



World Congress of Herpetology

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Introducing the 10th World Congress of Herpetology 2024 Kuching, Sarawak, Borneo

WCH 10



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At the 9th World Congress of Herpetology, January 2020, held in Dunedin, New Zealand, the Executive Committee of the Congress decided to award the rights to organise the next Congress, in the year 2024, to Malaysia, in the city of Kuching, in Sarawak State, on the island of Borneo.

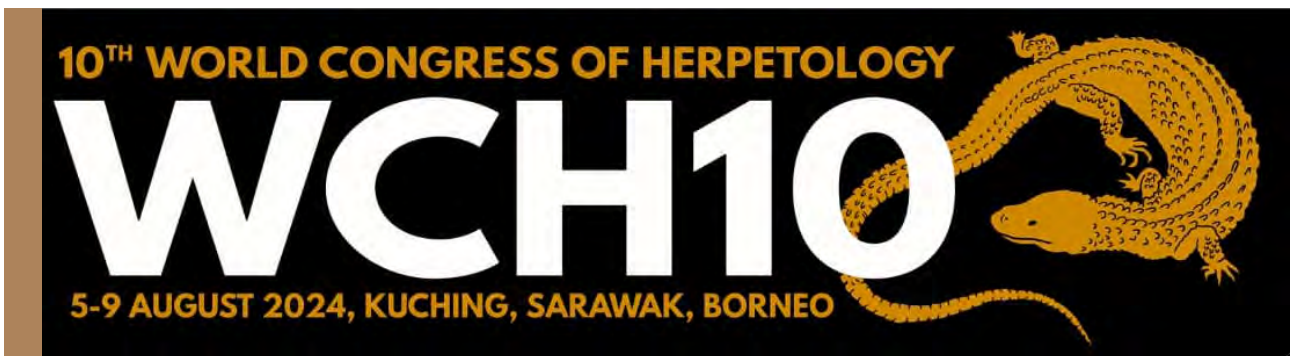


Fig. 1. The official logo of the 10th World Congress of Herpetology, depicting the Bornean endemic, earless monitor lizard, *Lanthanotus borneensis*.

Sarawak is the largest among Malaysia's 13 states, covering an area of 125,000 km² (approximately the size of Greece), and home to a human population of 2.8 million. Kuching enjoys good connectivity with regional airline hubs of Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, and has numerous direct international flights. Further, passport-holders from over 150 nations enjoy visa-free entry for purposes of tourism and conferences. Local logistics are up to international standards, with all categories of hotels, food

and beverages to fit all budgets, and a highway system permitting ease of access from the city centre to forested areas, such as the State's National Parks. And without appearing to sound too touristy, Sarawak, is an ideal place to explore cultural heritage, go on your own wild adventure, take in natural wonders such as rainforests and mountains, sample some of the region's extraordinary and sometimes, bizarre cuisine, and of course, discover some of its exciting amphibians and reptiles.

In line with the '[Aotearoa Climate Change Declaration](#)', released at the 9th World Congress in Dunedin, it will be held in a certified green venue – the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCKK), with reduced carbon footprint, and purpose-built on an east-west access to mitigate the effects of solar gain; a mostly paperless Congress, with all documentation (including registration and programme book) provided in electronic form; and food locally sourced, as far as possible. Delegates for the Congress can avail of free transportation to and from the city centre, arranged daily by the Convention Centre.

The venue is located on the Kuching Isthmus and ringed by the Sarawak River. At about 15 minutes' drive from the City Centre and 20 minutes from the International Airport, its location can be called strategic.



Fig. 2. A view of Kuching, from the south bank of the city, showing Sarawak River and the State Legislative Building.



Fig. 3. The Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, venue of the 10th World Congress of Herpetology.

BCKK is an initiative of the Sarawak Government to host mega business gatherings, and has hosted, to date, about 1,400 events, totalling 1.7 million delegates and visitors from around the world.

Conceived with a green theme in mind, the venue's structural design was inspired by rainforests, with a roof akin to the leaf of the native Ririk (a member of the arrowroots, family Marantaceae), used by indigenous folks to cook, wrap and serve food. The Centre has 38,000 square metres of space, and a capacity for 5,000 delegates. The Centre offers a variety of services such as the latest in audio visual technical services, parking, wireless connectivity, transport for delegates, a business centre, prayer and child care areas, a restaurant, as well as media rooms. Further, BCKK has demonstrated its commitment to international quality standards and practices by achieving the ISO14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems (EMS), linked to environmental responsibility and improvement in environmental performance. Finally, with rapidly-emerging technologies permitting broadcasts that can cater to potentially travel-averse colleagues, 'virtual' sessions are planned to reach out to an even greater number of international participants, while not adding to increased carbon footprint.

Field trips, within the duration of the Congress as well as before and after the event can be organised to a variety of locations and habitats, from sea beaches and mangrove swamps to cool montane forests and limestone hills, all within an hour's drive from the City. Given its aseasonal climate, with rainfall spread throughout the year, amphibians and reptiles can be seen the year round, and with minimal effort – even city parks and gardens are home to many unusual and endemic Bornean species.



Fig. 4. The Great Hall, a cavernous room within the Centre, that can house over 2,000 delegates.

The more intrepid traveller may opt for the interiors of the island, accessible only via long-boat, followed by homestays with indigenous people and forays into rainforests. Or consider a visit to the State's UNESCO Site, Gunung Mulu National Park, a short direct flight out of Kuching, and home to some 200 species of amphibians and reptiles.

The organising team from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, in collaboration with Business Events Sarawak, Sarawak Tourism Board and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Sarawak, is excited to be able to welcome the world community of herpetologists to Kuching, the ultimate venue within this magical tropical destination.

I am grateful to Donny Tan, Jamie Wang and Alexander Sigau of Business Events Sarawak; Mona Monap and her staff from Place Borneo, Professional Conference Organiser, as well as Reuben Sharma and Pui Yong Min for their assistance in presenting the bid in Dunedin. Eric Chuo, Business Development and Marketing, BCKK, provided images of the Centre reproduced here. Finally, Team Sarawak thanks the participants of the 9th World Congress of Herpetology and the Executive Committee of the World Congress of Herpetology for awarding Kuching, Sarawak, Borneo, the rights to hold the 10th Congress.

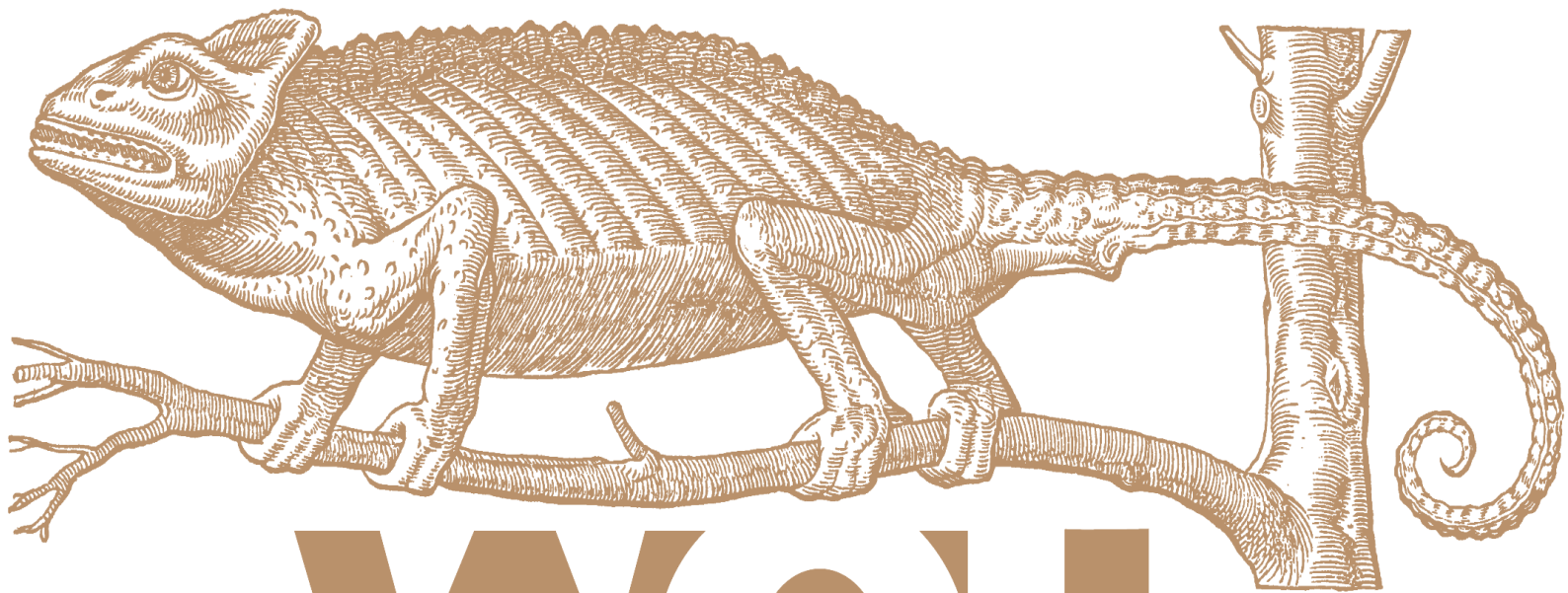
We look forward to welcoming you to Sarawak!



Fig. 5. Here are some of the exciting species you can encounter in Sarawak: the spiny hill turtle (*Heosemys spinosa*), the Bornean rainbow toad (*Ansonia latidisca*), false gharial (*Tomistoma schlegelii*), Sumatran pit viper (*Parias sumatranus*), and the Bornean horned lizard (*Harpesaurus borneensis*).

Fig. 6. A distinctive member of Borneo's herpetofauna is the Bornean earless monitor (*Lanthanotus borneensis*), described as the 'holy grail of herpetology', the species, genus and family (Lanthanotidae) being endemic to the island. This image forms the basis of the logo of the upcoming Congress.





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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