

# DECLARATIONS OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE (ICZN)

Hosted by the National University of Singapore, 16-20 November 2013

The ICZN convened a special meeting in Singapore to discuss and map its future in light of the rapidly changing practices in taxonomy as well as the impending dissolution of the London-based International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature which has supported it for over 60 years.

The five-day meeting had a broad agenda with one common denominator – how the ICZN can re-invent itself. ICZN wants not just to be more effective for the scientific community, but also to aim for greater financial autonomy, including the establishment of endowments.

The following major decisions were made:

1. The Secretariat of the ICZN will be a distributed one, reflecting what the ICZN actually is: an international group of 26 scientists from 19 countries across the globe. Co-ordination of ICZN activities will be through the ICZN office set up and funded by the National University of Singapore.

The ICZN office in London will continue to handle the preparation of *Cases* and editing the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*; it will be supported by The Natural History Museum.

2. A roadmap for the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of *The International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* was agreed upon. It will incorporate many new guidelines for scientists describing new species, genera and families, include improved procedures to streamline work, and be co-ordinated with innovations in biodiversity informatics. The new Code is expected to be ready within five years.

3. Operations of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* will be revamped, including an external review process that involves expert non-commissioners. This will expedite the handling of nomenclatural cases, opinions and comments, and better serve the community.

4. The online version of the Official Register of Zoological Nomenclature – *ZooBank* – was confirmed to be a core business for ICZN. Priorities were set for its continued development and how the Commission can increase the value of this resource with a view to strengthening its position in the biodiversity informatics landscape.

5. A manual for implementing Article 79 of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* was accepted. This important article deals with formalising *The List of Available Names*, an exercise that helps research communities standardise scientific names for their groups of animals and ensure nomenclatural stability; with valuable implications for biodiversity informatics.

6. The Commission will be revitalised with new blood as well as expanding the expertise now represented through the election of new commissioners. This will be done by engaging the wider community of biologists.

The next in-person General Meeting of the ICZN will occur in conjunction with the General Assembly of the International Union of Biological Sciences, scheduled in summer 2015 in Berlin.

**Singapore**, 20 November 2013

Dr. Jan van Tol

President, *International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature*