activities Adler envisioned for the IHC.

In response to calling for comment on the IHC situation, Yehudah Werner said he would pass on his suggestion later, directly to the IHC, as it was getting late. Claudia Corti recommended that national and regional herpetological society contact information should be linked to the WCH web page.

Agenda Item 10. Any Other Business.

As there was no response to this agenda item, S-G Joger closed the meeting at 19:11.

Respectfully submitted, with assistance from A. Bauer, U. Joger, and W. Hödl,

Ron Heyer, secretary pro tempore

Appendix to WCH Business Meeting of 21 June 2005.

**Report to World Congress of Herpetology**

**On the General Assembly of the**

**International Union for Biological Sciences**

**Cairo, Egypt, 17-22 January 2004**

The General Assembly (GA) of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), of which the World Congress of Herpetology is a Scientific Member, was held in Cairo 17-22 January 2004. It included sessions on the first and last days for the conduct of the business of the General Assembly, and the three remaining days featured symposia that constituted the Scientific Conference part of the GA. Professor David B. Wake represented WCH at the GA, at the request of Secretary General Ulrich Joger.

Several of the symposia included scientific presentations that are of relevance to WCH, and several of the Resolutions passed by the GA have direct bearing on the conduct of science that supports the work of scientists involved in WCH. Among the scientific presentations were the plenary address by then-current President of IUBS, Marvilee H. Wake, on “Integrative Biology: The Nexus of Ecology, Development, and Evolution”, which featured examples drawn from research on amphibians; the presentation by David B. Wake on “AmphibiaWeb” and “HerpNet”, collaborative herpetological database efforts, in a symposium on bioinformatics that was co-sponsored by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility; the presentation by Tyrone Hayes about his work on pesticides and their effects on amphibian development in a symposium on stress biology; and the contribution by Rohan Pethiyagoda in a workshop on international concerns about restrictions on collecting permits, intellectual property rights, and other aspects having to do with access to biodiversity specimens and information (a Letter by Pethiyagoda reflecting such concerns, and the IUBS Resolution that resulted, was published in the 13 May 2004 issue of *Nature*).

The text of the eight Resolutions presented to and passed by the General Assembly (all Ordinary [National] and Scientific Member representatives voting unanimously for each Resolution) is attached. In particular, Resolutions of direct import to WCH, either in terms of its relationship to IUBS or to the conduct of sciences are the following:

Resolution # 1 calls for the nominations for IUBS officers and Executive Committee members to be circulated a year in advance of the General Assembly to all Ordinary and Scientific Members, and states that candidates can emerge from the entire biological community, not just IUBS affiliates.

Resolution # 2 indicates the GA support for the reactivation of the International Society of Zoological Sciences.

Resolution # 3 urges the IUBS Executive Committee to be proactive in seeking new members from under-represented regions of the world, and to assist them in capacity building, and it increase joint activities with Scientific Members.

Resolution # 4 directs the IUBS Executive Committee to establish a Working Group to explore issues of access and benefit sharing, to enhance scientific input to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) process, to prepare the scientific community for compliance with evolving regulatory frameworks, etc. It directs the Executive Committee to invite Ordinary and Scientific Members to consider the manner in which the CBD is implemented, and the issues that have arisen in that context (see Pethiyagoda's Letter to *Nature*, cited above). The Resolution directs the Executive Committee to work with the Conference of the Parties of the CBD to develop a consultative process that involves the scientific community.

Resolution # 7 deals with the results of a CBD-UNESCO-IUBS workshop on research, training, education and public awareness priorities as part of the CBH work program, and directs the IUBS Executive Committee to organize the necessary expertise and resources and to coordinate contributions that address such priorities.

A proactive response by the World Congress of Herpetology, in its capacity as a Scientific Member of IUBS, to these Resolutions and the issues that they deal with would be enthusiastically welcomed by IUBS.

Respectfully submitted,

David B. Wake  
WCH Representative to  
The IUBS General Assembly

Marvalee H. Wake  
Past-President, IUBS