

2005 General Assembly of the World Sturgeon Conservation Society e. V.

Date May 10th, 2005

Time 22:15 -23:35 hours

Place of Venue: Ramsar AZADI Hotels Main Conference Hall
Rajaie Street, 4691710705 Ramsar, Iran Tel xx98192 -5223593-5

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Minutes of the General Assembly 2005

1) Opening of the Meeting (introducing of the Board of Directors to the Membership)

President Rosenthal opened the meeting at 22:15 and introduced the agenda as well as the Board of Directors and Foundation Committee members in attendance. The agenda was generally approved. (see Annex 1).

2) President's Report (briefing on history of the society, briefing on statutes, explaining membership development, reporting on activities during 2004)

President Rosenthal displayed a PowerPoint presentation outlining the history of the foundation of WSCS, explaining the WSCS Aims and Objectives, and summarizing the present activities the Society since its foundation. Activities to date and especially in 2004 have primarily been focused on building a suite of services to members including creation and management of the WSCS web site which offers a wide range of information and services such as the Sturgeon Discussion Forum, the Sturgeon Bibliography, a Membership Directory, access to hard to find literature from the WSCS archives, and the discount subscriptions to the official journal of the WSCS, the Journal of Applied Ichthyology. Activities in 2004 also focused on membership campaigns, efforts of regional representatives to attract new members and modes of processing dues and membership materials, while also promoting and conducting sturgeon workshops in preparation for the 5th ISS.

3) Treasurer's Report (2004 financial report, 2005 budget, Membership matrix and dues)

WSCS Treasurer, Ron Bruch, prepared the final financial report for fiscal year 2004. The accounting list and balance sheet was audited by Paolo Bronzi, Kurt Beens with secretary After the presentation, the Financial report was opened for discussion and approved unanimously by the General Assembly.

A budget for fiscal year 2005 was drafted by Ron Bruch, Jörn Gessner, Paolo Bronzi and Kurt Beens and submitted to the General Assembly for discussion and approval. The General Assembly approved the budget to include additional funds for web site support and clerical support for the President to manage the on-line bibliography.

4) Introducing the Website to the membership (e.g. discussion forum, links to Species information (FishBase))

WSCS web site offers a wide range of information and services such as the Sturgeon Discussion Forum, the Sturgeon Bibliography, a Membership Directory, access to hard to find literature from the WSCS archives, access to sturgeon species information through FishBase, and discount subscriptions to the official journal of the WSCS, the Journal of Applied Ichthyology.

Bibliography is on-line, but not completely functional at this time. Titles and authors can be searched but abstracts still need to be either entered or modified to meet copyright stipulations.

The General Assembly discussed further options for improving the information flow and reaching a wider audience. The need was stressed to build linkages between the WSCS website and websites of other institutions, organizations and other sturgeon and fisheries/environmental websites. The home office will work on this issue in the intersessional period.

5) Cooperation with and support for other organizations (e.g. China sturgeon projects; Italian projects; WWF France and A. *sturio* Action Plan, Europe;)

Development of a Danube Action Plan - WSCS has been invited to be a partner in the development of the Danube Action Plan and will be participating in the planning process. Jörn Gessner and Patrick Williot together with the WSCS President are leaders in demonstrating how to work with such groups in developing international action plans and can provide helpful advice in such matters.

ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea):

– WSCS has requested to be granted Observer Status. ICES is currently considering the WSCS request which must go through a formal approval process. Decision is likely by made later this year. If approved WSCS would be permitted to participate in ICES meetings and discussions, but without voting authority. ICES is an intergovernmental organization and observer status to outside organizations and societies may or may not be granted after critical review.

The German Society to Save the Sturgeon has become an affiliate member of WSCS. Information on how organizations can become WSCS affiliate members is on the web site.

EAS (European Aquaculture Society) has requested to convene a joint session with WSCS in 2006. Board members were interested and asked the President to discuss the concept further EAS and provide additional information on potential dates and the feasibility of holding a joint meeting next year.

WAS (World Aquaculture Society) is very keen on holding a joint meeting with WSCS in 2008. Such a meeting would provide an opportunity to solicit papers and contacts for the 6th ISS to be held in 2009.

WCFS (World Congress of Fisheries Societies): John Thorpe will develop and submit a proposal in July at the next WCFS meeting to grant WSCS affiliate member status in WCFS.

6) Information on Membership services (membership profile, contributions from members, electronic bibliography, Special rates for the official science journal of the Society; literature service.

As of December 31, 2004 WSCS membership was at approximately 317 members. Members are encouraged to promote WSCS membership amongst their colleagues and at various international and national fisheries meetings they attend.

A standardized form for the submitting information for the membership directory has been completed and is available on the WSCS website. Members are strongly encouraged to submit their professional information for the directory.

Discussion forum is not being used much – members are encouraged to regularly check the forum and provide answers and information to questions and information requests posted.

Members are asked to submit contributions regularly for the news section. Pictures can be submitted along with news articles.

7) Report on the status of WSCS past and future involvement in Conferences (e.g. Sturgeon session in China 2004 (Intern. Zoological Congress), WSCS involvement in planning of 5th ISS in Iran 2005, etc)

WSCS Board members organized or contributed to organizing sturgeon conferences in 2004 in Wuhan, China and Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Conferences were conducted to help promote participation in the 5th ISS and papers that could be submitted to the 5th ISS for presentation and/or publication as part of the proceedings.

WSCS is the home of the ISS series and President Rosenthal was a member of the 5th ISS Organizing Committee.

Jörn Gessner was appointed chair of the committee to judge and select best oral and poster papers at the 5th ISS. Dr. Rosenthal developed a judging criteria form and session chairs have been using these forms to judge and rank papers in each of their respective sessions. Gessner, Bruch and Bronzi will tabulate results and announce winners. It was decided that 5th ISS Scientific Committee members and WSCS Board members would not be eligible to win the award.

5th ISS Proceedings: Manuscript submission deadline is June 30, 2005. All Scientific Committee members and WSCS Board members will be utilized to review manuscripts. The goal is to complete all reviews and produce proof pages of final accepted manuscripts by fall and publish proceedings by Dec 2005. With proof pages, authors and reviewers are asked to go completely through the manuscript in addition to addressing comments made on query form, make all corrections on the electronic version, and send in a timely manner to Harald Rosenthal.

8) Open session for questions and inviting suggestions from the membership to the Board of Directors on further activities and services

Few questions were placed by the general membership, mainly considering the improvement of access to the membership section of the website and on questions on simplifying the transfer of membership dues while also asking to make credit-card (visa card) payments possible. The President promised to look into the various options to ease the logistics for membership services.

9) Call for proposals for hosting future ISS.

Dr. Jianbo Chang of the Chinese Academy of Science and Dr. Wei Qiwei of the Chinese Academy of Fisheries Science have submitted a proposal to co-chair and host the 6th International Symposium on Sturgeon in Wuhan, China in 2009. No other proposals have been submitted at this time for hosting ISS VI. WSCS Board will make final decision on location of the 6th ISS at the final Board meeting on 14 May 2005 following the close of the 5th ISS.

All final decisions on location for future ISS will be made by the WSCS Board and the Scientific Committee of the previous ISS by individual vote as has been the tradition since ISS IV

10) Session in public: Access of the general Public and media

The general discussion was brief and media as well as local authorities as well as ISS5 participants were all cordially invited to participate during the entire General Assembly. Because of the advanced time (close to mid-night). The General Assembly was attended by about 100 members and ISS5 participants (see Annex 2)

11) Closing of the meeting

The President closed the meeting at 23:35 hrs.