

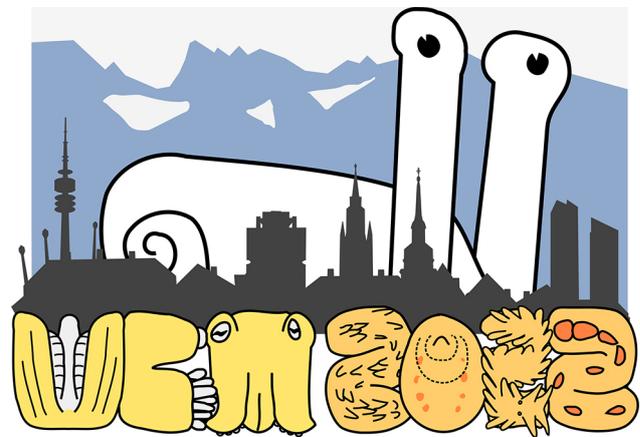
WORLD CONGRESS OF MALACOLOGY 2022

CONFERENCE REPORT

In 2022, as every three years, Unitas Malacologica organised the World Congress of Malacology (WCM). This time the congress was held in Europe, in Munich, Germany on August 1–5, 2022. The co-organisers of the congress were Staatliche Naturwissenschaftliche Sammlungen Bayerns, Technische Universität München, and Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München, which hosted WCM on its campus of the Faculty of Biology and Medicine.

The congress gathered 320 participants from 38 countries (Figs 1–4). The representation of European countries was very strong, which was not surprising due to the location of the congress. Nevertheless, there were scientists from all inhabited continents. Poland was represented by 13 scientists from 7 institutions and universities (Fig. 5). The most numerous were a group of researchers from the Institute of Paleobiology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw (5 people). Two Kraków institutions, the Jagiellonian University and the Institute of Nature Conservation of the Polish Academy of Sciences were each represented by two persons. There was also one representative of the University of Warsaw, the University of Łódź, the Museum of Natural History of the University of Wrocław and the Suwalski Landscape Park.

Plenary sessions were held every morning, and then participants moved to 4 parallel sessions. There were 10 main symposia to choose from: Exploration, biodiversity and systematics of mollusc (a symposium in honour of Philippe Bouchet); Mollusc evolutionary history; Molluscan conservation (American Malacological Society President's symposium); Continental molluscs facing environmental changes; Systematics and evolution of (not only marine) Heterobranchia; The ecology of fossil and extant molluscs; Molluscs as parasites and victims of parasitism; The EvoDevo corner; Insular ecosystems as cradles of mollusc biodiversity and evolution; Volunteers in



World Congress of Malacology Munich 2022

malacology. There were also open sessions, where people could present research on other topics such as Biogeography; Diversification and speciation in terrestrial molluscs; Environmental stress/adaptation; The malacological community; The neglected classes; Phylogeny; Species delineation; EvoDevo and vision; All about light. Some sessions were only available for posters: Diversity and distribution; Genomics; Morphology. The poster session was held on the first evening in the main hall, and the posters remained on display until the end of the congress. The hall was a bustling place with registration, sponsors' stands (scientific publishers with malacological books), and participants spent their breaks here, enjoying snacks and having interesting conversations.

The motto of the congress was "Meeting of generations". The organisers encouraged participation in WCM among young malacologists from all over the globe, as they should get in contact and should exchange ideas and experiences with established scientists. Altogether, participants presented 213 speeches (55 by students) and 86 posters (33 prepared by students). As can be seen from this number, many young malacologists came to congress. All of them



Fig. 1. Registration desk. Photo: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD

took part in the competition for the best presentation. Finally, the 3 best talks and the 3 best posters were awarded prizes. But *Unitas Malacologica* had one more surprise for them. All the winners may participate in the next WCM (3 years hence) without any fee.

Apart from traditional scientific sessions, it was possible to take part in accompanying events. One of them was Science Slam. Any participant could submit their speech in this unusual session and present themselves, their research and plans for the future. There were no rules here, just a limited time – 6 minutes! Creativity was appreciated and certain-



Fig. 2. Sponsors' stand with books. Photo: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD



Fig. 3. Waiting for the group photo. On the left, Prof. dr Gerhard Haszprunar, President of Unitas Malacologica and Congress Organizing Committee. Photo: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD

ly the courage to perform in an unusual style. The participants rose to the occasion – there were films, artistic performances, jokes, monologues and props. There was no boredom at all. The respected audience turned into an enthusiastic public that emotionally rewarded the speeches with applause and shouts.

The organisers, based on the applause of the audience, awarded the participants with prizes for the best performances. Another interesting event was the auction. The organisers put up for auction many of the latest malacological books. Various items donated by participants of the congress have also found



Fig. 4. A farewell feast in Bavarian style. Photo: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD



Fig. 5. Polish malacologists at WCM2022. Photo: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD

their way here – incl. jewellery, clothes, figurines, gadgets ... of course, everything in the shape of molluscs or decorated with malacological motifs. The

total proceeds from the auction fed the scholarship fund for travel grants for young scientists for the next WCM.



Fig. 6. Delicious snacks are waiting... Photo: ANNA SULIKOWSKA-DROZD



The organisers tried their best to make the congress a climate-friendly event. Printing of materials was limited to a minimum. A detailed program was printed in small numbers, and participants were encouraged to use the electronic version of the program. The Book of abstracts was available only in electronic version and it is still possible to download it at the WCM2022 site. Snacks and drinks were provided by local companies and there was a rich offer of vegan and vegetarian food (Fig. 6). Also, disposable packaging was kept to a minimum. Snacks were served on napkins or in reusable dishes, and cold drinks

were only in returnable bottles. Congress participants could use public transport for free. Everyone received a ticket enabling travel within the city and the entire country by public transport including regional railways.

This year's congress was a great scientific and social event. According to current plans, the next World Congress of Malacology will be held in Brazil in 2025.

MAGDALENA MARZEC
Suwalski Landscape Park, Poland
(e-mail: magdamarzec@poczta.onet.pl)