

Dear IPS Members,

I hope that this message finds everyone well, despite the pandemic conditions that challenge us all.

I am writing in my capacity as President of IPS, but on behalf of the IPS and SLAPrim officers and the chair of the local organizing committee, regarding our decision to postpone the 2020 IPS/SLAPrim Joint Meeting by a full year. The original Joint Meeting was scheduled to be held in Quito, Ecuador on August 16-22, 2020, but we need to reschedule this for a year later, to August 15-21, 2021. In addition, in consultation and with agreement from the hosts of the upcoming Malaysia Congress, we would then move the IPS Malaysia Congress to be 2 years later, in 2023 (instead of its current schedule of 2022), thereby retaining our 2-year interval between IPS Congresses by shifting them from even to odd years thereafter. Retaining this 2-year interval is important because of the financial implications for IPS. We ask you for your understanding and your support of this plan.

Please believe me when I say that we reached this decision after extensive discussion and consideration of all feasible alternatives, taking into account the availability of the venue in Quito, financial costs to IPS, and the feasibility of scheduling related events such as IPS/SLAPrim pre- and post-congress training programs. As you know, the spread and ongoing risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have imposed constraints on travel worldwide and have taxed local health services. Even the most optimistic scenarios are projecting travel constraints that extend beyond the scheduled August 2020 meeting date and in some scenarios, through 2020 or beyond. By postponing the Joint Meeting by one full year, to August 15-21, 2021, we hope to minimize health risks to joint meeting participants and our hosts alike, while also maximizing joint meeting participation.

Our local organizing committee chair, Stella de la Torre, has been able to confirm the availability of our venue in Quito for these new dates. Moreover, the three hotels that had offered discounted rates have kindly agreed to roll-over all reservations at the same discounted rates for the next dates. People holding reservations at these hotels would just need to request that their reservations are kept for August 2021. If you have reserved a room at another hotel, please contact them to explain the situation and ask if they will provide you the same roll-over service.

All registrations that were paid to IPS for the Joint Meeting will remain active and will also roll-over, with no added costs for the rescheduled Joint Meeting in 2021. Accepted abstracts will remain "accepted" as long as the associated registration remains active, and there will be an opportunity in early 2021 for anyone with an active registration to make updates to accepted abstracts if they wish to do so. We will also open a "second-chance" registration period for anyone who is not currently registered but would like to register and submit a new abstract at the regular rate for the rescheduled Joint Meeting in August 2021.

We really hope that everyone who has already registered will be able to participate on the new, postponed dates. If you cannot participate, you may request a refund on your registration by contacting IPS Treasurer Trudy Turner at trudy@uwm.edu by May 10. However, if you request a registration refund, your abstract(s) will be dropped from the program and you will need to re-register and re-submit your abstract(s) for re-review by the “second-chance” deadline, at the regular (not early-bird) registration rate. So, if you are planning to attend the Joint Meeting, we strongly encourage you to leave your registration (and abstract) active.

Leaving your registration active for the Joint Meeting of IPS/SLAPrim now scheduled for August 15-21, 2021, will help IPS to continue to support its grant programs across the research, conservation, captive care, and education activities in which we engage.

We have already been in contact with the IPS Council members, who represent our affiliated national and regional primatology societies. We hope that by making this decision far enough in advance we will minimize any scheduling or re-scheduling conflicts with other upcoming meetings. Moreover, we hope that by alerting everyone to this plan, the IPS/SLAPrim Joint Meeting can be something to look forward to, instead of another source of stress during these challenging times.

We will be posting reminders about rolling-over your hotel reservations and about the timing for new registration and abstract submissions in the coming weeks. Please check the IPS/SLAPrim Joint Meeting websites and social media for details.

Please, stay well, and thank you in advance for your understanding and support of IPS. On behalf of all of the IPS and SLAPrim officers, we look forward to seeing everyone in Quito next year.

Yours sincerely,

Karen B. Strier
President, IPS