

# EBCC

European Bird Census Council



every bird counts

*The European Bird Census Council (EBCC) is an association of like-minded expert ornithologists co-operating in various ways to improve bird monitoring and atlas work in Europe, and thereby inform and improve the management and conservation of bird populations. It aims to promote exchange of news, ideas and expertise through a journal and a programme of workshops and conferences. It works closely with ornithological and conservation organisations, and encourages links between ornithologists, land managers and policy makers. The EBCC oversees specialist working groups and monitoring projects; these have included the atlas of European breeding birds, and currently the pan-European common bird monitoring scheme and the second European atlas.*

## Chairman's report September 2013 to September 2016

### 1. Membership of the Board

Ruud Foppen (Chairman, The Netherlands)  
David Noble (Secretary, UK)  
Anny Anselin (Treasurer, Editor *Bird Census News*, Belgium)  
Oskars Keiřs (Delegate Officer, Latvia)  
Lluís Brotons (Data Officer, Spain)  
Henning Heldbjerg (Denmark)  
Mikhael Kalyakin (Russia)  
Verena Keller (Switzerland)  
Aleksi Lehikoinen (Finland)  
Danae Portolou (Greece)

The Board has also called upon the expertise of the following observers/advisors:

Mark Eaton (observer for RSPB, UK)  
Ian Burfield (observer for BirdLife International, UK), until 2014  
Ivan Ramirez (observer for BirdLife International, UK), from 2014  
Szabolcs Nagy (observer for Wetlands International, The Netherlands)  
Gabriel Gargallo (coordinator EBP project, Spain)  
Petr Vořířek (coordinator PECBMS/EBBA2)  
Jana řkorpilová & Alena Klvaňová (Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme)  
Marina Kipson (EBBA2)  
Anna Gamero (Scientist PECBMS)  
Kai Gedeon (2016 Conference Organising Committee, Germany)

### 2. Meetings of the Board

The Board has met twice a year since the last Annual General Meeting in Cluj, Romania in 2013, with its 47th to 52th meeting held in: Istanbul, Turkey (March 2014), Evora, Portugal (October 2014), Kiev, Ukraine (April 2015), Mikulov, Czech Republic (November 2015) and Sarajevo, Bosnia (April 2016). The Minutes and Agendas from Board meetings are posted routinely on the EBCC website allowing Delegates and others to learn more about our work (see: <http://www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=11>). Regularly we inform all the delegates by Newsletters.

### **3. Financial position (Anny Anselin)**

The financial position of the EBCC at the moment is healthy. A full financial report will be presented by the Treasurer at the General Meeting of the Association and incorporated into the minutes of the meeting. The balance at the end of 2015 was plus € 12000,00 thanks to some large income resources for data delivery. Costs mostly stemmed from travel costs associated with Board meetings (for delegates from institutions with limited financial resources).

Thanks to a NLBIF (Dutch node of GBIF) funding opportunity we were able to make our atlas data freely available in the GBIF portal. Therefore it is expected that there will be no future deliveries of data from the first atlas and so we lose this potential source of income. Thanks to the fair amount of capital at this moment this has no immediate consequences but the Board will seek for alternative sources of income for the near future.

### **4. Conference proceedings**

Conference proceedings from the 19th EBCC conference in Cluj in 2013 will be published soon in a Romanian Ornithological Journal. We will keep all the contributors informed.

### **5. Bird Census News (Anny Anselin)**

Since 2012 Bird Census News is in digital format (pdf). The editorial team (Anny Anselin, Henning Heldbjerg, Mark Eaton) managed to get more than 25 papers published. We are very thankful to Olga Voltzit (Russia) for her excellent lay-out work and the Catalan Ornithological Society for the free use of the bird drawings by artist Toni Llobet.

Since the last conference, three volumes of *Bird Census News* have been published:

BCN 2013 volume 26/1-2: 64 pgs

BCN 2014 volume 27/1-2: 39 pgs

BCN 2015 volume 28/1-2: 74 pgs

Volume 26 was a special issue about the EBBA2 project with many insights from atlas work on the national level.

### **6. Provision of data from the first EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds (Lluís Brotons)**

EBCC has dealt with less than 10 requests for EBCC atlas data during the current reporting period. The Board seeks to assist such requests and makes data available for use following EBCC's guidelines for the provision and supply of atlas data. In some cases, EBCC has charged for data provision and supply but in most cases EBCC favours scientific involvement in the project to increase the potential impact of the collaboration. The Board assesses each request on its individual merits. We have witnessed a steady decline in requests for atlas data in the last couple of years. In 2015 we decided to make the data open access by providing them to the GBIF data repositories.

### **7. EBCC on the web (David Noble)**

EBCC's website [www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info) has been updated on a regular basis. The site is maintained by CSO (Czech Society for Ornithology, BirdLife Partner in Czech Republic) under a contract from the EBCC. Board members and observers contribute to the site and it is discussed at each Board meeting. We are especially grateful to David Noble from the BTO who has acted as our Web Champion and to Jana Škorpilová, Marina Kipson and Petr Voříšek who have largely been responsible for maintaining and updating content. The most active areas are the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Breeding Bird Atlas project (EBBA2), where news, information and outputs such as the latest Pan-European bird trends and indicators are regularly updated. Alongside this, there have been regular updates of Board agendas and minutes, *Bird Census News*, the Delegates List and Newsletter, and Country Reports, as well as information about new initiatives and scientific papers related to the EBCC or PECBMS. We encourage all delegates to view sections of the website related to their country, or initiatives they are involved, and provide us with information to update the website and to fill in gaps. In the longer term, the plan is to further develop and improve the website. The EBP website and demo viewer ([www.eurobirdportal.org](http://www.eurobirdportal.org)) was launched in June

2015 and is hosted and maintained by ICO (Catalan Ornithological Institute). This website introduces the project and shows a set of five different animated maps depicting the week by week distributional patterns of 50 species in five years (2010-2014) at a resolution of 30x30 km. The website links to the other main EBCC initiatives (PECBMS and EBBA2) and, so far, has received 46.185 visits from 34.210 different users (date: 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2016).

EBBA2 also has its own website ([www.ebba2.info](http://www.ebba2.info)), launched in 2015 and also communicates by facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/EBBA2.info/?fref=ts>). Both report on news, tips and tricks, announcements, foreign observer contributions for atlas work, interesting papers and atlas field work reports. All delegates are invited to contribute. Please contact Marina Kipson for any questions and remarks.

#### **8. Planning for the 20<sup>th</sup> International EBCC conference in Halle, Germany, September 2016 (Ruud Foppen)**

The organisation of international conferences of the EBCC remains a very high priority for EBCC. The Board designated Ruud Foppen as Conference officer, to act as contact point to the local organisers and to coordinate the scientific programme. Kai Gedeon (on behalf of the conference organising committee) has joined Board meetings several times since Cluj to discuss the preparation and organisation of the conference in Halle. The scientific content of the conference was prepared by a Scientific Programme Committee, chaired by Ruud Foppen. Members from the Board were Mark Eaton, Henning Heldbjerg, Verena Keller, Aleksi Lehikoinen, Oskars Keiss and David Noble and from the local organizing committee Stefan Garthe and Kai Gedeon.

#### **9. Liaison with Delegates and Newsletter (Oskar Keiss)**

The work of our Delegate Officer Oskars Keiss has allowed the EBCC to maintain and update an impressive list of Delegates. EBCC considers 47 countries with currently 89 confirmed national Delegates. We have two confirmed Delegates in 44 countries, one confirmed Delegate in one country, and two countries without confirmed Delegates. Starting in 2008, we have produced regularly Newsletters that are distributed to the EBCC Delegates. The Newsletters contain information and news about the work of the EBCC that is compiled by our delegates officer around each Board meeting. Delegates are warmly invited to contribute to the Newsletter and tell us about themselves and their news. Please contact our Delegate Officer with your ideas and suggestions, or talk to them and other Board members and observers in Halle.

#### **10. Pan-European monitoring - The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (Petr Voříšek, Jana Škorpilová, Anna Gamero, Alena Klvaňová)**

##### *Activities implemented, main results and achievements over the period October 2013 – August 2016*

The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) is a joint initiative of EBCC and BirdLife International that started in January 2002. PECBMS has established a large European network of collaborators – coordinators of national or regional monitoring schemes, EBCC delegates and/or BirdLife Partners. PECBMS is officially led by a project manager, Richard Gregory (based in the RSPB, UK), and coordinated by a central coordination unit (based in the CSO, Czech Republic) that consists of a project coordinator, Petr Voříšek, and technical assistants, Alena Klvaňová and Jana Škorpilová and research officer Anna Gamero. The project Steering and Technical Advisory Group (Ivan Ramirez (replaced Ian Burfield), Ruud Foppen, Richard Gregory, David Noble, Zdenek Vermousek) meets annually and oversees the work.

##### *PECBMS outputs – European and regional common bird indices and indicators*

The European indices and indicators have been updated four times since the last Chairman's report in 2010:

- 2014 update contained indices for 163 species and set of headline indicators for period until 2012 based on data from 27 countries
- 2015 update contained indices for 169 species and set of headline indicators for period until 2013 based on data from 28 countries
- 2016 update contained indices for 169 species and set of headline indicators for period until 2014 based on data from 28 countries

#### *Technological development in data collation, quality control and production of species indices and indicators*

We finished a transfer of computation technology from Statistics Netherlands to the CSO, the European indices and indicators are now fully produced in the PECBMS coordination office in Prague. However, Statistics Netherlands still plays an important role in supporting PECBMS and in advising on the calculation of European trends. In a longer term, cloud computing seems to be the way how to improve data analyses further. We have also developed on-line tools for data collation (i.e. national data provided to the PECBMS coordination unit in order to calculate European species indices and indicators) as well as the on-line tool for data quality control, which can be used by the national coordinators for checking their data.

#### *Indicators – further development*

We have organized several discussions with EU policy people with the aim to find a solution for using different versions of Farmland Bird Indicators at national level. Also an alternative method for benchmarking countries' performance has been developed, presented at the PECBMS workshop and discussed further. Although the discussions with EU policy people will probably continue, it seems the approach of using two versions of national FBI, i.e. one based on single European species classification and another one using national species selection, will be the most preferred. Thus, it comes back to initial phases of PECBMS, when we promoted such an approach. Further development of Forest Bird Indicator has been also in the centre of PECBMS activities. The niche based approach developed and promoted by Simon Butler and his team at the University of East Anglia is the approach taking the most attention. Apart of these standard indicators, PECBMS has been considering a new generation of indicators, which would be based on site level data. Such indicators could be a powerful tool for measuring effectiveness of various conservation and policy measures at large scales.

#### *Workshop, November 2015, Mikulov*

A workshop involving all cooperating individuals and representatives of cooperating organisations was organised 2-5 November 2015 in Mikulov, Czechia. The workshop was organised back to back with the meetings of other two EBCC initiatives, EBBA2 and EBP. 96 participants from 41 countries took part. The workshop materials (presentations, discussion documents) were made available at the web site ([http://bigfiles.birdlife.cz/ebcc/PECBMS\\_workshop2015/](http://bigfiles.birdlife.cz/ebcc/PECBMS_workshop2015/)). A paper informing about the workshop and its conclusions was also published in Bird Census News.

#### *Research*

PECBMS recruited a person for a new position of a research officer- Anna Gamero has started working in 2014. The PECBMS research priorities are within an area of analyses of common bird monitoring data for policy relevant studies incl. management oriented analyses. Research oriented on description and understanding of bird population trends also belongs to PECBMS priorities. Such a research has been done also in close cooperation with external researchers from universities and other research institutes. Resulting scientific papers are listed below.

#### *Project outputs publications and dissemination*

Indices and indicators published:

- On the EBCC website (<http://www.ebcc.info>)
- In the leaflet 'Population Trends of Common European Breeding Birds' - published 2016
- In a series of scientific publications – see below
- In talks and presentations at meetings and conferences

#### *Other activities*

- Regular reports on the EBCC website (ca. twice per year)
- Regular reporting to EBCC Board (twice per year)
- Update of PECBMS website

#### *Assistance to national monitoring schemes*

PECBMS assisted coordinators in various tasks either via e-mail communication or via personal contact. We assisted national coordinators with calculation of indices, we helped in lobbying for funding, in monitoring design and data management.

#### *Funding*

Since its inception in 2002, the scheme has been continuously supported by the RSPB. It has also been supported financially by the European Commission since 2006. However, the financial support from EC was interrupted from July 2012 - June 2013. Since July 2013, the European Commission re-allocated support for PECBMS, with the new grant running from July 2013 until June 2016. Unfortunately, the European Commission has not provided further support for PECBMS since July 2016. Because we were informed about the decision at the last minute, PECBMS core activities had to be temporarily suspended. We have been working on raising the funds for re-starting the programme as soon as possible.

### **11. Spatial Modelling Working Group (SMOG, Lluís Brotons)**

The work of the Spatial Modelling Working Group (SMOG) has continued to develop as capacity and opportunities have allowed. Spatial modelling raises both difficult technical questions and difficult practical questions about data access that need to be overcome for the work to develop. Both of these aspects in part explain modest progress by the working group, although this is now set to change. In addition to the activities derived from the SCALES and EUBON projects (discussed below), the group has agreed to stay involved in EBCC specific priority projects. The priorities in this line have been identified as the contribution to the new European atlas (EBBA2) and the development of specific products within PECBMS. The main involvement during 2015-2016 have revolved around the support of activity planning for EBBA2 and to this objective a working group within SMOG has been set up. This group has met twice in Barcelona (September 2015 and April 2016) to prepare a working document describing spatial modelling objectives for the atlas. A new postdoc working in collaboration with SMOG and Sempach, Pietro Milanese, is now coordinating the implementation of the planned modelling activities within the EBBA2 developments.

### **12. EBBA2– Second European Breeding Bird Atlas (Verena Keller)**

#### *Main activities and achievements*

With the official fieldwork period for EBBA2 defined as lasting from 2013 to 2017, project activities focused on promoting, organising and supporting data collection. The atlas steering committee (ASC) set up by the board in 2011, supervised and supported the work of the atlas coordination team. It consisted of the following members: Verena Keller (chair), Hans-Günther Bauer, Lluís Brotons, Ian Burfield (until 2014), replaced by Ivan Ramirez (from 2014), Mark Eaton, Ruud Foppen, Mikhail Kalyakin, David Noble, and Aleksii Lehtikainen (from 2015). The ASC held its meetings, usually preceding board meetings, in Istanbul (spring 2014), Evora (autumn 2014), Kiev (spring 2015) and Sarajevo (spring 2016). Meetings were coordinated with training workshops for local ornithologists and meetings with national coordinators.

#### *European Coordination*

Spreading the coordination over the three pillars Swiss Ornithological Institute in Sempach (SOI), Czech Society for Ornithology in Prague (CSO) and Catalan Ornithological Institute in Barcelona (ICO) proved to be an effective way of bringing the project forward. In Sempach, Verena Keller, chair of the Atlas Steering Committee (ASC) manages the project and leads the coordination team. In Prague, Petr Vorisek is responsible for the general coordination, the EBBA2 network consisting of national coordinators and other partners, and information. In August 2014 Martin Kupka joined him as network and communication officer for a one-year half-time contract. In October 2015 he was replaced by Marina Kipson, now working on a full-time basis. Since July 2016, Jana Skorpilova joined the team in Prague temporarily (till the end of 2016) too. In Barcelona, Sergi Herrando coordinates data collection, storage and analysis. From 2015 Marti Franch joined the team, supported by other staff of ICO (mainly Marc Anton) and of the Catalan Forestry Centre (Dani Villero and Magda Pla). In 2016 Pietro Milanese was employed by the Swiss Ornithological Institute to start work on modelling distribution.

### *Funding*

Until 2013 the small amounts of funding available were mainly provided by participating organisations and EBCC research income. In 2014 the situation improved thanks to a one-off grant by the Swiss Federal Department for the Environment and an annual contribution by a Swiss foundation securing core funding for the European coordination. In 2015, the MAVA Foundation decided to provide a grant to the Swiss Ornithological Institute to support the fieldwork period for the years 2015 to 2017. Part of the funding goes directly to countries in east and southeast Europe, the other for providing support by the European coordination team.

### *Data collection and support at national level*

Data collection poses a particular challenge in countries which have never carried out atlas work, lack resources at coordination level and for fieldwork. Following the 2013 workshop in Barcelona organised for national coordinators having indicated a need for support several countries set up data collection successfully but in others the situation remained difficult. In 2014 specific assistance to around a dozen countries was given by supplying or adapting national grids or advising on methodology and implementation of national atlas projects. The grant from the MAVA foundation was a turning point. The support by the European coordination team could be increased, both in the form of training for fieldwork and individual support to national coordinators. In 2015 training workshops were held in Ukraine and Serbia, in 2016 in Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Belarus, and Moldova. Prior to the MAVA grant, a training workshop was also organised in Istanbul (2014) and workshop for five Caucasian countries without field training in Tbilisi, Georgia (2016). An additional workshop on data management was organised jointly with Euronatur for Western Balkan countries. Small grants to support fieldwork and/or the coordination at national level were given to 14 countries in 2015 and to 20 in 2016. A general workshop for all national coordinators was organised in 2016 in Mikulov, back to back with the PECBMS and EBP workshops.

Data collection by observers visiting other countries was promoted through presentations, internet and Facebook, and the provision of guidelines. Contact with the main European online portals allowing the collection of data in any country was intensified and grants provided to adapt the portals to the requirements of EBBA2.

In September 2014 national coordinators were asked to provide pilot data for the occurrence of five species at the level of the 50x50 km grid. This enabled us to test data exchange, to establish and strengthen the working relationships with national coordinators and to create pilot maps for interim reporting on progress and for promotion. A second pilot data collection in 2015 provided data from 'timed visits' used as a basis for modelling occurrence at the level of 10x10 km. Almost all countries contributed data for the two pilot data sets. A third pilot data collection, which will provide an enlarged data set at the 50x50 km scale, has started in July 2016. The same system was used for visualization of all species recorded in all squares of European Russia which was very helpful for national coordinators.

### *Data management and analysis*

The team in Barcelona concentrated on setting up a central database and providing web tools to present data. The two pilot data collections allowed to test and improve data exchange with national coordinators. In 2015 the spatial modelling group (SMOG) met for first discussions to start the modelling process. This was followed up by a second meeting in spring 2016. Work so far has concentrated on identifying environmental parameters used for modelling and providing input for the final data collection. An on-line 'gap tool' developed by the team in Barcelona enables the national coordinators to indicate priority squares for fieldwork, particularly targeted at foreign fieldworkers, as well as the squares which are not recommended for visits (e.g. security reasons).

### *Communication*

In 2014 work started on the special project website, which was launched in 2015 ([www.ebba2.info](http://www.ebba2.info)) as well as the corresponding Facebook page and Twitter account. EBBA2 website statistics have been established in April 2016, and up to August 2016 have in total of 3 584 visits, with 2536 users that visited the website.

Facebook page has 1238 followers and 56 followers on Twitter. The European coordination team as well as national coordinators provided 21 short reports to document progress (in the form of web articles). Several articles in Bird Census News have been published mainly on methodology and national projects (see the list of references below). EBBA2 was also presented at more than ten national conferences and in bird magazines.

### **13. European Bird Portal (Gabriel Gargallo)**

*Activities implemented, main results and achievements over the period October 2013 – August 2016*

#### *Background, organization and main goals*

The EBP is a project of the EBCC developed through a partnership that currently comprises 69 institutions from 21 different European countries. The partnership involves biodiversity data centres and reference ornithological institutions in their respective countries, accumulating a long-time experience collecting high quality monitoring data from thousands of volunteer birdwatchers and turning this information in sound science. The EBP project has only been formally established very recently (2015), however, it's the result of an intensive work started in September 2012 with the creation of a working group devoted to explore the possibilities of integrating and analysing data from different European on-line bird portals, and with the organization of the first so-called EBP meeting in Switzerland in June 2013. The partnership is formally based in two key agreements: the Collaborative agreement between on-line bird recording schemes operating in Europe ([http://eurobirdportal.org/files/EBCC\\_online\\_bird\\_portals\\_agreement.pdf](http://eurobirdportal.org/files/EBCC_online_bird_portals_agreement.pdf)) and the Collaborative agreement between on-line bird recording schemes participating in the EuroBirdPortal (EBP) project ([http://eurobirdportal.org/files/EBP\\_collaborative\\_agreement.pdf](http://eurobirdportal.org/files/EBP_collaborative_agreement.pdf)). The first one is a generic agreement promoted by the EBCC since 2013 to encourage data sharing and research at the European scale and to support the development of future European Breeding Bird Atlases. The second and more recent agreement is made within the framework of the more generic one, and sets out the specific terms and conditions of the EBP initiative and entitles the EBCC as the organization formally responsible of the project and owner of the intellectual property. The project is coordinated by Gabriel Gargallo, from the Catalan Ornithological Institute (ICO).

Overall, the online data gathering portals run by the EBP partners collect c. 30 million bird records every year thanks to the collaboration of more than 100,000 active observers. This is the largest and most dynamic citizen science biodiversity data flow in Europe and, thus, with a great potential in terms of conservation, research and outreach.

The purpose of EBP is to establish a European data repository based on aggregated data from online bird recording portals from across Europe with the following major objectives: 1) to describe large scale spatiotemporal patterns of bird distributions (seasonal distributional changes, migratory patterns, phenology) and their changes over time; and 2) improve the value of online data gathering portals. The EBP project will, specifically, complement PECBMS and EBBA2 by focussing on the study of continental-wide seasonal changes in bird distribution as well as those temporal changes taking place too fast as to be properly tracked by more traditional monitoring projects.

#### *EBP meetings*

Seven EBP meetings have taken place since autumn 2013:

- September 2013, 2nd EBP meeting (Cluj, Romania). 17 participants from 12 countries took part. During the meeting the EBP overall goals and expected products were defined.
- February 2014, 3rd EBP meeting (Ilmitz, Austria). 23 participants from 17 countries took part. EuroBirdPortal became the official name of the project and the basic data sharing structure was defined (based on aggregated data by week and 10x10 km square).
- June 2014, 4th EBP meeting (Thetford, UK). 21 participants from 11 countries took part. The first draft of the EBP specific agreement was presented and the funding and research options of the project were discussed in detail.

- October 2014, 5th EBP meeting (Satigny, Switzerland). 19 participants from 11 countries took part. The modelling approach and the development of the EBP demo viewer were key subject of the meeting. The funding opportunities were also largely discussed.
- March 2015, 6th EBP meeting (Hoeilaart, Belgium). 17 participants from 9 countries took part. The EBP agreement and the EBP logo and visual design were formally approved. The EBP demo viewer was presented and it was agreed to officially launch the project and the viewer during the GreenWeek 2015 (June 5th).
- November 2015, 7th EBP meeting (Mikulov, Czech Republic), 17 participants from 13 countries took part. A detailed overview of the LIFE EBP preparatory proposal was presented and discussed.
- May/June 2016, 8th EBP meeting (Beek-Ubbergen, Netherlands). 12 participants from 8 countries took part. The list of 50 additional species to be shown in the EBP demo viewer was approved and the first version of the new EBP data standard format was presented and disused.

#### *Funding (LIFE EBP project)*

The principal aim of the project “Combining and improving online bird portals data to display near-real-time spatiotemporal patterns of bird distribution across Europe”, known by the acronym LIFE Euro Bird Portal (LIFE15 PRE/ES/000002), is to develop the EBP demo viewer into a full-fledged web portal displaying detailed and up-to-date European-wide spatiotemporal patterns of bird distribution in near-real-time and in a reliable manner. The project has a duration of three years (January 2016 to December 2018) and an overall cost of 510.557 €, of which 60% (306.334 €) are financed by the European Union. The main specific objectives of project are: 1) To create a new EBP data sharing standard, database repository and data-flow system capable of managing automatically and in near-real-time all data interchange processes between the local online portals and the central databank; 2) Adapt and improve the current EBP demo viewer and the spatial bird distribution models in order to reliably display detailed and up-to-date European-wide spatiotemporal patterns of bird distribution in near-real-time; 3) Increase the geographical coverage of the EBP project to include most of the European Union (>90% of its territory); and 4) Improve the quality and relevance of the data collected.

The LIFE EBP project is coordinated by the Forest Sciences Centre of Catalonia (CTFC) and has five associated beneficiaries: the Catalan Ornithological Institute (ICO), the Swiss Ornithological Institute (SOI), the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Natagora and the Sovon Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology (SOVON). The project is managed in close cooperation with the EBP project coordination to ensure that fits perfectly in the framework of the EBP. The project also counts with the co-financing of the Directorate-General of Telecommunications and Information Society of the Government of Catalonia, and each of the project beneficiaries.

All details about the LIFE EBP project as well as its progress can be found at a specific website (<http://life.eurobirdportal.org/>) closely linked to the EBP website.

#### *Main EBP outputs (EBP website)*

The EBP website and demo viewer ([www.eurobirdportal.org](http://www.eurobirdportal.org)) was launched in Brussels on June 5th 2015 in the framework of the GreenWeek 2015. The EBP demo viewer aims to show the scope and potential of the EBP project and its future developments. It is, therefore, solely a very first insight about the possibilities of the collaborative work of European on-line bird recording schemes under the auspices of the EBCC. Currently, the EBP demo viewer shows animated maps depicting the week by week distributional patterns of 50 species in five years (2010-2014) at a resolution of 30x30 km. By the end of 2016, the list of available species will be increased to 100 and data from 2015 will also be added. A total of five types of species maps and four of climatic variables are shown. Two animated maps of any species or climatic variable, year and type can be selected to be shown simultaneously for direct comparison. In total, more than 2.6 million different map combinations are available to choose from. The website links to the other main EBCC initiatives (PECBMS and EBBA2) and, between June 2015 and August 2016 has received 46.185 visits from 34.210 different users.

## 14. Collaboration projects with other organisations

### *Wetlands International*

Wetlands International established a new steering body for the International Waterbird Census (IWC) in the AEWA region, the African Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership (AEWMP) and invited EBCC to join. The representation of EBCC was taken up by Verena Keller. The EBCC board sees this as an important step to strengthen waterbird monitoring in Europe and invited Wetlands International (Szabolcs Nagy) in return to attend EBCC board meetings as an observer. The AEWMP has held one to two meetings annually since 2012, and initiatives to strengthen the IWC have been started. The relationship to EBCC was also strengthened during EBCC conferences, which provide the platform for specific meetings of IWC national coordinators.

### *BirdLife International*

The collaboration with BirdLife has further been strengthened. The BirdLife offices in Brussels and Cambridge deliver crucial support for our main projects (PECBMS, EBBA2 and EBP). This involves networking and lobbying at the EU-level. We started with strategic meetings on a regular basis and there are frequent adhoc contacts between Board members, project coordinators and BirdLife staff.

EBCC was a formal partner (and a member of the steering committee) in a 3-year project that BirdLife was leading, commissioned by the European Commission, to compile a European Red List of Birds. This project has successfully delivered a Red List and also has supported the Article 12 reporting under the Birds Directive.

### *European science projects: EUBON*

The successful integration of EBCC in a FP7 project consortium and the positive participation in the SCALES project has allowed the EBCC team to be invited to the EUBON project, another larger FP7, strategic project starting in 2013. The EUBON project has allowed EBCC to link the European agenda with EBCC flagship projects (PECBMS, EBP and EBBA2). EUBON has allowed the recruitment of two postdocs that have worked on specific EUBON agendas (spatial modelling of bird data under climatic and land use scenarios at various spatial scales) in collaboration with other project partners (specially with UFZ researchers in Leipzig). Furthermore, the recruitment of these two postdocs (Sergi Herrando and Nicolas Titeux) by EBCC has allowed the reinforcement of two EBCC projects in key moments of their development. The recruitment of Sergi Herrando during 2014 in parallel with EBBA2 establishment and that of Nicolas Titeux during 2015-2016 in parallel with EBP network structuring has allowed EBCC to reinforce its capacity to develop large scale projects.

## 15. Strategic planning

The list of activities in this report shows that the EBCC is alive and kicking. Three main projects are well established. They are managed and coordinated by skilled and dedicated people. However, this also needs attention of the Board. As a consequence the time available for further development of projects and activities on the Board level is severely limited. Therefore for the moment we will not pro-actively seek for or engage with any new projects at least until the EBBA2 project has finished. Focal points of our activities will be:

- to pursue funding opportunities for our three main projects. We want to find and safeguard 'structural' funding for the monitoring projects PECBMS and EBP and also make sure that sufficient funding is available to successfully publish the second European Breeding Bird Atlas
- to continue to promote common bird monitoring and the use of wild bird indicators at national and EU/European levels
- to launch a new website. We decided to create a new general website. The information we want and need to supply is more diverse and plentiful than ever. The present website design needs improvement. The successful launches of the EBBA2 and EBP websites are a big stimulant.
- to strengthen the communication and collaboration with the BirdLife offices in Cambridge and Brussels, both on the Board but also on the project level

- to initiate and stimulate scientific research projects together with partners. We have witnessed a growing interest in the spatial exploration of the PECBMS data. A huge potential is available for analysing the EBBA2 data. Therefore we will liaise and discuss with the research community how to optimally explore and utilize the data. This is not only for the benefit of science but also because we expect the data (analyses) to become crucial to answer questions concerning nature management, policy and conservation on the European level
- to take further initiatives to analyse the monitoring and atlas data and publish its results in scientific journals. Thanks to the successful activities of the PECBMS scientific officer Anna Gamero we now are in an excellent position to engage with the scientific community and raise our profile.

As chairman of EBCC I feel privileged to work together with such a dedicated and great group of people. I would like to thank all of the Board Members and observers for the support in the last three years to run the EBCC and to employ such important activities. Furthermore great thanks go to the project teams of PECBMS, EBP and EBBA2. It is a pleasure to see the great achievements we have made. Our work matters and is and will be essential for bird and nature conservation in Europe. Last but not least I want to thank our members, the Delegates. Without your trust and support we can not do it.

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