

WORLD CONGRESS OF HERPETOLOGY

also serving as Section of Herpetology of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS)

NEWSLETTER No. 4

12 June 1986

This newsletter serves a dual function: to provide a means of communication among the Executive Committee (EC) and the International Herpetological Committee (IHC) and, at the same time, be a status report to those organizations and individuals who have decided officially to support the Congress. Since this is an international effort, I encourage comment from all persons who receive this newsletter, so that I can become better aware of the diversity of concerns and opinions.

I thank the many individuals who responded to newsletter no. 3, several of them in great detail. Unfortunately I could not respond individually to each of the 57 letters! However, there were many useful, even ingenious ideas in them and these will be abstracted and sent to the organizing committees for action.

The World Congress of Herpetology announces the

FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF HERPETOLOGY

11-19 September 1989

at the University of Kent, Canterbury (U.K.)

This international congress will be the first of a series occurring at regular intervals at venues around the world. Such a meeting will enable all persons interested in herpetology to meet and exchange information to promote the advance of knowledge and the conservation of the world's amphibians and reptiles. The congress will consist of topical symposia, poster sessions, plenary speakers, workshops, displays, excursions, and meetings of ancillary groups. Subjects and moderators of symposia will be announced well in advance so that potential participants can volunteer. The meeting will be open to all persons. Registration will begin 1 January 1988.

For further details and mail listing, write: Dr. Ian R. Swingland, World Congress of Herpetology, Rutherford College, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX, United Kingdom.

Sponsoring organizations and individuals are welcome. For further details write: Dr. Marinus S. Hoogmoed, Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Postbus 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands.

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1. Congress Dates.

The dates for our meeting have now been set (see page 1), with the 11th and 19th being arrival and departure days, respectively. Since both are on weekdays air connections should be more numerous and less expensive.

2. Constitution.

I am happy to announce that Harold Cogger has agreed to chair a committee to draft a Constitution for our organization. It is hoped that a draft of this document can be circulated to you in advance of the Canterbury meeting so that a discussion and final vote can be taken at the meeting. If you have suggestions to make, please contact Harold Cogger, Australian Museum, P.O. Box A285, Sydney South, New South Wales, Australia.

3. IUBS.

At its 22nd General Assembly held in Budapest, Hungary, last September, the International Union of Biological Sciences elected our organization a full Scientific Member. Therefore, we now also serve as the Section of Herpetology of IUBS. This is an important step in the recognition of WCH as *the* international body for herpetology and, among other advantages, will greatly facilitate travel to our conference for persons from many parts of the world.

4. Amphibian and Reptile Species Checklists.

As you know, WCH is responsible for the academic supervision of the herpetological checklists being published jointly by Association of Systematics Collections and Allen Press, both of Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A. The first volume, covering Amphibia, was issued last August and, to date, about 650 copies have been sold. Sales have been greater than anticipated and a second edition may be justified in a few years. Accordingly, the data base is being constantly up-dated by a committee chaired by William E. Duellman.

Two additional volumes are in progress: Crocodilians and Turtles, edited by F. Wayne King, and Snakes, edited by Jonathan Campbell. The editor for Lizards should be appointed shortly. Editorial Committees for each volume are appointed by WCH.

5. Telephone and Telex.

Since some of you may need urgently to reach me or Ian Swingland, the conference director at Canterbury, I give below our telephone and telex numbers:

Kraig Adler (Ithaca, New York, U.S.A.)

Telex: WUI 6713054. Telephone: (area 607) 255-6569 office, (607) 539-6127 home.

Ian Swingland (Canterbury, Kent, U.K.)

Telex: 965449. Telephone: (area 227) 66822 office, (227) 751709 home.

6. Society Sponsors.

Many national and multinational herpetological societies and organizations have voted officially to sponsor the WCH and provide needed financial support during these organizational years. Currently, the list includes: American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Australasian Affiliation of Herpetological Societies, Australian Society of Herpetologists, British Herpetological Society, Centro Pirenaico de Biología Experimental, Chinese Society of Herpetologists, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Herpetologie und Terrarienkunde, Herpetological Society of Japan, Herpetologists' League, Societas Europaea Herpetologica, Societat Catalana d'Ictiologia i Herpetologia, Société Batrachologique de France, and Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. I have invited a number of additional societies to join, in order to have a truly international representation, which is important in demonstrating worldwide recognition and support of WCH.

There are still a number of societies missing from our list and I solicit your assistance in contacting them. Please encourage them to join in sponsoring WCH and ask the responsible officer to contact me.

7. Congress Announcement.

The official announcement of the congress dates and venue is printed on page 1. *Feel free to copy this*

advertisement and have it published in your national herpetological and biological journals. We want our conference advertized as widely and as promptly as is possible.

8. Congress Language: English Plus.

The question of whether the congress ought to have many acceptable languages or only a single one was discussed in the last newsletter (item 8). Since then, I have had many written responses, from the EC and IHC, and the benefit of group discussions at the herpetological meetings in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and at Guangzhou, China, last August. It was agreed by the vast majority of persons that, to maximize communication among participants, which has to be a primary goal of any world congress, a single language is preferred and, for convenience's sake only, that language should be English. It was pointed out that whereas it is not difficult to have lectures translated and read in English, it is in the discussions that follow the lecture that speakers are sometimes at a decided disadvantage if English is not their native tongue. Accordingly, the speaker's discussion can be in another language but a translator must be found to handle the translation. Because costs of providing official translators could be prohibitive and add to the registration fee, we will ask speakers to arrange for their own translators, but the WCH can help in special cases. A special notice will appear in the pre-registration documents.

Concerning poster presentations, it was further agreed that while English was the preferred language, others would be permitted but preparers should recognize that their research papers will be far more widely read if they are in English.

9. Funding and Sponsorship.

A major conference of this sort requires funding from outside sources if registration costs are to be kept reasonable and some travel grants are to be provided. Accordingly, two groups have been appointed. The Earl of Cranbrook has agreed to establish a U.K. Committee of Patrons, comprising the leading naturalists and many public figures, a group that, among other functions, will assist in fund raising. Ian Swingland, the conference director, has established a U.K. National Executive Committee, one arm of which will handle fund raising.

Thus, fund-raising activities in the United Kingdom are well organized and doubtless will be effective. However, we hope in addition to raise funds outside the U.K. I ask you, therefore, to *send me the names and addresses of any academic organizations, commercial firms, or others to whom I could make an appeal for funds.*

Clearly we will want travel awards to go to the most needy individuals. *How do we define "needy."* Should persons in symposia or other official activities be given preference? Students? People from certain countries or long distances? Should an international committee be established to supervise these awards? Your advice will be appreciated.

10. Meeting Organization.

Based on responses from the EC and IHC and the discussions at Prague and Guangzhou, it is decided that there will be no oral contributed papers, in order to provide time for plenary lectures and a large series of topical symposia. Instead, contributed papers will be by poster only with special times being set aside for viewing and for discussions with authors.

Poster sessions will be given an especially prominent position in the conference, such that they are equivalent to the usual oral communications and thus presenters should be eligible for travel funds. If circumstances dictate, I can supply official WCH letters of invitation stated in such a way that it will not be obvious to administrators that an oral presentation will not be given. In addition, the titles and organizers of the symposia will be announced far in advance of the meeting so that interested persons can volunteer to participate. Hopefully, the range of symposia will cover the full spectrum of herpetology so that virtually everyone will have at least a possibility to participate.

Plenary lectures and symposia will occupy the daytime, with special lectures, movie and slides, demonstrations, and social activities in the evenings. There will also be workshops and displays, and perhaps roundtable discussions of controversial topics. For safety and university insurance reasons, no live animals will be permitted at the meeting unless they are requested for use in an authorized display.

REQUEST FOR ADVICE

In addition to the questions posed and assistance requested in items 6, 7, and 9 (above), I need to have your advice on the following questions:

A. Plenary Lectures.

The first day of the Congress will consist of special lectures, each one 45 minutes to one hour in length. These will cover some of the most important topics and new areas of work in herpetology, not only academic research but conservation and other aspects as well; for example, effects of acid rain on amphibian reproduction, environmental sex determination, veterinary and medical aspects of herpetology, or more general topics such as general systematics, behavior, and evolution. *I solicit your advice on topics and speakers.* Please limit yourself to no more than five topics and speakers. Such nominations need not be restricted to herpetologists *per se* but can include anyone working on the biology of amphibians and reptiles. The object should be to invite the most outstanding people to give the plenary lectures, persons who can provide a masterly review of a current topic as well as point out the most important areas for future research. Try to suggest topics and names that cover the full spectrum of our field, and also people who are known to be excellent speakers and researchers.

B. Symposia.

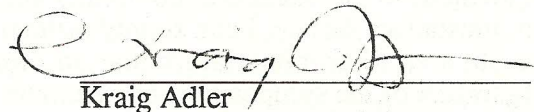
On days 2-4 and 6-7 of the conference (day 5 is for excursions) there will be two or three topical symposia running concurrently each day. Some will be full-day symposia, others half- or quarter-day. As for the plenary lectures, *I want your suggestions for symposium topics and moderators.* The choice of moderators is crucial since they will be the persons largely responsible for choosing participants, organizing the format, and in maintaining quality. Please also specify what length of time each symposium should occupy, and limit yourself to no more than 10 topics and moderators.

The suggestions for plenary lectures and symposia will be compiled and submitted to the EC for a final vote. As before, your comments will be kept confidential and not identified as to source. If you have other suggestions concerning the format and content of our conference, I would be delighted to have these also.

NOTICE OF MEETING

The face-to-face meetings in Prague and Guangzhou last year were extremely useful and, therefore, I wish to take advantage of a herpetological meeting this summer to meet and talk about the Canterbury conference. The joint annual meeting of the Herpetologists' League and the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles will be held in Springfield, Missouri, U.S.A., from 10-15 August. I have arranged for us to meet on Monday evening, 11 August, at 8:30 PM in Temple Hall room 1. This meeting will be open to all interested persons. Ian Swingland will be present and can provide details about the facilities at University of Kent. I do hope that you will join us.

I very much appreciate your cooperation and support in planning our first congress.



Kraig Adler