

Dear members,

I hope that you are doing well, despite the numerous difficulties we are facing these days. I guess that many of you are unable to reach your tropical study sites, to follow your on-going experiments and surveys, or to interact in person with colleagues in the field and partners from local institutions. The consequences of this health crisis are tremendous, unique in our history, and never experienced during times of peace in Europe. But it is also critical for tropical countries, since their inhabitants and ecosystems are now facing additional threats and pressures, as if climate change and global warming were not enough.

Although we are trying to maintain social and scientific contacts via virtual meetings, the enthusiasm and motivation for these tools is already eroding, and we do not yet see an end to this state of isolation. As ecologists, we know well what it means if we cannot maintain and restore those “sociological corridors”. Our Society also serves that purpose for its members.

In this context, we had an unscheduled virtual gtoe board meeting on Monday 7 September afternoon. Since the COVID situation is likely to worsen over the next months, and because the Society already lost a substantial amount of money with the cancellation of the 2020 conference in Leipzig (see our latest Newsletter), we are unable to take another risk. Therefore, in agreement with the organizers of the Prague conference and our Professional Congress Organizer KCS Kuhlmann Convention Service, the Executive and Scientific Advisory Board of the Society of Tropical Ecology jointly decided to **cancel the planned Prague meeting in February 2021**. We are now working on the changed schedule for future annual conferences and will keep you informed. This decision is certainly disappointing for all of us, given that we had little interactions since the Edinburgh meeting in 2019. The board certainly acknowledges that we need to see each other in person, present our achievements, to collaborate, to welcome colleagues from abroad, and generally think to the future, as soon as the COVID situation allows us to do so.

In the meantime, and awaiting better days, we decided to organize a **small, inspiring, virtual Tropical Ecology Event in early 2021 in conjunction with the next virtual general assembly** which will also comprise the election of all members of the Executive and Scientific Advisory Board of the Society. This will be an opportunity to refresh the Board and enrich the society. We will inform you soon about the underlying procedures.

Please be patient and stay with us throughout 2021 and beyond, and **please pay your open membership fees (2019 & 2020) via bank transfer**, if you have not yet done so (a respective letter was sent out to all members in August!), because the Society is there to serve you but can only do so with your support during these difficult times.

Pierre-Michel Forget
President Society for Tropical Ecology