

## Proposed change to the Bylaws of the SICB Division of Invertebrate Zoology

A proposal to make changes in the Bylaws of the Division of Invertebrate Zoology is submitted below for consideration by members of the division. There will be a period of at least 60 days to review and discuss the proposal on the SICB - Division of Invertebrate Zoology discussion board (<http://www.sicb.org/divisions/DIZ/bbdiz/>) in advance of any vote taken at the annual meeting in New Orleans.

The proposal presents a possible change to our voting operations, moving from the current, at-meeting voting system to an electronic system coincident with elections after prior posting in the newsletter, or at other times if deemed necessary. **It is expected that this bylaws amendment will be brought to a vote at the 2017 annual DIZ business meeting.**

In addition, we will soon post a proposal (at <http://sicb.org/divisions/DIZ/bylawrevs2016.php>) for modifications to our competition for Best Student Presentations at the annual meetings. A vote on this proposal will not be taken at the annual meeting, but we hope to discuss it at the January meeting, after DIZ members have had a chance to review and discuss the proposal via the DIZ discussion board.

### Proposed change to Bylaws Article XV. Amendments

#### *Current Language:*

These bylaws may be amended at any annual business meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present, provided that the text of the proposed amendments has been sent to all members of the Division at least 60 days in advance of the annual business meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.

Proposed Amendment (additions are indicated as bold underline and deletions as strikethrough):

~~These bylaws may be amended at any annual business meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present, provided that the text of the proposed amendments has been sent to all members of the Division at least 60 days in advance of the annual business meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.~~ **by a two-thirds vote of DIZ members returning ballots in the Society's annual spring elections or a special election called for the purpose of amending the bylaws, provided that the text of the proposed amendment has been communicated to the membership at least one month prior to voting. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee of the Division to assure that opportunities for discussion, either verbal or written, occur before a ballot is taken. Members wishing to propose amendments are encouraged to work with the Executive Committee of the Division to put the proposal on the agenda for discussion at the annual DIZ business meeting preceding the election in which the vote will be held.**

#### Rationale for proposed change:

1. *These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of DIZ members returning ballots in the Society's annual spring elections or a special election called for the purpose of amending the bylaws ...*
  - The current language is at odds with the rules for the society overall, and contradicts rules laid out in the Divisional Secretary's manual.

- Voting at the business meeting disenfranchises members who cannot attend the meeting. All dues-paying members should have the opportunity to vote. Folding the bylaws ballot into the SICB elections is the most straightforward way to accomplish this. But, in the event that the officers deem it necessary, a special election would also be acceptable.
  - DIZ averages nearly 500 members (the number fluctuates year to year), yet fewer than 20 individuals generally attend business meetings. In no way is this a quorum. Under the current system, it would be possible to pass an amendment that is actually opposed by most members. We should not have rules that make it possible to subvert the will of the membership.
2. *...provided that the text of the proposed amendment has been communicated to the membership at least one month prior to voting...*
- The text of the proposed amendment will usually be posted on the website, and should also be in the spring newsletter (either by publishing the full proposal or by providing a link to the proposal). We have left the method of communication open to allow for flexibility.
3. *It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee of the Division to assure that opportunities for discussion, either verbal or written, occur before a ballot is taken.*
- All members should have the opportunity to discuss an amendment before voting on it. Discussion at the business meeting is one very good way to do this (more on this below).
  - The executive committee may wish to extend opportunities for discussion beyond the business meeting, for example to the DIZ wiki, to include people who cannot attend the meeting. The best mechanism for such discussion may change over time, therefore we have not specified the wiki or the website in the bylaws. We leave the decision about how best to discharge this responsibility to the DIZ executive committee.
4. *Members wishing to propose amendments are encouraged to work with the Executive Committee of the Division to put the proposal on the agenda for discussion at the annual business meeting preceding the election in which the vote will be held.*
- Members wishing to propose an amendment should at minimum inform the executive committee that they plan to do so, so that the executive committee can discharge their duty to facilitate discussion (it would be excellent to also solicit input from the committee, but that's not required).
  - Discussing proposed amendments at the business meeting is encouraged because it ensures that the discussion is recorded in the minutes, thus allowing members who could not attend to see what was discussed and ensuring that points of debate are entered into the record.
  - We are unwilling, however, to absolutely require that amendments be discussed at the meeting – circumstances may not always allow this, and some flexibility is desirable.