



World Congress of Herpetology Newsletter

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Strengthening our collective commitment to the Aotearoa Climate Change Declaration: Ecological Responsibility at the WCH10

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Introduction

At the 9th World Congress of Herpetology in Dunedin, New Zealand, our collective voice to address the urgent need for global ecological responsibility rose to become a formal declaration. As the world grapples with the consequences of climate change and anthropogenic environmental degradation, we encourage WCH10 participants to re-declare their commitment to reducing their ecological footprint and working towards a more sustainable future for everyone. This commitment not only acknowledges the severity of the challenges but also encourages all attendees to actively participate in efforts to mitigate these issues, before, during, and after the WCH10.

Our collective commitment can be seen in the [Aotearoa Climate Change Declaration](#) of the 9th World Congress of Herpetology and herein, we offer some information on progress as well as humble advice in lieu of the guidelines set forth in Dunedin.

Carbon Mitigation in Travel

Acknowledging the environmental impact of travel to the congress, we suggest that where possible, participants carbon-mitigate their air travel through reputable and certified avenues. At WCH10 we will endeavour to collect information on the proportion of delegates who offset their travel. Our ultimate goal is to transform the World Congress into a 100% carbon-neutral event.

The Malaysia Aviation Group has provided information about how to carbon offset flights here:



Promoting Sustainability

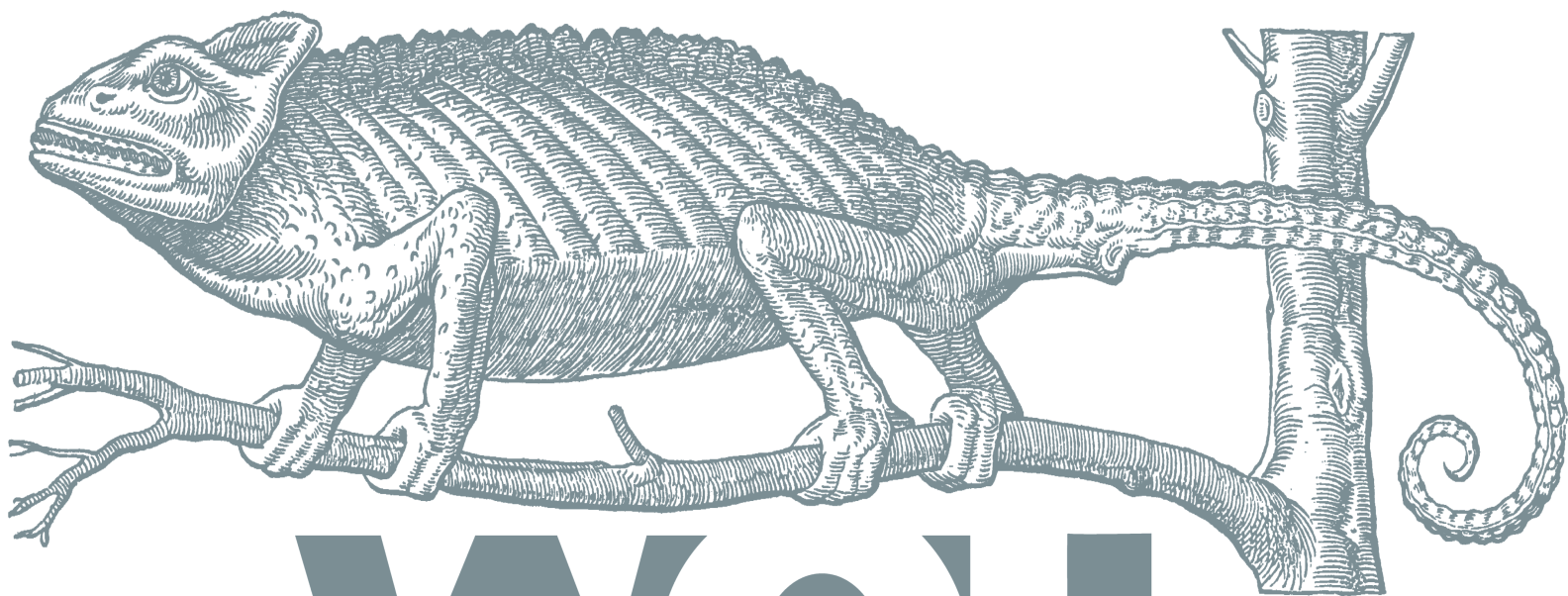
Sarawak currently sources over 60% of its energy from renewable sources. In our pursuit of ecological harmony, we are working with the congress venue and hotels to try and adopt sustainable materials, and a preference for local and low-impact food options for the WCH10. The Borneo Conference Centre Kuching (BCCK) manages its food waste through a local farm using a bioconversion process. This involves recycling segregated waste into organic fertilizers that produce pesticide and chemical-free plants. Likewise, BCCK has gained support from its food suppliers, some of whom have chosen to work with the farm, promoting long-term sustainability in the community. These endeavours include reduced consumption of meat and dairy, and promotion of locally-sourced foods. WCH10 merchandise will be produced from sustainably harvested sources, such as recycled paper and biodegradable products. We also emphasize the importance of transparency in the services provided during the Congress, including transportation, accommodation, and catering, while recognizing and supporting indigenous and local economies.

Biodiversity Protection

We underscore the significance of increased protection for biodiversity and wild ecosystems. Preserving our planet's rich biodiversity is crucial for a sustainable future. Part of the way we can collectively support conservation efforts is through responsible eco-tourism. While we realize that not all tourism is ecologically minded or sustainable, we encourage WCH10 participants to travel in Borneo and support protected areas and tour companies that promote biodiversity conservation and the livelihoods of local communities. In this way, we hope to reduce unsustainable consumerism while enhancing awareness and understanding of viable solutions to environmental problems.

This article therefore serves as a rallying cry for all participants of the 10th World Congress of Herpetology, as well as an invitation to the wider global community, to join hands and work tirelessly to reduce our negative environmental impact. Together, we can strive for a more sustainable, equitable, and harmonious world, preserving the planet's ecological workings for future generations.





WCH

World Congress of Herpetology

The World Congress of Herpetology (WCH) is an International Scientific Nonprofit Organization that is also a Scientific Member of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS). The mission of the World Congress of Herpetology is to promote herpetological research, education, and conservation, by facilitating communication between individuals, societies, and other organisations engaged in the study of amphibians and reptiles.

The aim of the WCH newsletter is to provide a means of communication during the period between WCH congresses that are typically held every three to five years. We want it to be a means of communication between the WCH Executive Committee (EC), the International Herpetological Committee (IHC), and the global herpetological community, and a place to feature ongoing actions being taken to study amphibians and reptiles by individuals and herpetological societies globally. It will be published bi-annually in June and December.

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