

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY OF AQUATIC SCIENTISTS
45th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 20th August 2007, Institute for Natural Resources, UKZN, Scottsville,
Pietermaritzburg

1 WELCOME

Digby Cyrus welcomed those present. Mark Chutter passed on wishes for a successful meeting from Bob Crass.

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attending: Members: Digby Cyrus (in the chair), Rodney Owen, Wynand Vlok, Guy bate, Nick Rivers-Moore, Bonani Madikizela, Mark Chutter, Mike Coke, Chris Dickens, Tlali Ntholi. **Non-members:** Mncedi Nkosi.

Apologies: Barbara Curtis, Alan Whitfield, Llew Taylor, Graham Jewitt, Brian Marshall, Phumlele Gama, Hendrik Jerling, Leon Vivier, Janine Adams.

3 ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGENDA

The minutes were accepted. Proposed by Wynand Vlok and seconded by Nick Rivers-Moore.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 44TH AGM HELD AT PESTANA ROVUMA HOTEL, MAPUTO

None that were not covered under separate items on the agenda.

6 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The period covered by this report started with the very successful Conference in Maputo, hosted by members for the University of Johannesburg.

The Exco has continued to maintain linkages with its members via the issuing of regular e-mail Newsletters. In this way members have also been kept up to date with developments within the Society, particularly related to subscriptions, publication and editing of our Journal as well as matters related to access to the Journal papers. A major problem encountered has been related to the e-mailing of the Newsletters, firstly with numerous e-mails bouncing back and secondly with major bulk sending problems related to our server at Unizul. The latter of these has not yet been fully resolved.

During this period the decision, one of economics, was taken to cease publishing hard copies of our Journal and to move to on-line publication only. This was almost solely related to the costs of publication and the small number of members requesting hard copy subscriptions. The Journal however, still retains its SAPSE accreditation with the Department of Education. All 'current members' have been given online access to the current issues as well as the three or four previous year's issues that are also available on line. In addition we are in the first cycle that will see the issuing of three issues of the journal during 2007. The Honorary Editor will no doubt elaborate on these matters in his report.

In terms of subscription for the 2007, negotiations with NISC saw us being able to keep increases within the membership approved 10% per annum. Subscriptions for 2007 are R244 including VAT for all classes of members. Of this the Society retains R25 per member. This standardization of fees means that the cost to foreign (non-African) members has decreased substantially while the cost to African members outside of South Africa has gone up slightly more than the rest due to the requirement of including the VAT charge of the online subscription.

The obtaining of hosts for the annual Society Conference remains one of the major failures we have had to date! In 2005, thanks to the help of Grahamstown members we were able to have our own session at the Zoo Soc conference held at Rhodes. Last year the UJ members came to the party and organised the Maputo Conference. This year despite some Potch members indicating that a Joint conference with Zoo Soc there was an option, no volunteers came forward despite direct contacts having been made. As far as 2008 is concerned we are hoping that the PMB members have made the decision that they said they would give some thought to when approached in Maputo last year, and go ahead and organise a conference somewhere in the Drakensberg in June/July!!

Society Membership and the payment of subscriptions remain the most vexing issues that we have faced during this reporting period. Based on the Treasurer report 163 members were invoiced in 2006 and only 42% of them are currently paid up!! It appears that we are currently sitting at a membership of just over 125. However, if we were to exclude those members that have yet to pay their 2006 subscriptions, and some of you are sitting in this very room, then we would be down to under 80 members, this despite statements having been sent out for this year!! According to the constitution subscriptions are payable in advance each year!! A membership minimum of 125 is a critical level as below that the cost of the online subscription with NISC for the journal increases. At the same time if we can get to 150 or preferable 200 then the subscription rates will be lower.

We are currently in the process of preparing to make direct contact with each of these members, who have continued to receive the Journal (initially hardcopy & latterly online), in order to encourage them to pay their subscriptions. As part of this drive, members who became dormant and have not had access to the journal since 2005, will also be contacted in an attempt to get them to rejoin the Society. It is proposed that, as they have not had access to the journal for the past three years, they will be offered to be reinstated as members by paying the Societies share of R25 for 2005 & 2006 plus the current annual Subscription.

Conclusion

As I stand before you today I find it hard to believe that less than six months remain of my three year term of office. I want at the outset to thank the Zululand Exco, Hendrik Jerling & Rodney Owen as well as Wynand Vlok our Vice President for the support that they have given me over this period. During this last year an extra burden has been placed on their shoulders as I was on sabbatical for a full year and overseas for six months of that period. My thanks also go to all those members who contributed in different way during the year and to the PMB membership who have assisted with us holding our AGM here at the INR today.

At the end of the year the Presidency and Exco change hands and the Vice President with his team based at the University of Limpopo take over for the next three years. From our side we are committed to chasing the outstanding subscriptions and to try and recruit new members to the Society. In addition, before hand over we will ensure that the constitution has been updated with all amendments from these past three years and redistributed to the membership.

In conclusion, the Society still needs to grow to be able to sustain itself, in part we hope to achieve this by getting outstanding 2006 members to pay their subs and by approaching members who have been on the dormant list since 2005. However, we need all our members to assist with regard to the recruitment of new members.

We have a very well established, and long running Journal which has a good track record, that is now coming out three times a year. It is attracting an excellent selection of papers and still retains its Department of Education SAPSE rating. This means that University and affiliated staff publishing in our journal generate substantial financial subsidies into their organisations and in many instances to their own research. We should aim to keep our Journal in the position that it currently is.

I thank you for your attention,

Digby Cyrus

President SASAqS
Matters arising

The President's report was accepted with thanks.

The question of defaulters was raised. Accounts will be sent to all defaulters. The Treasurer had mentioned that payments by some institutions do not identify the member/s they are paying for.

7 TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's report was presented by Digby Cyrus.

Members

Invoices for 2006 subscriptions were posted to 163 members in August 2006. Members more than two years in arrears with their subscriptions were categorized as dormant and did not get access to the journal. The invoiced members were divided into the following categories: Local online journal (123 members), local printed journal (19 members), rest of Africa online (11 members), rest of Africa printed journal (2 members), overseas online (8 members). At year-end (31 December 2006) 68 members were fully paid-up (42%).

Subscription fees

Because we now publish our journal online only, all members, including international members, pay the same fee. Invoices for 2007 subscriptions were posted in July 2007.

Financial Statements

The financial statements below for the year-end 31 December 2006 from the auditor M. Livingston were presented. (Note: These were in hard copy only and handed out at the meeting)

Hendrik Jerling

Honorary Treasurer
19 Aug 2007

The report was accepted with thanks. Proposed by Mike Coke and seconded by Guy bate.

Matters arising

Vic Wepener will be asked to contact Diks Madikizela regarding fees outstanding by DWAF from the Maputo conference.

8 EDITOR'S REPORT

This year I want to report on nearly two years' worth of journal publishing.

In 2006 we published two issues of AJAS 31(2), which have turned out to be the last volume of our journal to be published in hard copy. Then in 2007 we not only went 'online-only', but also decided to increase production to three issues per year. This decision was based on the fact that, in recent years, we've published about 300 pages of copy per year in two rather fat issues, whereas NISC and I felt we could probably produce three 100-page issues per year and at the same time get a faster turn-around time, particularly for those papers that got refereed and accepted for publication quickly.

Volume 32(1) appeared online on about 15 June 2007. Volume 32(2) should have come out in July, but was delayed by having a particularly large number of figures that required re-drawing, and looks like it will now come online at the end of August. Finally, this month (early August) I submitted a set of manuscripts for Volume 32(3) so that NISC could get going with its production. It is scheduled to come out in October.

Manuscripts: In 2006 I received 62 manuscripts for consideration, a slight decline from 73 the previous year, and during that year 37 manuscripts were rejected for publication. To date in 2007 I have received 44 manuscripts, and already 13 of these have been rejected.

A total of 34 manuscripts were published in AJAS 31 [2006], which, at 328 pages in length, was an impressive 100 pages longer than Volume 30 [2005]. In addition, a total of 39 manuscripts and 4 book reviews have been, or are now being, published in Volume 32 [2007], but its final page length is at present unknown.

A disappointing point is that two of my book-reviewers have not submitted their reviews, despite pressure from me, and have also not responded to e-mails requesting that they either submit their reviews or return the relevant books. I regard these books and reviews as lost.

Table 1. Analysis of the Journal from 2001 to 2006

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 to date
MSS received		31	47	57	73	62	(44)
Volume Number	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Total No. of pages	147	174	195	291	221	328	
Total No. of papers	19	20	23	32	28	34	39
Total No. of book reviews	1	7	3	8	9	5	4
Authorship							
SASaQs members	13	10	8	8	9	7	5
Non-members	6	6	13	24	19	24	33
Number of items published per region							
South Africa	16	17	10	14	11	20	12
Southern Africa	2	1	7	9	6	4	9
Africa	0	2	6	9	10	10	16
Overseas	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	19	20	23	32	28	34	38

Sub-Editors: In 2007 I started a system of using sub-editors, each of whom oversaw the refereeing process for selected manuscripts within their personal fields of interest. This worked well, by and large, and took some of the pressure off me. Seven sub-editors agreed to assist me, taking between one and four manuscripts each, thus relieving me of 16 of the 115 manuscripts currently on hand.

Publishing options: NISC made it clear that it was uneconomic to continue publishing in hard copy for only 169 subscribers and so we agreed to go online-only. This has not yet resulted in a faster production time for issues of the journal, although it would appear to promise such a result. The ultimate time lag between manuscript submission and eventual publication still depends very largely upon the quality of the manuscript, the willingness of referees and authors to cooperate in the refereeing and revision process, and the ability of NISC staff to turn accepted manuscripts into publishable copy.

Table 2: AJAS sales statistics : 2004-2007 (data from NISC)

	2004	2005	2006	2007
African Institution	3	3	3	6
African Society	8	1	7	8
International Institution	18	16	21	12
International Society Member	5	7	5	7
SA Institution	13	13	12	14
SA Society Member	123	146	122	127
TOTAL	170	186	170	174

In May 2006 NISC produced a 6-page “AJAS publishing overview” setting out the pricing structure of our journal, its subscription management, marketing, visibility, online publishing, rating and indexing, and its publication process. In addition it gave feedback on NISC’s production process. NISC recommended a meeting between SASAqS executive and NISC staff to iron out certain difficulties, but this has not taken place.

During the year I investigated some alternative publishing options. Elsevier proposed a 7-year publishing contract with us under which SASAqS would pay them \$20 000 (R152 600) per year for the production of AJAS, plus an online manuscript submission and management platform. SASAqS members would then buy online access to the journal for \$25 (R190) per year each. This proposal was clearly beyond our means.

For a 100-page issue of AJAS a layout artist in Howick, Fiona Crooks, has quoted ‘about’ R3 000 to set out the text and figures, and a local printer, Zwavhudi Ltd, quoted R21 400 to print 120 hard copies. That totals about R24 400 per journal issue. This approach would still leave me with the full editing load, part of which is currently undertaken by NISC, and would not include online access or visibility for the journal.

These avenues and options remain open for discussion by SASAqS members.

ASSAf publishing report: Arising from questionnaires sent to journal editors, the Academy of Science of South Africa [ASSAf] published a 127-page report entitled “Report on a strategic approach to research publishing in South Africa” and have subsequently established an “Editors Forum for Scholarly Journals”. I did not attend the Forum’s inaugural meeting. ASSAf’s objective is “to assist the publishing of research journals in South Africa in a new operating environment where Open Access would be widely aspired to, ensuring much higher visibility of South African articles in the international system, and a purposeful system of support.” I will continue to explore the potential impact of ASSAF’s initiative on our journal.

Mike Coke
Editor, African Journal of Aquatic Science

The Editor’s report was accepted with thanks.

Matters arising

Page charges were confirmed as being charged by NISC at R137 per page from a SA address.

The question of membership especially wrt the Journal was raised as many publications can be ordered online with no need to belong to a Society. It was agreed that the SAPSE status of the Journal must be protected, especially for university employed academics. Mike Coke was requested to ask NISC what they get out of publishing AJAqS.

Mike was asked to request that NISC sends a list of titles with each new issue. The Secretary can include this in the newsletter.

9 COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

None

10 CONFERENCES

- 2008 Chris Dickens undertook to investigate a conference in the Drakensberg in mid June.
- 2009 A conference in PE or Cape Town to be investigated.
- 2010 SIL. Jan Roos attended the Montreal conference. No direct approach has been made to SASAqS. Wynand to contact Jan Roos.

Diks Madikizela suggested that SASAqS approach DWAF to jointly fund a conference.

Diks to send the Hon Secretary details of the UNEP conference for the newsletter.

11 AWARDS

None.

12 HONORARIA

The honorarium paid to the Honorary Editor will be continued.

13 CONSTITUTION AND BYE-LAWS

Digby Cyrus proposed that members who wish to terminate their membership must resign in writing. There was some concern on legal aspects of this as well as the it could create negative perceptions. It was agreed that a 'friendly reminder' was the best approach at this stage.

The term 'dormant' wrt membership was queried. It was suggested that the Society be stricter in setting a payment deadline after which defaulters would no longer be considered members.

14 GENERAL

Digby Cyrus reported that although approval was received from the Maputo AGM for NISC to manage and collect membership fees, it was to be at no cost to the Society. NISC, however, wanted to charge so this was not taken up so the agreed change to the constitution was not implemented.

The new committee under Wynand Vlok takes over in January 2008. Wynand and Digby to liaise wrt election of a vice president to become 'president – elect' for the term after Wynand. Wynand to confirm Hon Secretary and Treasurer positions.

Chris Dickens announced that Invertebrate Guidelines numbers 10 (Coleoptera) and 1 (Introduction) were available.

The meeting closed at 14h30.

Signed

DR RK Owen
Hon Secretary

Date

Accepted

President (D. Cyrus)

Date