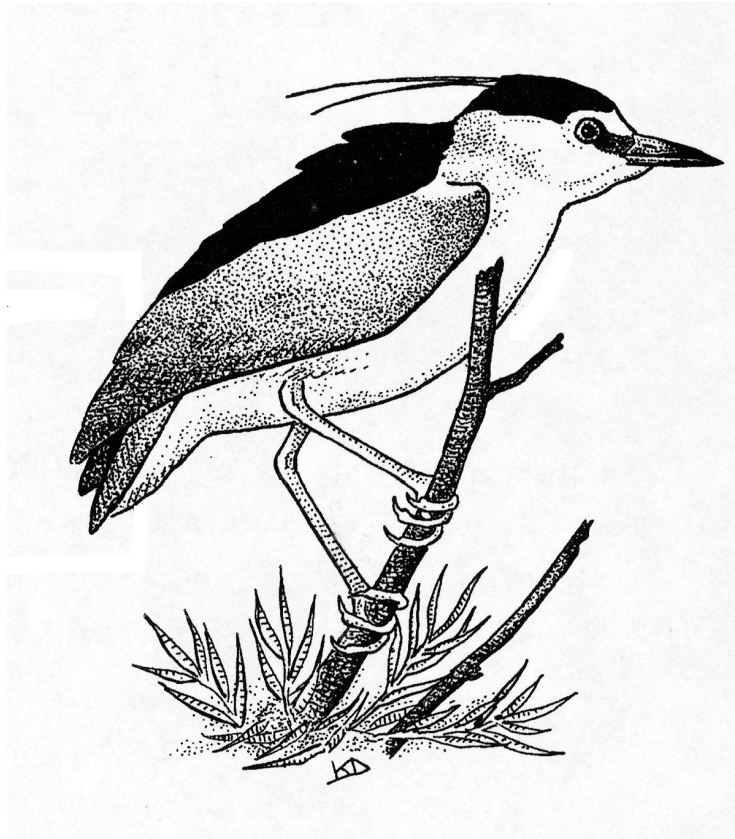


# Bird Census News

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*Newsletter of the European Bird Census Council*  
[www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info)



**2007**  
**Volume 20 n°1**

## **Bird Census News** **2007, volume 20 n°1**

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Bird Census News is the Newsletter of the European Bird Census Council or EBCC. The EBCC exists to promote the organisation and development of atlas, census work and population studies in all European countries; it promotes communication and arranges contacts between organisations and individuals interested in census and atlas work, primarily (but not exclusively) in Europe.

Bird Census News reports developments in census and atlas work in Europe, from the local to the continental scale, and provides a forum for discussion on methodological issues.

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### **EDITOR:**

Anny Anselin

**Research Institute for Nature and Forest, INBO**

Kliniekstraat 25, B-1070 Brussels, Belgium.

home: E. Poetoustraat 13, B-9030 Mariakerke, Belgium

email: [anny.anselin@inbo.be](mailto:anny.anselin@inbo.be)

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## Bird Census News

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### Preface

The EBCC conference in Chiavenna has been a success and ExCo would like to thank Lorenzo Fornasari, Elisabetta Di Carli and their highly efficient team for the smooth organization. This was really another great conference which was attended by no less than 240 people from more than 40 countries!

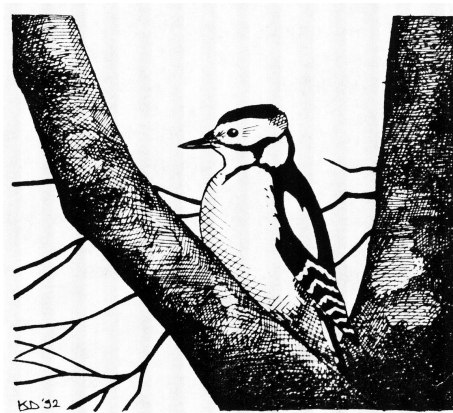
At the board meeting, a new ExCo has been elected and we welcome Svetoslav Spasov (Bulgaria) and Lluís Brotons (Spain) as new members. We thank outgoing members Ward Hagemeyer and Przemek Chylarecki for their hard work. Juan Carlos del Moral on behalf of SEO/BirdLife Spain kindly proposed to organize next EBCC meeting in 2010 "somewhere in the central part of the country". You'll find the ExCo Activity Report, the Board Meeting Minutes and the new ExCo list at the end of the issue.

Maybe you did not notice it, but BCN celebrates its twentieth birthday this year! The first volume appeared in 1988, and Rob Bijlsma from The Netherlands was editor during that pioneering period. I therefore asked him to write down some impressions on BCN, atlas and monitoring, a request which he kindly fulfilled.

Furthermore you'll find information on the new atlas project in Estonia, bird monitoring in Denmark and monitoring common birds in Flanders.

Enjoy this issue of BCN,

Anny Anselin  
BCN Editor  
anny.anselin@inbo.be



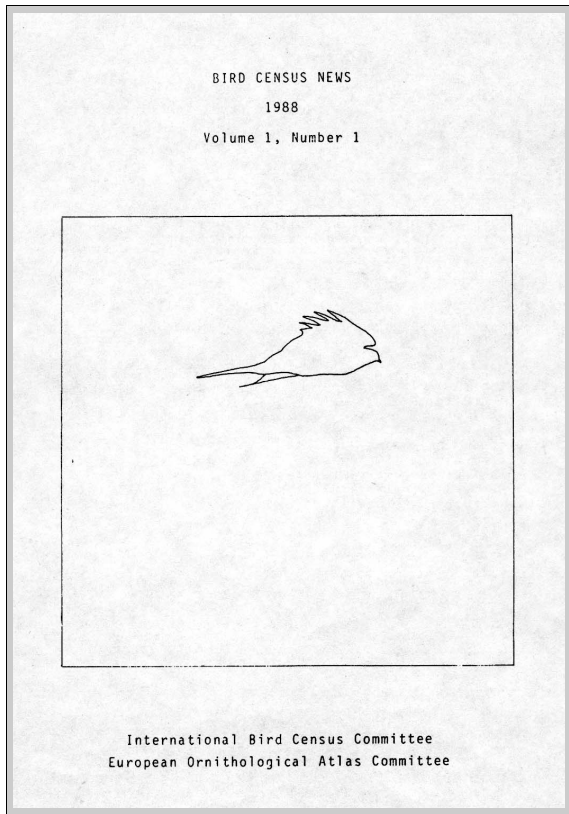
## **European atlasing and monitoring memorised in two decades of Bird Census News**

**Rob G. Bijlsma**

Doldersummerweg 1, 7983 LD Wapse, The Netherlands  
rob.bijlsma@planet.nl

Picture the Zoological Museum in Helsinki, a sturdy building cramped with collections painstakingly assembled over the decades, on the evening of 25 August 1987. The day before, a scattering of European ornithologists had assembled to discuss recent developments in atlas and census work, the start of the 10th International Conference on Bird Census Work and Atlas Studies. The air was full of expectancy, now that the European Atlas was making headway (but it would take another 10 years before it would emerge in print) and new census techniques were being developed and tested. Few of us anticipated the huge changes in the political landscape of Eurasia that were about to enrol. Although birds were – not surprisingly – an important topic throughout the conference, politics, history, poetry and life in general also figured prominently. What else to expect from a crowd that included such illustrious predecessors as Pontus Palmgren (1907-'93), who was among the first to publish methodological bird census work (1920s) and who later also specialised in arachnids, and Lars von Haartman (1919-'98), who gave an appreciation of the census work of Palmgren, was himself renowned for his ecological studies on birds and had interests well beyond the ornithological realm (a typical remark after a lecture that did not satisfy him: “as Aristotle already said: do not look at the teeth of a horse...count them”). Neither did we anticipate that Olli Järvinen (1950-'90) and Olavi Hildén (1932-'94), both deeply involved in bird census work at the time of the Helsinki conference, would not live to witness the new millennium.

That evening in August 1987, though, plans were made to improve the organisation and standardisation of bird census work. One of the suggestions, if I am not mistaken by Robert Kwak from The Netherlands, was to start publishing a newsletter focused on monitoring and atlas work. It would be a means to remain in contact in between conferences, to publish preliminary results, to keep track of the latest atlas and monitoring studies, to give a platform to eastern European countries and – in general – to keep the spirit high. This newsletter, Bird Census News, started to appear bi-annually in 1988. The computer had not yet permeated life as thoroughly as today, and



the first issues were hammered away on an electric typewriter and multiplied by photocopying. A far cry from the meticulous issues produced by Anny Anselin from 1993 onwards, when she took over as editor. Indeed, Anny greatly improved Bird Census News, enlarging its scope and readership, soliciting (and receiving) papers from all over Europe, and having it published in a regular fashion. Doing this for 15 years is no small feat, and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Anny for the hard work and the care with which she carried on with BCN.

What did Bird Census News bring during these past two decades, and did it fulfil its initial target? Both questions can be answered by checking the contents of the 1678 pages published so far. Three facts immediately surface: (1) the even distri-

bution of papers among the main topics (64 atlas studies, 57 monitoring, with another 15 on methodology and 25 species-specific), (2) the wide range of countries covered (31 in total, from Andorra and Belgium through Turkey and the United Kingdom), and (3) the good coverage of eastern European countries (half of all accounts, covering 14 countries from Belarus through Ukraine). This is precisely what we bargained for when BCN was started.

Atlas studies and preliminary atlas results dominated BCN in the first decade of its existence, coinciding with the prolonged genesis of the European Atlas. The latter's publication in 1997 resulted in a few years of atlas fatigue, but the popularity of atlasing – both countrywide and on a smaller scale – took another upsurge later on. Actually, a recent survey of ornithological atlas studies worldwide showed that already more than 400 atlases have been published (Greenwood 2007). Remember that the first atlases based on squares and standardised censuses only came into existence in the 1960s. Moreover, atlases have evolved from qualitative absence-presence basics into elaborate quantitative distributional studies. Repeat atlases, as published in quite a lot of countries already, have been instrumental in showing changes in distribution on a scale hitherto only dreamed of. Such data strengthens the outcome of monitoring studies, another line of research that has flourished since the 1960s. In one way or another, most European countries nowadays are involved in atlasing and monitoring (overview in [www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info)), including countries that were behind the Iron

Curtain in 1987 and still suffer from the aftermath of having been deprived of free initiative (and the means to realise plans) for so long. Contacts with the western world have been frustrated for decades, or had to be realised at great personal risk (see Nowak 2005, for an appraisal of these difficulties). However, one advantage of postponed implementation of monitoring is the opportunity to avoid mistakes made by the pioneers, and be able to choose from a variety of well-tested methods (the only restrictions being money and manpower, but hey, what's new, passion and dedication can move mountains).

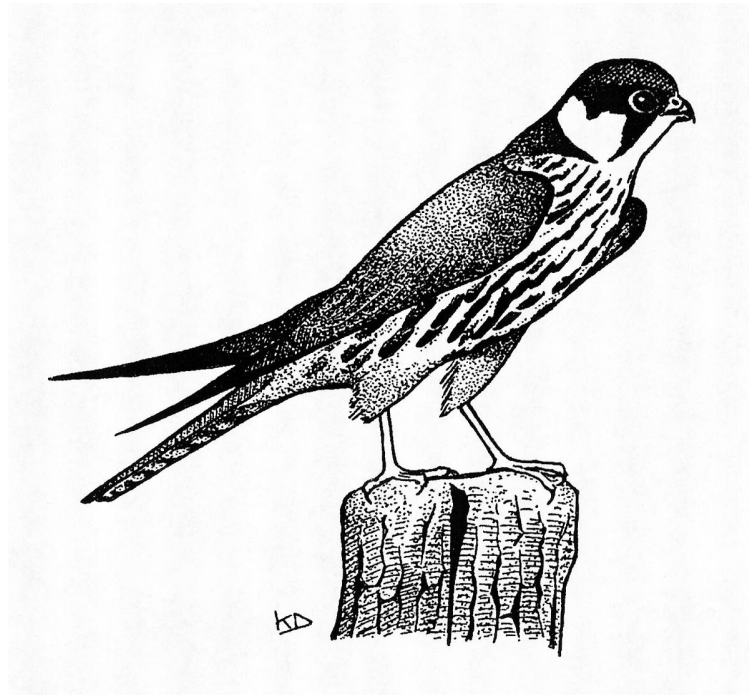
Interestingly, after several decades of exploring and testing the majority of countries (23 out of 35) has now settled for Point Counts as the most appropriate method to monitor breeding birds (in terms of costs, manpower and repeatability), followed by Line Transects (11 countries, sometimes in addition to Point Counts). The labour-intensive Territory Mapping, that is moreover prone to produce unacceptable between-observer variations, has been abandoned by most countries in favour of Point Counts and/or Line Transects. Equally interesting, more than 70 % of the countries use a single monitoring scheme to elucidate trends in breeding bird numbers. This is a weak point. Without calibration trends based on a single monitoring scheme may derail without being noticed; checks from other types of monitoring are needed to detect erroneous results. Also, few countries have taken the step to employ specialised census methods to monitor bird families that are difficult/impossible to census reliably with Point Counts, Line Transects or Territory Mapping. Lack of resources may be at the heart of this problem, but it is exacerbated by placing too much confidence into the outcome of general monitoring schemes (this confidence is easy to uphold when independent checks fail to exist). Refining models and statistical procedures is not going to solve this soft spot. We need more fieldworkers, and a larger variety of species- and habitat-specific programs, to calibrate the present monitoring schemes. Apart from funding, this may be the most important bottleneck to guarantee a continuation of reliable monitoring in the near future, as dedicated fieldworkers are growing grey and old (but not worn-out) whereas the new generations are not so much interested in long-term bird census work. On the other hand, the birth and growth of atlasing and monitoring in eastern Europe is a reminder that anything is possible. Also, monitoring and atlas studies are just the first step in understanding the dynamics of bird populations, and the past decades have shown that – at least in some countries – incorporation of data on reproduction and survival has added greatly in understanding what is going on. The latter is particularly important now that the European landscape is changing this fast. It is my firm belief that conservation is better served with sound science than with conjuring up thousands of pages of bureaucratic caboodle (unfortunately the tack taken by governments and the European Union, sometimes facilitated by servile organisations).

So, since the outcry of Yrjö Haila, Olli Järvinen and Pertti Koskimies in their preface to the Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Bird Census Work and Atlas Studies (1989) much has been improved (notably statistics and analytical methods), but equally much remains to be desired.

May therefore Bird Census News continue to provide a platform for novice and settled bird organisations alike, and may it help to improve standards.

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## **The second Estonian Atlas on breeding bird distribution**

**Jaanus Elts**

Estonian Ornithological Society, P.O. Box 227, 50002 Tartu, Estonia,  
Jaanus.Elts@eoy.ee

### **The first atlas**

From 1977 to 1982 365 field ornithologists collected over 62 296 records for the first Atlas of Breeding Birds in Estonia (Renno, 1993). The Atlas shows the distribution of 220 species in 567 10 × 10 km squares. Squares in which breeding was “possible”, “probable” or “confirmed” were distinguished, but not quantitative data were collected.

### **The new atlas**

In 2003 the Estonian Ornithological Society has initiated the compiling of a new Estonian Breeding Bird Atlas to update the data collected for the previous breeding bird atlas considering the necessity for revealing the current distribution and numbers of breeding birds. Field work of the atlas will be carried out within the period 2004-2007, but most probably also in 2008.

The Atlas Working Group for the purpose was set up, with the following members: Jaanus Elts (co-ordinator), Riho Kinks, Lauri Klein, Andres Kuresoo, Andrus Kuus, Eerik Leibak, Agu Leivits and Kaja Peterson.

Collection of the data for the atlas is based on international 5 × 5km UTM-grid squares. The main objective of the work is to identify all species of breeding birds within the squares as well as provide estimates of the numbers of less abundant species within squares and record the observation data on the maps of the squares. The squares can be selected on the Internet homepage of the atlas [www.eoy.ee/atlas](http://www.eoy.ee/atlas). The aim of the Atlas project is a complete as possible coverage of 2093 atlas squares of 5 × 5 km, among these there are 602 incomplete squares on the sea coast and the shores of large lakes, on the outlying islands, near the border of the republic and on the 24<sup>th</sup> meridian.

For direct comparison between the previous and new atlases, the same methods were applied. Only the working units are 4 times more precise,



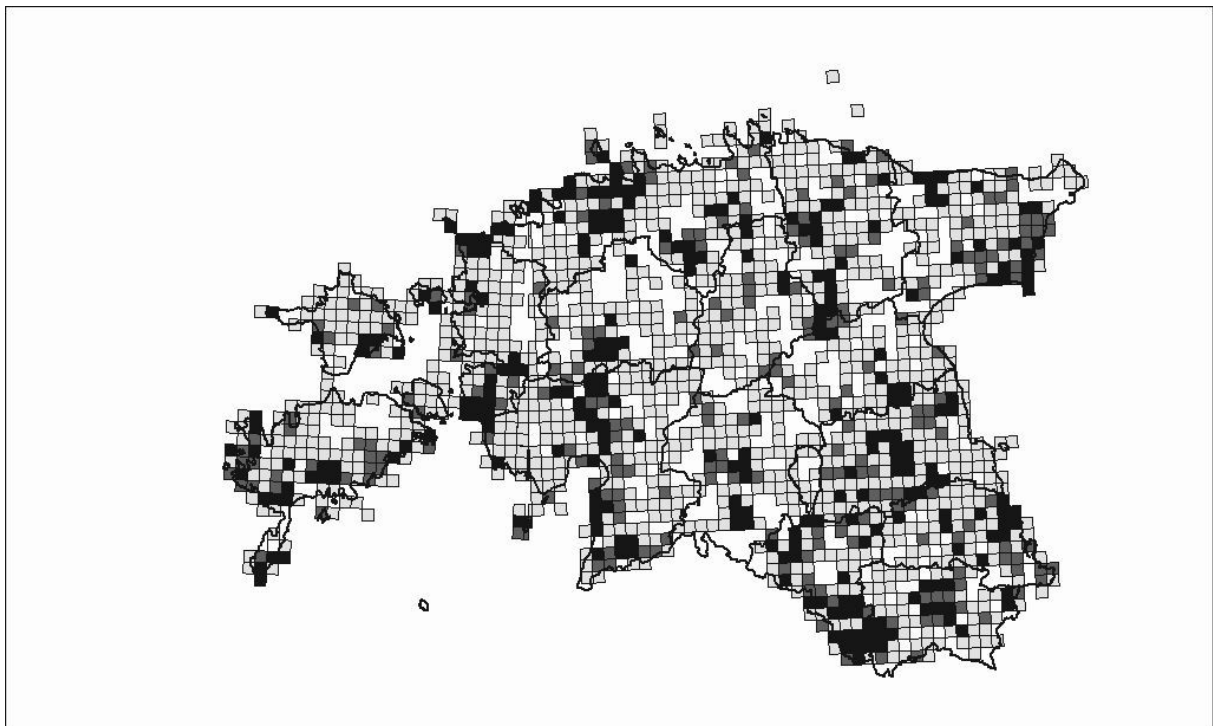
namely  $5 \times 5$  km squares in the new atlas. Currently we are digitalizing the old atlas data as well to make the analysis on species distribution easier and more comprehensive.

Additional information will be collected to quantify the breeding populations. One of methods used is 120 randomly choose square-shape transects to make precise estimations of the breeding densities. As our experience from first years shows estimates given by volunteers are mostly very biased.

We provided each co-worker with two maps of the scale of 1 : 20 000 (1 cm = 200 m) and two forms to fill in. One set of materials was requested to send back to the atlas team and another set to be kept by observer. Observations of rare species should be confirmed by the Estonian Rarities Committee. Less common species were asked to be mapped precisely for later digitalisation (colonies, lecks etc.).

## Results until now

Up to the end of 2006 a number of 81 123 records were registered by 616 observers, covering 1527 UTM squares (73 %, Fig. 1).



*Fig. 1: Number of registered species per square up to the end of 2006 (light: 1-50 species, dark: 51-70 species, black: more than 71 species).*

According to the latest list of Estonian birds we have 207 regular breeding bird species (Elts *et al.*, 2003). In atlas database there are registrations for 226 species, but six of them (*Milvus migrans*, *Falco peregrinus*, *Galerida cristata*, *Lanius minor*, *Bombycilla garrulus* and *Hippolais pallida*) are listed only as non-breeders.

No of breeding species	No of squares
0	566
1-50	1027
51-70	233
71-90	176
>90	91

**Table 1: Number of species registered per atlas square.**

<b>Estonia, first atlas</b> (Renno, 1993)	<b>Estonia, a new atlas,</b> by 31.12.2006	<b>Latvia</b> (Kerus & Račinskis, 2004)
1. <i>Motacilla alba</i>	1. <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1. <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
2. <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	2. <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	2. <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
3. <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	3. <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	3. <i>Turdus merula</i>
4. <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	4. <i>Motacilla alba</i>	4. <i>Motacilla alba</i>
5. <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	5. <i>Turdus merula</i>	5. <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
6. <i>Corvus corone</i>	6. <i>Parus major</i>	6. <i>Parus major</i>
7. <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	7. <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	7. <i>Alauda arvensis</i>
8. <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	8. <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	8. <i>Hirundo rustica</i>
9. <i>Parus major</i>	9. <i>Sylvia communis</i>	9. <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
10. <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	10. <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	10. <i>Sylvia communis</i>

**Table 2: Ten most widespread breeding birds in Estonia and Latvia (according to the number of registered squares).**

Very soon it will be possible to query the atlas web-site to find out most up-to-date distribution maps or some overall maps, like the number of species registered per atlas square or how many observers are doing fieldwork in a certain square. These queries are available in Estonian already.

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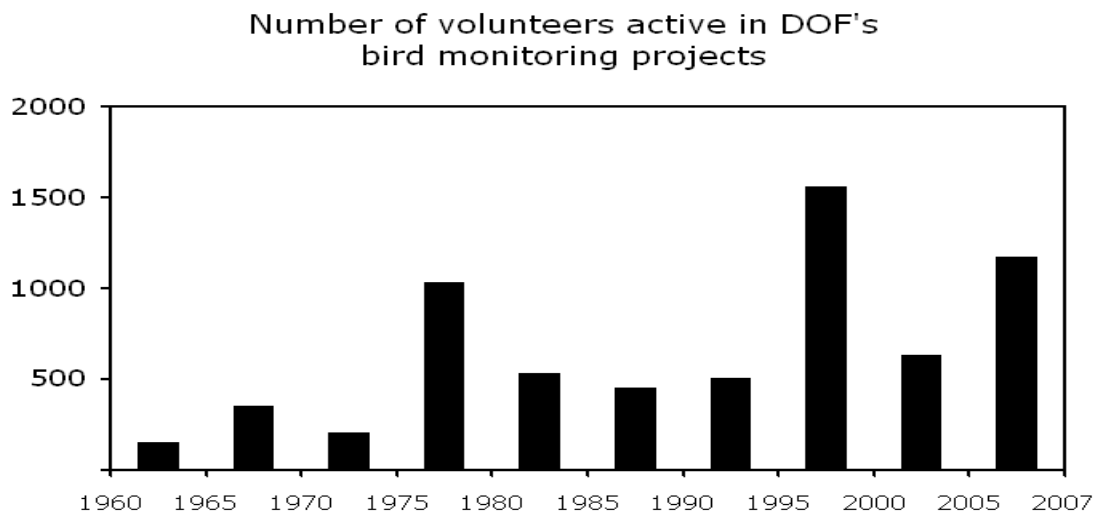
## Voluntary-based Bird Monitoring in Denmark

**Michael B Grell, Henning Heldbjerg,  
Timme Nyegaard & Thomas Vikstrøm.**

### Introduction

In 2006, Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF/BirdLife Denmark) celebrates its 100th anniversary. When a group of dedicated and concerned bird lovers met in Copenhagen on 15 October 1906 they founded DOF as an organisation with the mission to enhance bird protection as well as to share the affection for birds with the wider Danish public. Since then conservation and information has been a dual mission for DOF. Probably, this historical decision is why DOF (13,000 members) is today the only ornithological society in Denmark (5 mio inhabitants) and holds all aspects of modern ornithology including twitchers, conservationists, amateur field ornithologists, scientists and garden bird lovers.

Over the last decades, DOF has developed into a modern, science-based green NGO with a sharp profile in the Danish public environmental debate. DOF's force is the large group of skilled and dedicated bird watchers that are willing to participate voluntarily in organised bird monitoring (see Fig. 1). A major step forward was the first national bird site survey in the 1960's (Ferdinand, 1971), followed by the first Danish atlas survey 1971-'74



*Fig. 1: The total number of volunteers active in DOF's monitoring projects given as estimates in 5-year periods.*

(Dybbro, 1976), the Common Bird Census Programme launched in 1975 (Heldbjerg, 2006) and the second atlas survey 1993-'96 (Grell, 1998).

The need for sound knowledge about Danish birds – their trends, population sizes, distribution and important bird sites triggered DOF's monitoring activities. In her speech at DOF's Anniversary conference on 13 October 2006, the Danish Minister for the Environment, Mrs Connie Hedegaard, said that DOF is one of the most influential green NGO's in Denmark. What has brought us to this political recognition is probably the solid, science-based arguments used in lobby and advocacy work and produced by volunteers.

In this article the authors outline the present monitoring strategy of DOF/BirdLife Denmark.

### **A three-legged monitoring plan**

In 2001, public support of the Common Bird Census Programme (CBC) was stopped for political reasons. It was felt in DOF that the voluntarily based monitoring was at a crossroads, and that the CBC as a corner-stone in DOF's monitoring had to be secured. Much inspired by the BirdLife species, sites and habitats approach, DOF outlined what we today call the three-legged monitoring strategy. The three legs being

- survey of rare and threatened breeding birds
- monitoring the most important bird sites
- following the population changes of the common birds

The main Danish habitats are monitored using indicators such as the farmland or the woodland bird indicator based on CBC data. To realise this ambitious strategy DOF needed a basic organisational structure and the support of hundreds of volunteers. A generous 5-year grant obtained in 2003 from the private Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation made it possible to realise the plan. The running costs of the complete scheme is 300 000 € annually and it employs 4 full-time biologists.

### **Data used for policy work**

It is crucial that the data are used to improve conservation. That is our motivation for doing monitoring – either we are volunteers or professionals. Therefore, informing members, decision makers and the wider public is an important task in the monitoring plan. The channels of information take many different forms: Websites, electronic newsletters as well as articles in membership magazines and printed reports (Dansk Ornitologisk Forening

2005).

An example of effective advocacy is the conservation agreement made between the Danish Ministry of the Environment and DOF in 2004, giving special attention to rare and threatened breeding birds. This ministerial agreement has provided national action plans for both the Red Kite (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 2005a) and for the threatened meadow birds Dunlin, Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 2005b). Both the Ministry of the Environment and DOF are actively involved in implementing those plans.

In 2005, DOF's monitoring data were used to evaluate the designation criteria of the 113 Danish SPA's, and in 2005-'06 the national Danish Red List of birds (Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser, 2006) was equally revised using DOF's data.

The first 3-year Ministerial Agreement has recently been extended to comprise governmental support to the CBC and formalised inclusion of DOF's data in the public environmental monitoring programme (NOVANA). At this point, we deeply thank all the good colleagues in BirdLife who supported us in this process. No one mentioned – no one forgotten!

The official recognition of DOF's citizen science activities is not only a major step forward for the organisation itself but also a significant motivating factor for the volunteers. By formalising this cooperation we have also ensured that the huge amounts of bird data are being used for the benefit of bird protection in the best possible way, which has and will always be the overall objective of DOF's monitoring work.

### **DOF's survey of threatened and rare breeding birds (The 'DATSY-project')**

Formerly, surveys of scarce breeding birds were made by dedicated individuals who based their work on historical data obtained by correspondence with local bird-watchers - rarely by systematic organised surveys. Such retrospective avifaunistic papers were regularly published in DOF's scientific journal Dansk Ornitologisk Forenings Tidsskrift from the 1950's to 1970's. The first comprehensive systematic survey of scarce Danish breeding birds had to await the implementation of the EC Wild Bird Directive in the beginning of the 1980's. From this arose a public need for present data on population sizes and trends of the Danish Annex 1 species. Accordingly, DOF was engaged to conduct a national survey and volunteer field ornithologists were monitoring those species including a number of specialist groups (terns, raptors, storks, etc.) in the so-called Project Status

(Sørensen & Dybbro, 1985).

After a period with no organised national surveys, it became clear that DOF needed a better knowledge of the trends of the scarce Danish breeding birds. A project organisation was established and in 1998 the DATSY project was launched as a voluntarily based survey. Since 1999, the survey has been sponsored by the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation.

The objective is to

- collect high-quality data on the rare and threatened breeding birds to establish the population size once a year
- use the data to inform the public and thereby enhance public attention on our mutual responsibility to protect the endangered species and their habitats
- publish an annual status report
- engage volunteer field ornithologists in an important national survey

## **Organisation**

The project is organised as a network of voluntary species coordinators. Presently, 38 species coordinators are participating in the project and they collect survey data from a much larger group of field ornithologists. After the breeding season those data are sent to a central coordinator, who prepares the final report. The national coordinator employed in DOF's secretariat is responsible for the project on a daily basis and has an important task in servicing the network of species coordinators and observers as well as processing and publishing the results.

In the first phase of the DATSY-project (1998-2003), the survey comprised 57 species on the national Red List. In the second phase (2004-'08), the species list has been reduced to 42 species selected primarily by their presence on Annex 1 of the EC Wild Birds Directive and a few other species of national interest (Table 1). Since 2004, producing monitoring manuals for each species has enhanced the survey quality. So far (late 2006), 7 monitoring manuals have been published.

**Table 1: Species included in the monitoring by DATSY and the latest breeding population estimate (bp = breeding pairs; singing = number of singing birds) and trend of the population development (disappeared (▼\*), decreasing (▼), status quo (►), fluctuating (~), increasing (▲), new breeding bird (▲\*), unknown (?)) during the project period.**

Species	Monitoring period	Latest population estimate	Trend
Slavonian Grebe <i>Podiceps auritus</i>	1998-2003	2003: 0 bp	▼*
Fulmar <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	1998-2006	2005: 0 bp	~
Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i>	1998-2006	2005: 1 bp	►
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	1998-2006	2005: 1 bp	▼
Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	1998-2006	2005: 21 bp	▲
Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	2002-2006	2005: 1 bp	▲*
Barnacle Goose <i>Branta bernicla</i>	1998-2006	2005: 504 bp	▲
Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>	1998-2003	2003: 2 bp	►
Red-crested Pochard <i>Netta rufina</i>	1998-2006	2005: 12 bp	▲
Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>	1998-2006	2005: 64-68 bp	►
Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>	1998-2006	2005: 40-53 bp	▲
Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 37-39 bp	▲
White-tailed Eagle <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	1998-2006	2006: 15 bp	▲
Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 0 bp	▼
Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 28 bp	▼
Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 3 bp	▲*
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1998-2006	2006: 1 bp	▼
Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1998-2006	2005: 15-19 bp	▲
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 1 bp	▲*
Black Grouse <i>Tetrao tetrix</i>	1998-2003	2003: 0 bp	▼*
Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	1998-2003	2003: 638 singing	~
Spottet Crake <i>Porzana porzana</i>	1999-2006	2005: 44 singing	~
Corncrake <i>Crex crex</i>	1998-2006	2005: 97-113 singing	~
Crane <i>Grus grus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 58-66 bp	▲
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 36 bp	~
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	1998-2006	2005: 2 bp	▼
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	2001-2006	2005: 17-21 bp	►
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	1998-2006	2005: 66-67 bp	▼
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	1998-2006	2003: 50-52 bp	▲
Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	1998-2006	2006: 19 bp	▲*
Little Gull <i>Larus minutus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 1 bp	~
Gull-billed Tern <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	1998-2006	2005: 2 bp	▼
Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>	1998-2003	2001: 464-500 bp	▼
Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	2004-2006	2005: 4300-4500 bp	?
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>	1998-2006	2005: 54-59 bp	►
Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	1998-2006	2005: 277 bp	▲
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>	2003-2006	2005: 60-75 bp	▼
Eagle Owl <i>Bubo bubo</i>	1998-2006	2005: 28-29 bp	▲
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 3 bp	~
Tengmalm's Owl <i>Aegolius funereus</i>	1998-2006	2005: 0-1 bp	►

Species	Monitoring period	Latest population estimate		Trend
Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	1998-2006	2005:	0 bp	~
Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	2001-2003	2003:	7-25 bp	▼
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	1998-2003	2003:	16-49 bp	?
Crested Lark <i>Galerida cristata</i>	1998-2006	2005:	1-2 bp	▼
Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>	1998-2006	2005:	2-4 bp	▼
Dipper <i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	1998-2006	2006:	1 bp	~
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	1998-2006	2005:	147 bp	▲
Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	1998-2003	2003:	28-30 bp	~
Savi's Warbler <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	1998-2003	2003:	8-20 singing	~
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	1998-2003	2003:	5-9 singing	~
Barred Warbler <i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	1998-2003	2003:	0-1 bp	▼*
Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	1998-2003	2003:	1-2 bp	~
Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	1998-2003	2001:	14-16 bp	?
Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1998-2003	2003:	4-11 bp	~
Grey Shrike <i>Lanius excubitor</i>	1998-2006	2005:	17-20 bp	~
Nutcracker <i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	1998-2003	2003:	0 bp	▼*
Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>	1998-2003	2003:	8 bp	~

## Other activities

Breeding records are being collected using DOF's Internet database (DOFbasen). A webpage has been produced for each of the surveyed species edited by the species coordinators themselves and, furthermore, a project-specific site at DOF's website (<http://www.dof.dk/datsy>) is used for communication and distribution of newsletters and published material for the use of participants as well as the general public.

## Action plans

It is the intention that the acquired knowledge of the project should be used to produce action plans for the most endangered species. So far, action plans for White Stork (Grell, 2000), Golden Plover (Heldbjerg & Grell, 2002), Crested Lark (Grell *et al.*, 2002) and Red Kite (Grell, 2003) have been produced along with a special management plan for improved protection of Dunlin (subspecies *C. a. schinzii*), Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit (Thorup, 2004). In the last few years, further implementation of formerly published action plans has been given higher priority than the production of new action plans.



## Ups and downs

In the course of the survey period we have witnessed quite significant changes in the Danish avifauna. The most critically endangered Danish bird species are those living in different types of open habitats such as meadows, dry grasslands, heaths or dunes. The endangered species of those habitats are suffering from a general impoverishment of the habitat quality. A negative impact is the cessation of extensive use of meadows and dry grasslands, e.g. through grazing, that is no longer an integrated part of Danish arable land management. Furthermore, those habitats are negatively influenced by the increasing amounts of airborne nitrogen pollution. In the survey period two once numerous Danish breeding birds, Black Grouse and Barred Warbler, have completely vanished from the Danish fauna. White Stork, Golden Plover, Gull-billed Tern, Crested Lark and Tawny Pipit (see Fig. 2) are on the verge of disappearing. For all these mainly open land species a long-term negative population development has continued throughout the period, and this stresses the need for improved protection and management plans for their main habitats.

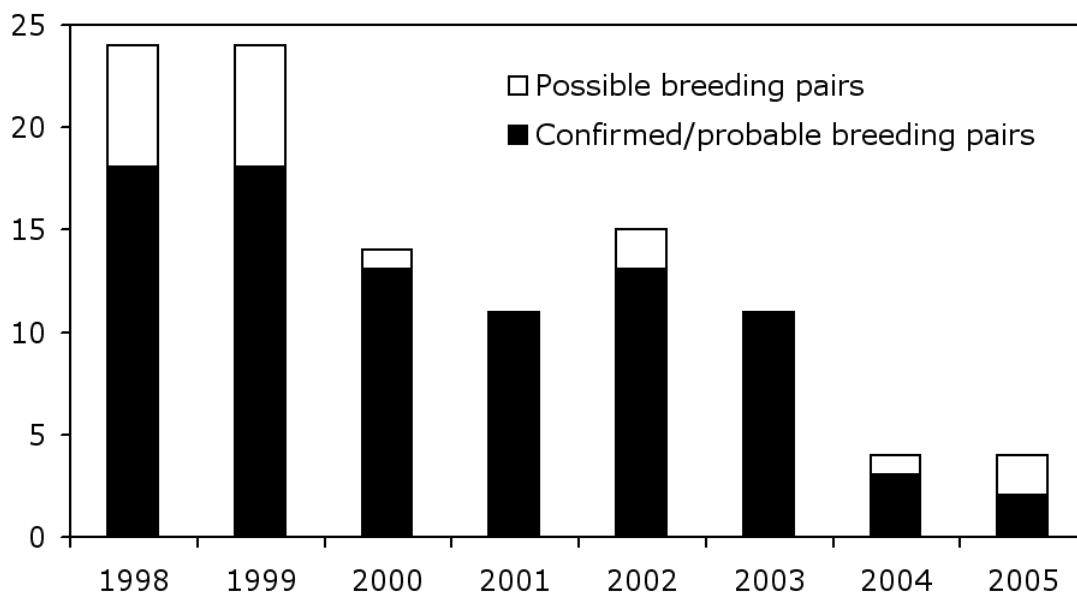
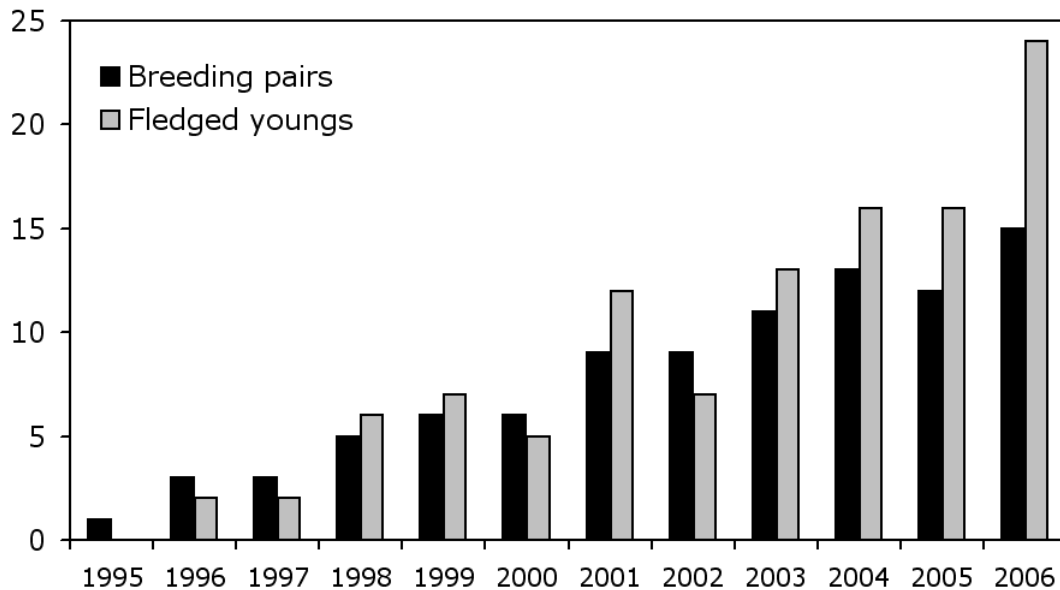


Fig. 2: The Danish breeding population of Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* in Denmark 1998-2005.

A more positive change is the colonization or re-colonization of several species during the last decades: Spoonbill (first breeding 1996), Whooper Swan (2002), Red-crested Pochard (2000), White-tailed Eagle (1995, see Fig. 3), Golden Eagle (1999), Peregrine Falcon (2001), Mediterranean Gull (2000), Bee-eater (1997-2005) and Southern Bluethroat (1992). Corncrake and Quail occurred very scarcely around 1990, but have since shown a

remarkable increase. The survey period has produced some record-breaking counts with more than 600 singing Quails (2000 and 2003) and 500 singing Corncrakes (2003).



*Fig. 3: The Danish breeding population of White-tailed Eagle Haliaeetus albicilla and their breeding success since the recolonization in 1995.*

### **The IBA Caretaker Project**

In 2003, DOF launched the IBA Caretaker Project. In this project, volunteers are monitoring the most important bird species at the most important bird sites in the country. By November 2006, 490 ornithologists had volunteered to monitor 114 of Denmark's 128 IBA's and 34 other sites. Until 2008 they will improve our knowledge and optimise conservation actions at these locations.

### **Three main elements**

The three elements of the Caretaker Project are:

- monitoring selected bird populations in the Important Bird Areas (IBA's)
- improved conservation of IBA's in cooperation with landowners and authorities
- education of the public about the importance of IBA's, through information on websites, public excursions, etc.

The sites included in the project can be divided in three categories:

- sites qualifying as IBA's under BirdLife's internationally recognised criteria
- potential IBA's, apparently fulfilling the international IBA criteria, but only recently discovered by the caretakers
- DOF's own reserves, sites near towns, and newly restored wetlands, which all three are ideal for informing the public about nature conservation.

Social aspects and teamwork are major elements in this project, and participants are offered training in bird monitoring, nature policies, website maintenance, public relations and other relevant subjects.

## **IT plays a role**

By November 2006, 100 of the project sites have their own website where interested people can keep up to date with the most recent information about the sites. DOF is providing website templates to the IBA caretakers, which include information about the area's size, threats, conservation, etc. Other information, recent news and pictures are administered and maintained by the caretakers themselves. Moreover, bird observations based on extracts from the DOF database (see below) are presented on the site.

## **What is monitored**

In particular, DOF volunteers are monitoring sites where 1 % of water-bird fly-way populations regularly roost, or where 20,000 or more of any water-bird species are found, or sites where species of European significance breed. They also monitor migration bottleneck sites where at least 3,000 raptors and cranes pass each season.

A monitoring example is the yearly counts of swans and geese in mid-January. Counts are made all over the country by the ornithologist network of the National Environmental Research Institute and DOF's IBA Caretaker Project (the result for Whooper Swan in 2006 is shown in Fig. 4).

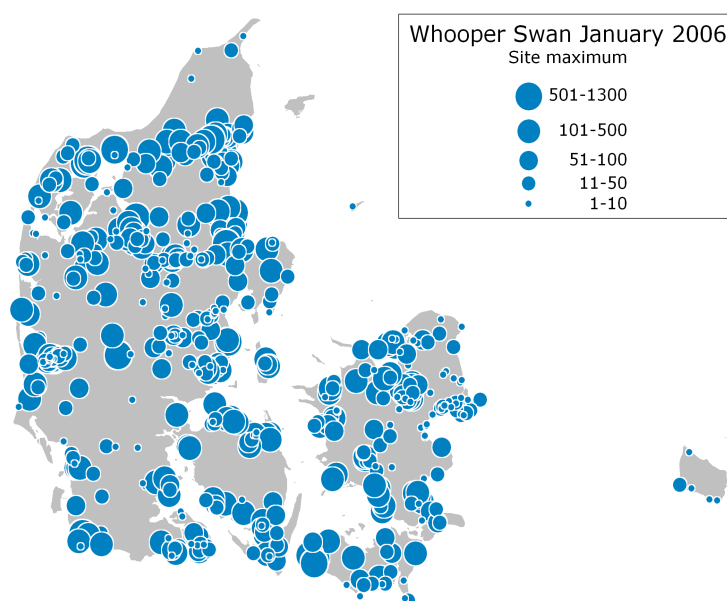


Fig. 4: Site maxima of Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* in January 2006 as counted by the ornithologists network of the National Environmental Research Institute and DOF's IBA Caretaker Project. In total 40,000 individuals were counted.

## Two examples of Danish IBA's and their bird species

The Danish part of the Wadden Sea is the country's most important non-marine IBA, regularly holding millions of water-birds. The IBA is intensely monitored by local authorities in the Danish/German/Dutch so-called Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. However, the local IBA caretakers, who have a thorough knowledge of the site, have pinpointed a number of waterbird occurrences, which fulfil the IBA criteria, but are not covered by the authorities. Thus, the caretaker group has made a 4-year plan for the monitoring of these occurrences, and the results reported until now are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Coordinated wader counts in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea by the local IBA caretaker group.**

Year	Species	Date of count	Total number of birds	Fraction of fly-way population
2004	Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	March 3	8,875	2.1 %
2005	Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	May 20–25	5,977	2.4 %
	Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	July 25–Aug. 5	13,868	5.5 %
	Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avocetta</i>	July 25–Aug. 5	8,003	9.6 %

Almindingen Forest on the island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea is the third largest forest in Denmark and has many important breeding species, including about 5 pairs of Tengmalm's Owl *Aegolius funereus*, and is the only site in the country for this species (see Fig. 5). The biggest caretaker group in the project until now, counting more than 30 members, is among others monitoring this species, which has to take place on (hopefully) moonlit nights in February and March.

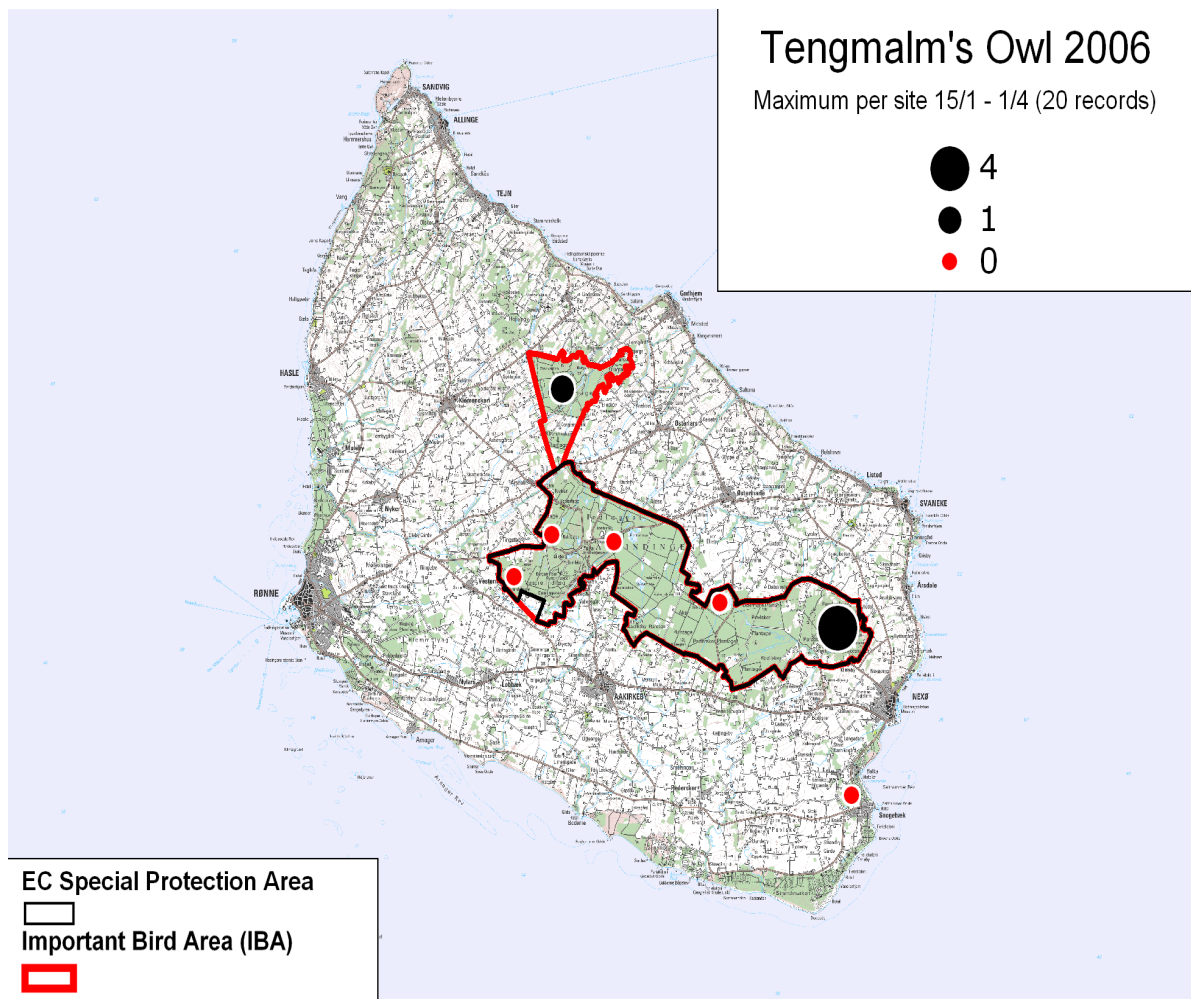


Fig. 5: Breeding records of Tengmalm's Owl, *Aegolius funereus*, at Bornholm in the breeding season of 2006. The map also shows where listening for the species has been carried out unsuccessfully, and it is marked by a red line where the local caretaker group has decided to enlarge the IBA (in relation to the corresponding EC Special Protection Area) because of a steady occurrence of the species in this part of the forest, outside the SPA.

## The Common Bird Census

The Common Bird Census in Denmark was initiated in 1975. Point Count Census in a free choice scheme is the chosen method and volunteers among the members of BirdLife Denmark (DOF) do all monitoring. The Common Bird Census consists of a breeding-bird survey and a winter-bird survey, both based on routes with 10-20 points and monitored once per season.

The number of routes is about 370 in the breeding season and about 270 in winter. This is the highest level ever, which is a result of a focus on the achieved results from the first 30 years communicated to the members in popular papers and in presentations at meetings, seminars, etc.

There has been no governmental support of the monitoring in 2002-2006. After 5 years of lobbying, we have now succeeded in regaining government support and the Minister for the Environment signed an agreement for the next five years during the celebration of DOF's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October 2006. As biodiversity indicators the indices will make up a considerable contribution to monitor whether Denmark can fulfill the 2010 obligations to stop the decrease in biodiversity.

## Results

Each year we produce TRIM-indices for nearly 100 breeding-bird species and about 75 winter-bird species; the most increasing and decreasing species are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: The species with the largest increasing or decreasing trends (mean annual percentage change per year) during 1996-2005 in the breeding time and at winter respectively.**

	<b>Breeding</b>	<b>%/yr</b>	<b>Winter</b>	<b>%/yr</b>
<b>Increasing</b>	Cormorant	14.0	Canadian Goose	25.9
	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		<i>Branta canadensis</i>	
	Raven	9.0	Greylag Goose	20.9
	<i>Corvus corax</i>		<i>Anser anser</i>	
Goldfinch	8.8	Kingfisher	10.5	
	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	
<b>Decreasing</b>	Yellow Wagtail	-5.4	Shellduck	-6.8
	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	
	Whinchat	-5.1	Twite	-4.7
	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	
	Sand Martin	-5.1	Rough-legged Buzzard	-4.3
<i>Riparia riparia</i>		<i>Buteo lagopus</i>		

Of the species having a significant trend we see an increase for 47 % of the breeding birds and 53 % of the winter birds. For 57 species both a breeding-bird index and a winter-bird index are calculated (see Fig. 6), and the two sets of indices are mutually correlated (Pearson  $r = 0.563$ ,  $n = 57$ ,  $P < 0.0001$ ). Nine of these species are considered as being genuine residents and among these we find that the two sets of indices are closely related ( $r = 0.927$ ,  $n = 9$ ,  $P = 0.0003$ ), and we conclude that the indices achieved by the Common Bird Census do track the populations.

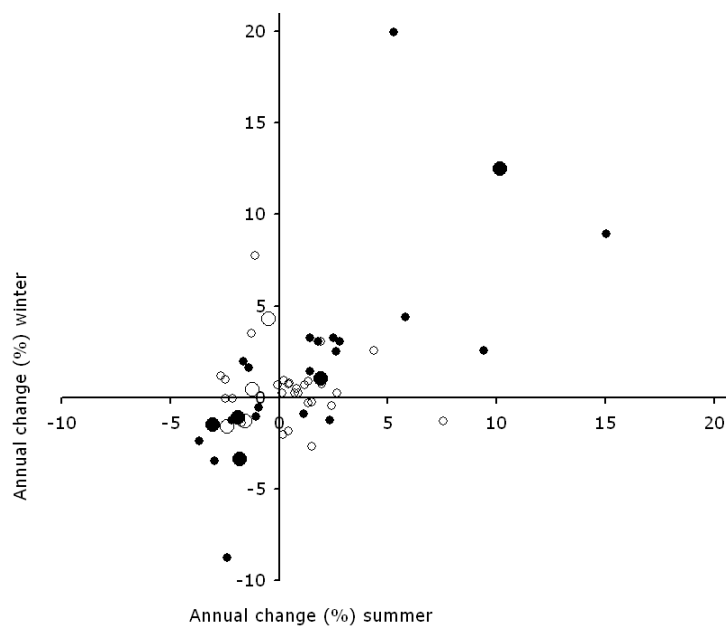


Fig. 6: Comparison of the mean annual change (%) in respectively, the breeding-bird index and the winter index for 57 species for which both indices are available. 25 species have significant trends in both seasons (filled circles). 9 species are regarded as genuine residents (large circles; Grey Partridge, Pheasant, Green Woodpecker, Marsh Tit, Crested Tit, Nuthatch, Raven, House Sparrow and Corn Bunting).

We compared the relevant indices with the very few other high quality population estimates in Denmark to see if they correlated. We found a significant correlation between the Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* breeding-bird index and the number of counted nests in Denmark 1983-2005 (Eskildsen, 2005; Fig. 7) as well as between the Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix* breeding-bird index and the annual hunting bag in 1976-2004 (Asferg, 2006; Fig. 8). These examples illustrate that the Danish Common Bird Census produces population indices with a quality comparable to the best other estimates in Denmark.

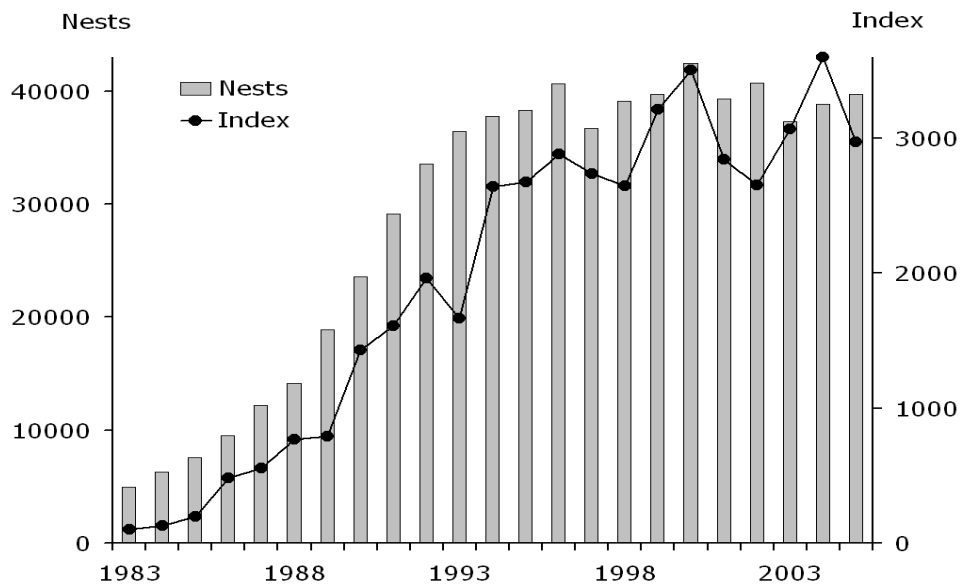


Fig. 7: The Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* breeding-bird index in Denmark is significantly correlated (Pearson product moment correlation  $r=0.957$ ;  $n=23$ ;  $p<0.0001$ ) to the annual nest counts.

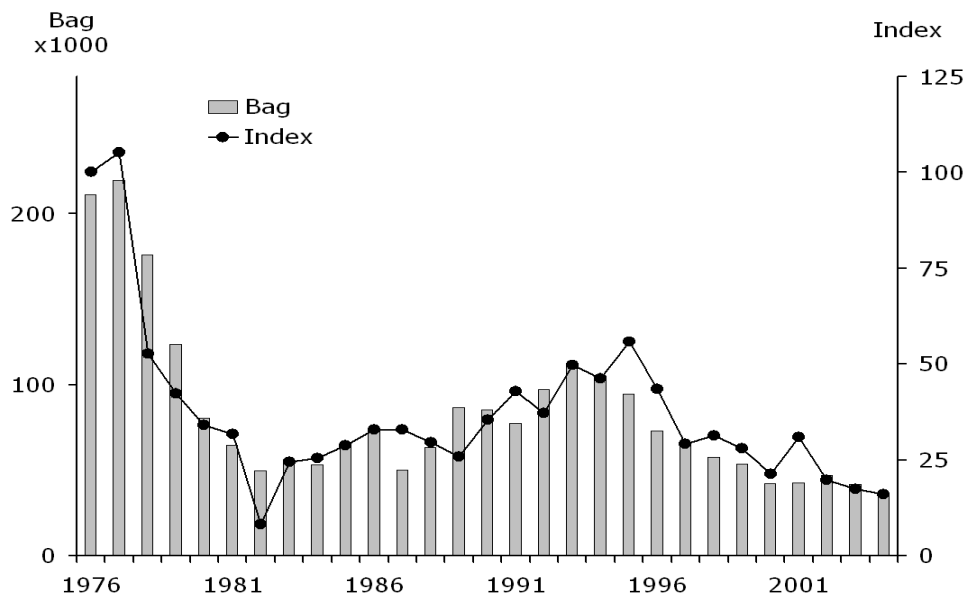


Fig. 8: The Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix* population in Denmark based on the breeding-bird index is significantly correlated (Pearson product moment correlation  $r=0.920$ ;  $n=29$ ;  $p<0.0001$ ) to the annual bag of shot birds



In the last few years, the results of the Common Bird Monitoring are increasingly being used in relation to conservation and we can expect an improved cooperation with the Government in the near future, which will hopefully secure optimal use of the census data.

## The DOF database “DOFbasen”

DOFbasen is DOF’s Internet-based database for bird observations. The purpose of the database is to give the Danish bird-watchers an opportunity to report and share their bird observations and counts. Modules have lately been added to make it possible also to use DOFbasen for reporting the more specialized bird counts made as part of DOF’s monitoring projects. All data are gathered by volunteers and can be accessed by the public on the website [www.dofbasen.dk](http://www.dofbasen.dk).

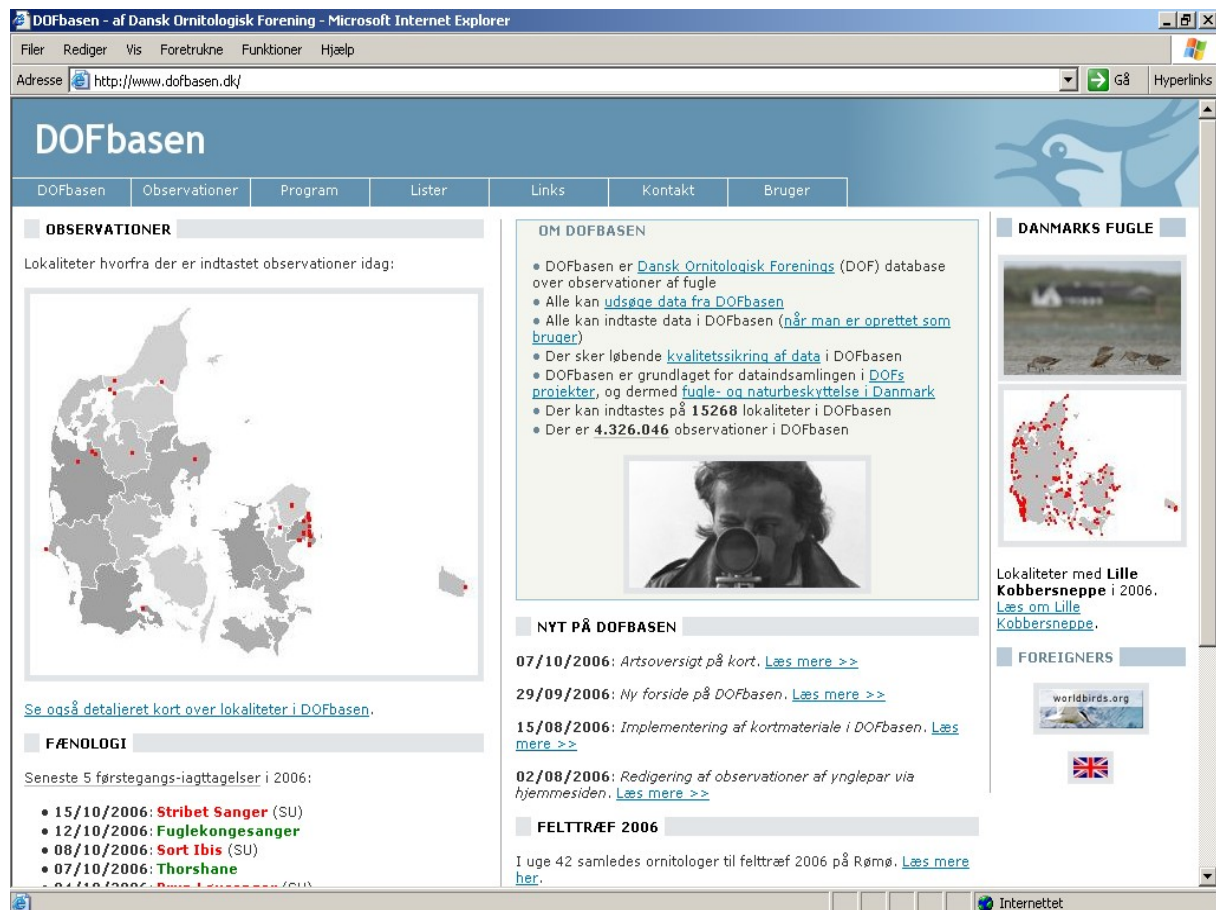


Fig. 9: The front page of [www.dofbasen.dk](http://www.dofbasen.dk), amongst other showing a map of the sites where data have been entered today and the latest species arrivals to Denmark.

## **Software and a website**

DOFbasen consists of two central parts: a locally installed software and a website (see Fig. 9). The software is used for entering observations using predefined lists of localities, species names, behavioural categories, etc. Access to the internet is needed to upload the data to the central database, but the data entry can be made offline. On the website the observations made by all users can be accessed using search tools. Many features are available here, for instance search results shown on maps, arrival dates for the migratory species, easy extracts of rare bird observations, top list of most active observers and filters to show only IBA-relevant observations. The website is also where the software can be downloaded, and user support is available if needed. Anyone can access the website, but a username and password are needed to report observations.

## **The developing team**

Two programmers are attached to DOFbasen, one maintains the website and one is responsible for the programme. The central coordinator plans new developments and improvements of DOFbasen together with the 12 regional coordinators. The latter are volunteers and, furthermore, responsible for adding users on request and maintaining the local site list. They support users and run regional introduction courses. The coordination group works on the basis of an email group and annual meetings.

To ensure high data quality, a group of 6 volunteers, including representatives of DOF's Rarity Committee, was established in 2006. The group follows records of rare species as well as common ones, and reacts on all irregularities of phenology, habitat and region. By contacting observers they ensure that typing errors are corrected and that descriptions of rare birds are sent to the Rarity Committee. Furthermore, the users can send emails to other users, and the members of the forum are therefore able to assist each other in maintaining the correctness and quality level of the data.

## **The data**

DOFbasen went online in its present form in May 2002. Since then, 1,900 user profiles have been created and 4.4 million observations entered (see Fig. 10). In 2006 so far, more than 1,000 people have reported 500,000 observations from 6,800 different sites (per mid-November). The number of users and amount of data entered every year have been increasing, but now seems to have been stabilized around 550-600,000 observations per year.

The website has an average of 40,000 page views per day.

In other words, DOFbasen has become an important and fundamental tool for the majority of the active Danish bird-watchers. It is used for observations of common birds as well as rarities, random observations of few individuals and thoroughly made counts of large flocks from small sites as well as huge and important bird areas. The database is used as a supplement to the sms-based rarity reporting system in sharing information between field ornithologists and as a quick reference for taking the pulse on the birding situation in Denmark as well as to gain information on individual birds and sites.

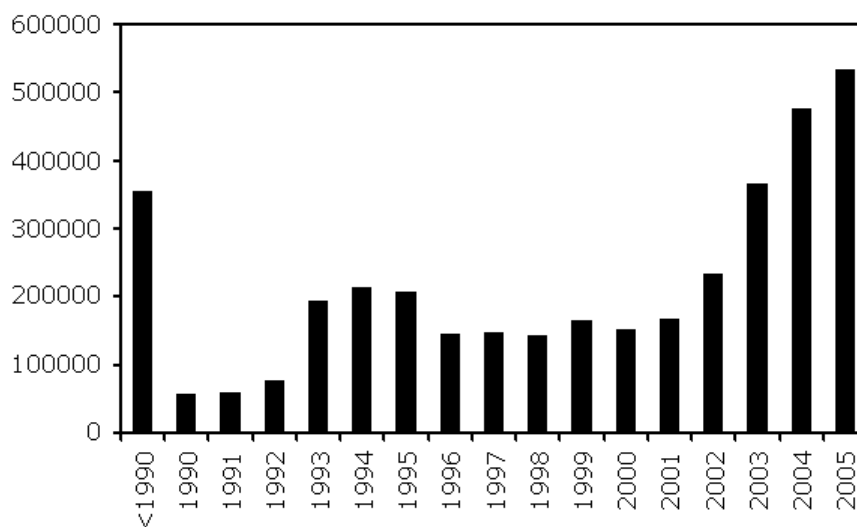


Fig. 10: Number of observations entered in DOF's Internet based bird database "DOFbasen" grouped by observation year.

## Communication of the results from the projects to the public

Each project has its own website mainly used for communication from the project management to the participants and the public. Another important part of the project descriptions has been the communication of the project results using subsets of websites linked in a network and, as a very new approach, the majority of these websites are edited and maintained by the volunteers themselves. This is done by simply logging in on the website and adding text in templates (Content Management System).

Three sets of websites have been established:

- **Important bird areas.** At present, 100 sites have their own website where the local caretakers can write site descriptions. Also shown are hints on access roads and observation points, news, upload pictures,

latest counts, etc. Maps showing site boundaries are added by the central coordination ([www.dofbasen.dk/IBA](http://www.dofbasen.dk/IBA)).

- **Rare and threatened breeding birds.** 41 species each have their own website where the species coordinator can add text about the breeding ecology of the bird, latest status on the population, monitoring instructions, construction plans for building nesting boxes (for owls) and contact information to report newly discovered breeding pairs ([www.dofbasen.dk/DATSY](http://www.dofbasen.dk/DATSY)).
- **Birds of Denmark.** 220 species each have a web page giving a brief and general description of the bird. Global and Danish breeding range, wintering sites, migration pattern, feeding ecology and population changes. The main purpose of the sites is to present the specific data gathered by DOF over many years of survey, and chiefly the indices produced by the common bird census programme since 1975 and the breeding maps produces in the atlas surveys in the 1970's and 1990's ([www.dofbasen.dk/ART](http://www.dofbasen.dk/ART)).

These websites are all automatically linked together (see Fig. 11) with links from an IBA to all species important in that area and the latest entries of observations from the site in DOFbasen. From the species sites there are links to all relevant IBA's and the latest observation entered in DOFbasen of that species. When searching observations in DOFbasen, relevant links appear if an active website of the involved species or site exists.

The volunteers have shown great interest in maintaining the websites regarding IBA's, whereas the activity in editing the websites about the rare

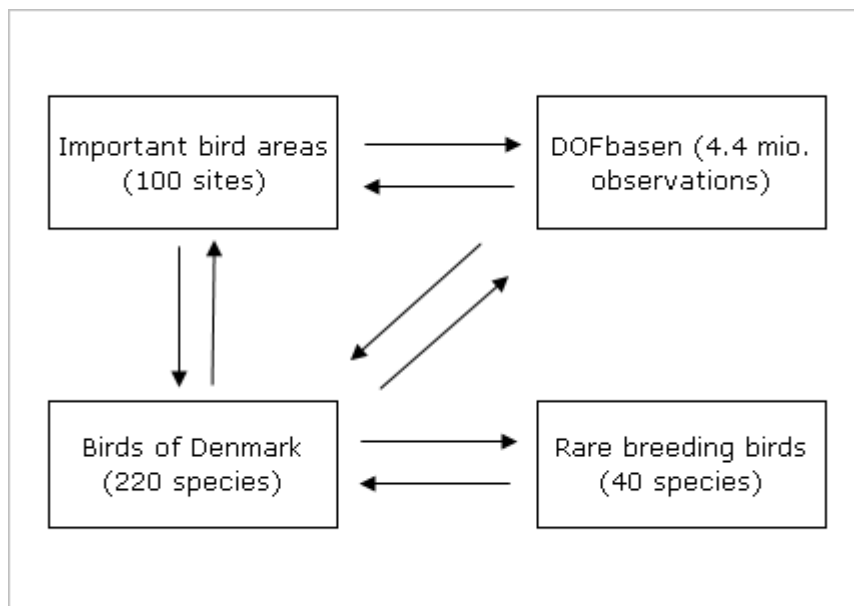


Fig. 11: Diagram showing the linking between the different subsets of websites in DOF's projects.

breeding birds has varied. The visiting numbers have been higher than expected, with the pages about the birds of Denmark being the most popular together with the IBA websites. In all, the websites have around 50,000 page views per month, excluding DOFbasen.

## Contact information and latest publications

Dansk Ornitologisk Forening/Birdlife Denmark  
Vesterbrogade 138-140  
DK-1620 Copenhagen V  
Denmark  
+45 3328 3300 - dof@dof.dk                      www.dof.dk

### *Rare and threatened breeding bird programme (DATSY)*

**Contact**

michael.grell@dof.dk  
timme.nyegaard@dof.dk

**References**

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Nyegaard & Grell (2006)

**Web**

www.dof.dk/datsy (The project website)  
www.dofbasen.dk/DATSY (Info about the species covered by the project)

### *Caretaker Project*

**Contact**

thomas.vikstroem@dof.dk

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**Web**

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www.dofbasen.dk/IBA (Info about the IBA's)

### *Common Bird Census*

**Contact**

henning.heldbjerg@dof.dk

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**Web**

www.dof.dk/punkt (The project website)  
www.dofbasen.dk/ART (Info about the species)

### *DOFbasen*

**Contact**

henning.heldbjerg@dof.dk  
timme.nyegaard@dof.dk

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## **Monitoring common breeding birds in Flanders: a new step towards an integrated system**

**Glenn Vermeersch, Anny Anselin,  
Thierry Onkelinx & Dirk Bauwens**

Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Kliniekstraat 25, 1070 Brussels,  
Belgium  
glenn.vermeersch@inbo.be

### **Introduction**

Since 1994, the populations of rare, colonial and exotic breeding bird species are monitored (BBV-project) by the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO, the former Institute for Nature Conservation), in collaboration with volunteers of the NGO Natuurpunt (BirdLife partner), Flanders' largest voluntary-based organisation and several local ornithological groups. However, INBO continuously received questions by local and regional governments concerning trends or causes of population-shifts in more common bird species. Moreover, Europe was also demanding more information on common bird species trends. Nevertheless, the start of a common bird census in Flanders has been postponed for a long time due to the lack of interest and financial support (Anselin et al., 1997). After publishing the atlas of breeding birds in Flanders in 2004, continuous attempts have been made to finance this new project. Finally, the development of the Pan European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme has urged us to increase pressure on our government for additional support since Belgium was almost the only European country that could not fully contribute to this scheme. In the end, we succeeded in 2006. In March 2007, additional staff was hired and a contract was made with Natuurpunt to share the data and divide the different tasks. INBO is responsible for developing a standardised method and for reporting to regional governments and the scientific community. Natuurpunt will coordinate the volunteers and will report to them on a regular basis. Finally, INBO is developing an on-line database where volunteers can fill in all the project's observations.

### **Common Bird Census: methodology**

In 2006 we compared all existing European common bird census schemes in order to implement a method in Flanders. Almost all member states use



either point counts or transects or a combination of both to monitor common birds. Both systems have their strong points (Table 1) but after internal consultation and several contacts with fieldworkers, we chose for a method based on point counts.

**Table 1: A comparison between point and transect counts (free after Gregory et al. 2004)**

<b>Transect counts</b>	<b>Point counts</b>
Excellent in open, extensive areas	Excellent in forest and scrub
Large, mobile and conspicuous species	Also cryptic, shy and skulking species
Excellent in cases of low densities and species poor areas	Excellent in cases of higher densities and more species rich areas
Time efficient	Time is lost moving between points, but counts give time to spot and identify shy birds
Double counting of birds is a minor issue	Double counting of birds is a concern within the count period, especially for larger counts
Suited to situations where access is good	Suited to situations where access is restricted
Can be used for bird-habitat studies	Better suited for bird-habitat studies

The atlas of breeding birds in Flanders was based on territory mapping in 5×5 km UTM-squares with additional information collected in a subset of 8 1×1 km squares (Vermeersch *et al.*, 2004). So, since we already had information in over 5,000 1×1 UTM-squares, we chose that grid as a basis for the new census. The grid was then randomly stratified over 6 habitat types (farmland, woodland, urban, suburban, heathland and marshland) and finally, 6 points were randomly assigned to each grid cell (Fig. 1). Each point has to be counted three times in a year in predefined periods (DD/MM): 01/03-15/04, 16/04-31/05 and 01/06-15/07. All six points in a square have to be counted on the same day and subsequent counts of the same points in different periods should lie apart for at least two weeks.

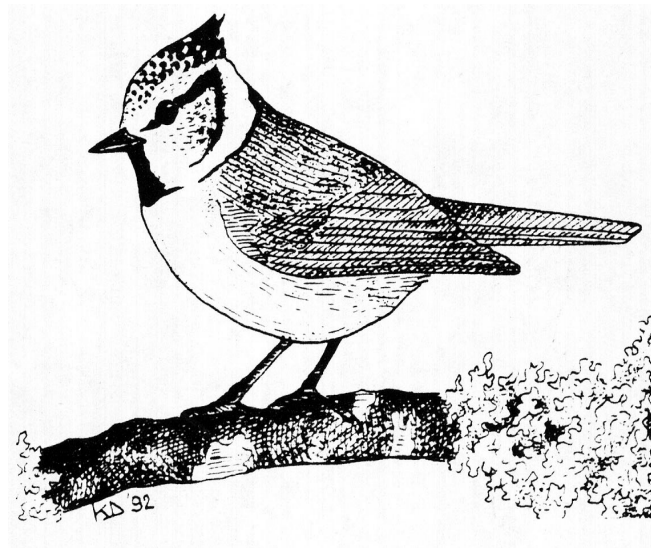
A separate study (Onkelinx *et al.*, 2006) was carried out to estimate the sample size needed to calculate good indices for the majority of common species. The study was based on density-figures in 1×1 km squares from the previous atlas. Finally, 1200 squares were randomly chosen from the above mentioned grid. Considering the number of volunteers and to increase geographical coverage and sample size, we chose for a three-year cycle. Initially, every point had two observation circles around it (50 and 150 meters), but after consulting our Dutch colleagues from SOVON, we chose not to use these circles. Instead, this system is preserved for a calibration study in 10 % of all squares that should allow us to calculate density functions for some of the commoner species (see also Van Turnhout, 2006). In this study, all observations will be drawn on a map, while in the ‘normal’ scheme this is not requested. This fieldwork is carried out by INBO staff.

## **The voluntary network**

Starting from the existing network in the BBV-project, approximately 40 regional coordinators were found throughout Flanders. Natuurpunt and INBO started giving lectures about the project and its methodology in March. Although this was a rather late start, volunteers were very eager to join in and after a few weeks, over 300 squares (for 2007) were already assigned to approximately 150 different people. For the following years, success will be even higher since some regional groups chose to start only next year. All volunteers received maps, field forms and a methodology folder (Fig. 1).

## **On-line data collection**

At INBO, the IT-staff is now working on an online system for data collection for both the BBV-project and the new monitoring scheme. Three different types of logins are defined: administrators (INBO and Natuurpunt), regional coordinators (with access to all data in their respective regions) and volunteers. The implementation of such on-line systems has proven to be a great success in water-bird counts and butterfly monitoring schemes already. The speed of reporting has increased significantly, fieldworkers have less paper work and therefore there is less room for errors. At the same time, this new approach allows us to add all the existing atlas and monitoring data to the on-line system as an extra feedback.



# Methodehandleiding bij het project 'Algemene Broedvogelmonitoring Vlaanderen (ABV)'

Glenn Vermeersch, Anny Anselin, Marc Herremans

Een initiatief van het Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO) en de Vlaamse Vogelwerkgroep van Natuurpunt in samenwerking met Natuurpunt Studie.







inbo  
 instituut voor natuur- en bosonderzoek

natuurpunt

Algemene broedvogelmonitoring Vlaanderen (ABV) - Veldform

Nummer km-hok : ..... Waarnemer : .....  
 Nummer telpunt : ..... Adres : .....  
 Tijdsperiode : ..... Telefoon : .....  
 Datum : ..... Email : .....

Soort	Aantal	Soort	Aantal	Soort	Aantal	Soort	Aantal
Aalscholver		Grote Gele Kwikstaart		Kuffieuwerk		Spreuw	
Appelvinck		Grote Karskiet		Kuffmees		Sprinkhaanzanger	
Baardman		Grauwe Klauwier		Kwak		Staar-meest	
Barmsej spec.		Grauwe Vliegenvanger		Kwartel		Stadsluif	
Bergeend		Grauwe Gors		Kwartelkoning		Steenuil	
Bijeneter		Grauwe Kiekendief		Magelaengans		Stelkkuut	
Blauwe Reiger		Grasmus		Mandarijneend		Stormmeeuw	
Blauwe Kiekendief		Graspeper		Matkop		Strandplevier	
Blaueborst		Grauwe Gans		Meerkoet		Tafelend	
Bonte Vliegenvanger		Groene Specht		Merel		Tapuit	
Boerenwaluw		Groentling		Momikspartiet		Tjytfj	
Bontbekplevier		Grote Lijster		Nachtgall		Tanrenkalk	
Bonte Stranddoper		Grote Stern		Nachtzwaluw		Tortel	
Boonkruiper		Grutto		Nijlgans		Tuinfluter	
Boonkruiper		Halbandparkiet		Noordse Stern		Tureluur	
Boonleuvenk		Havik		Deverloper		Turkse Tortel	
Boonpeper		Heggenmus		Oeverwaluw		Veldoeuwerk	
Boomvalk		Holenduif		Oleivaar		Velduil	
Bosrietzanger		Hop		Orpheuspovogel		Vink	
Bosuil		Houdruif		Paapje		Viedief	
Braamkruiper		Houstrup		Parijs		Vlaamse Gaal	
Brandgans		Huiszwaluw		Pijlstaart		Vuurgourchaan	
Bruine Kiekendief		Huiszwaluw		Pimpelmees		Waterhoen	
Budelmees		javogel		Porseleinhoen		Wateral	
Buizerd		Indische Gans		Puffel		Watersnip	
Canadese Gans		Kauw		Ransuil		Waldereeuw	
Carolina-eend		Keep		Rietgors		Wespandief	
Casarca		Karkuil		Rietzanger		Wielewaal	
Dodaars		Kievit		Ringmus		Wilde Eend	
Draaiblaas		Kleine Bonte Specht		Rose Sietelstaart		Winterkoning	
Dwergstern		Kleine Barmsej		Rode Wouw		Winterfaling	
Ekster		Kleine Karskiet		Roek		Witte Kwikstaart	
Engelse Gele Kwik		Kleine Mantelmeeuw		Roerdomp		Woudsaage	
Europese Kanarie		Klapkester		Roodborsttapuit		Wulp	
Fazant		Kleine Plevier		Roodbont		Zanglitaler	
Fils		Kluut		Roodhaligans		Zilvermeeuw	
Fluter		Kneu		Roodmus		Zomertaling	
Fuut		Knobbelzwaan		Roozwikstaart		Zwarte Kraai	
Gedjors		Koolkoek		Scholekster		Zwarte Roodstaart	
Gekraagde Roodstaart		Kokmeeuw		Sig		Zwarte Wouw	
Gele Kwikstaart		Koligans		Slechvalk		Zwarte Zwaan	
Geoorde Fuut		Koolmees		Sieboend		Zwarte Mees	
Gierzwaluw		Kraakeend		Snor		Zwarte Specht	
Glaraskop		Kransvogel		Soepend		Zwartkop	
Goudhaan		Krooneend		Soepgans		Zwartkopmeeuw	
Goudvink		Kruisbek		Sperwer			
Grote Bonte Specht		Kulfeend		Spotvogel			

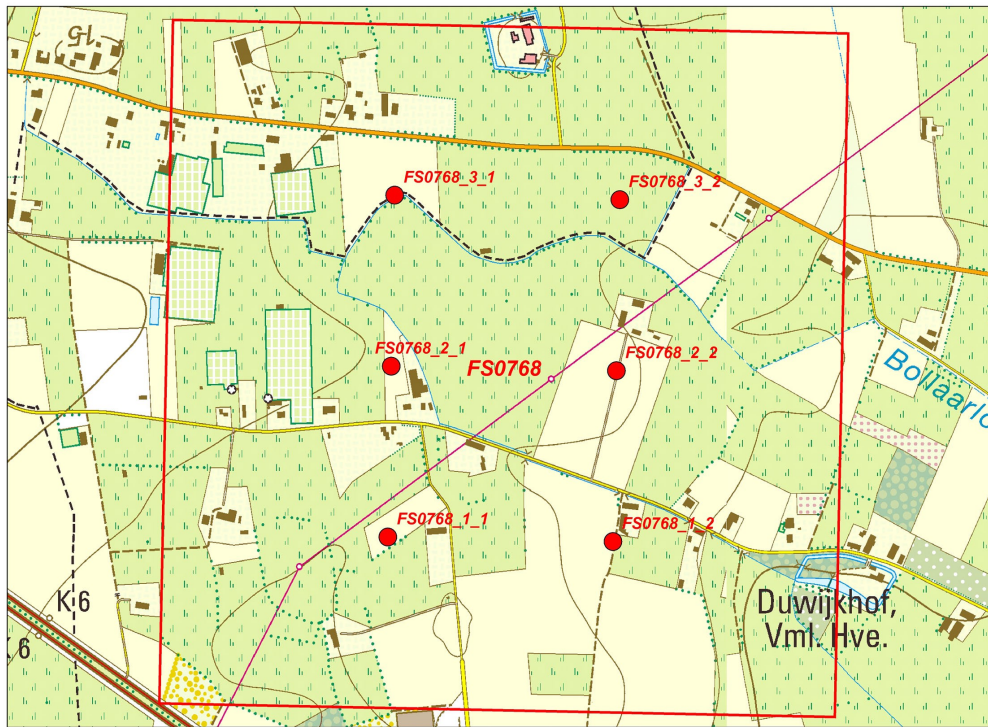


Fig. 1: The volunteers' equipment: map, field forms and summarized methodology folder

## Future prospects: integration of existing data and implementation of new projects

The ultimate goal of INBO is to produce a yearly 'Bird Report' based on an integration of existing and new projects. The start of the common bird census is another step towards such an integrated system. However, to achieve the scheme in Fig. 2, a lot of work still needs to be done. One more project to be set up in the near future is a 'Waterways bird survey' since both the common and rare breeding bird census are insufficient to obtain good data on species like Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and Grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*). Along with Natuurpunt, the set-up for this project is planned for 2008.

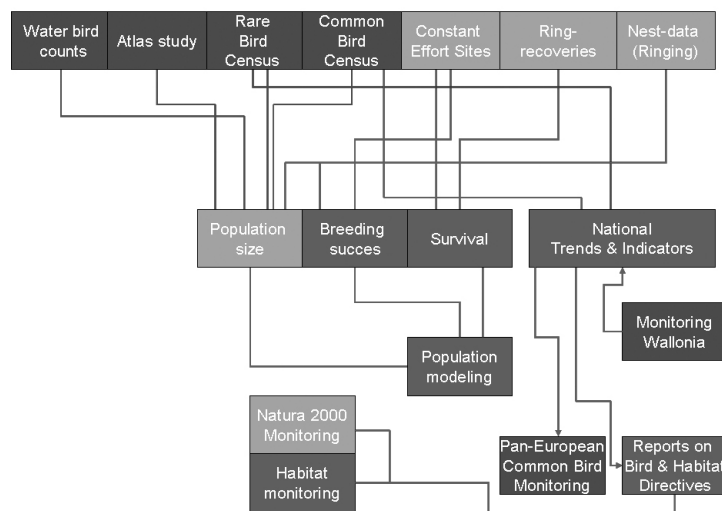


Fig. 2: Integrating existing and future projects

Ringing data are of great value in understanding survival and reproductive success of a number of species. In Belgium, ringing data are collected by the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Science (KBIN). For some species, long data series are available (e.g. Sparrowhawk, Fig. 3). INBO will try to incorporate some of the data in their forthcoming bird reports.

A very limited number of Belgian bird ringers invest time in a Constant Effort Site (CES) programme. However, the CES-programme has proven to yield very valuable data on survival and reproduction rates of several small passerine species. Therefore plans exist to expand and standardise the CES-sites and efforts in a joint project between INBO and KBIN. In 2006, 5 CES (Constant Effort Cites) were run in Belgium. We aim to establish at least 15 such sites in the near future.

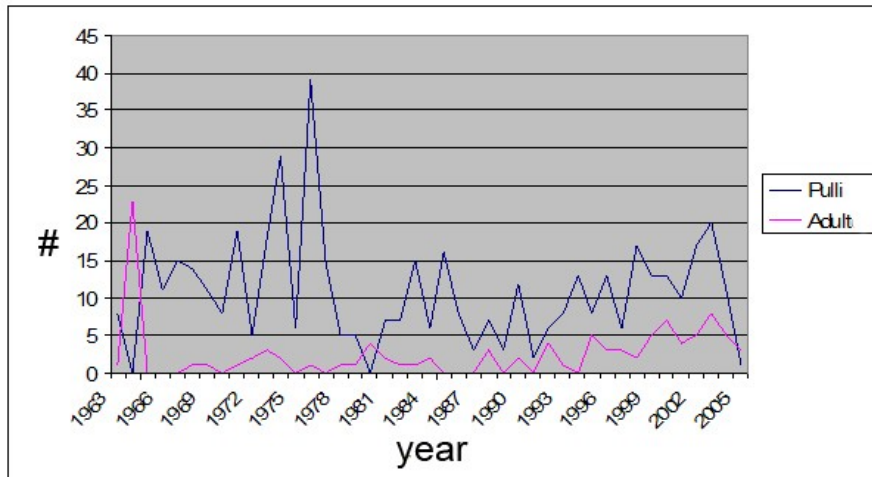


Fig. 3: Overview of ringed Sparrowhawks *Accipiter nisus* in Belgium by KBIN

Several study groups in Flemish universities publish very interesting life history research and effects of global warming based on long data series of several cavity-breeding species like tits, Nuthatches and Pied flycatchers. These data could also be incorporated in future breeding bird reports in order to explain possible trends resulting from the monitoring schemes. Finally, European legislation is a driving force behind the set-up of an integrated system in Flanders. Every member state has to report (every six years) on distribution, trends and future prospects of all species listed on Annex 2 and 4 of the Habitats Directive. Therefore, the Flemish Minister of Environment has declared (integrated) monitoring as one of the prime tasks of INBO.

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## **European Bird Census Council (EBCC) Chairman's report for the period September 2004 to April 2007**

### **1. Membership of the Executive Committee**

The ten members of Executive Committee as elected at the Board meeting of 8 September 2004 in Kayseri, Turkey, have been:

Richard Gregory (Chairman, UK)	Ruud Foppen (Treasurer, Netherlands)
Ward Hagemeijer (Vice-Chairman, Netherlands)	Åke Lindstrom (Delegate Officer, Sweden)
Hans-Günther Bauer (Secretary, Germany)	Uygar Özesmi (Turkey)
Anny Anselin (Editor Bird Census News, Belgium)	Frederic Jiguet (France)
	Przemek Chylarecki (Poland)
	Alexander Mischenko (Russia)

The Executive Committee has also called upon the expertise of a range of observers including:

Ian Burfield (observer for BirdLife International)  
David Noble (observer for British Trust for Ornithology)  
Petr Vorisek (coordinator for the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme)  
Lorenzo Fornasari & Elisabetta Di Carli (Chiavenna conference organising committee)  
Sylvia Andonova (coordinator for the SEED Bird Indicators project)

### **2. Meetings of ExCo**

ExCo has met twice a year since the last Board meeting, with its 29th to 33rd meetings held in: Solsona, Spain, April 2005 – Prague, Czech Republic, September 2005 – Chiavenna, Italy, April 2006 – Radolfzell, Germany, October 2006 – and Chiavenna, Italy, April 2007. Minutes from recent Executive Committee (and 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>)

### **3. Financial position**

The financial position of the EBCC remains relatively healthy and stable (Annex 1). Total assets in April 2007 approach 10,000 Euros, similar to the situation in September 2004. Income is generated almost exclusively by the sale of data from the European breeding bird atlas. The main expenses relate to servicing data requests, production of *Bird Census News*, and travel and subsistence costs for the meetings of the Executive Committee. In the latter case, EBCC covers costs for those members and observers who have no funding of their own.

### **4. Conference proceedings**

Conference proceedings from the 16<sup>th</sup> EBCC conference in Kayseri, Turkey, in September 2004 are close to completion. Approximately 15 manuscripts will be published in the *Turkish Journal of Zoology*, aiming for September 2007 publication. A further four manuscripts have been or will be published in *Bird Census News*. We thank Uygar Özesmi, Can Bilgin, and a number of EBCC reviewers for their assistance in finalising the proceedings.

### **5. Bird Census News**

Since the last Board meeting, five issues of *Bird Census News* have been published:

BCN 2004 volume 17 1-2 (double issue):	68 pgs	
BCN 2005 volume 18/1:	40 pgs	
BCN 2005 volume 18/2:	24 pgs	
BCN 2006 volume 19/1:	44 pgs	
BCN 2006 volume 19/2:	44 pgs	Total pages: 220

*Bird Census News* has a circulation of 300. Since 2003, all issues have been available via the EBCC website in PDF format. ExCo is extremely grateful to the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) in Belgium for continuing to provide financial support for the publication.

#### **6. Provision of data from the EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds**

At each of its meetings, ExCo considers requests from a range of people keen to make use of Atlas data for academic and/or conservation purposes. Since Kayseri, requests have been received from: Brian Huntley/Rhys Green (University of Durham/University of Cambridge & RSPB); Pam Berry (University of Oxford); Gregoire Lois (European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity); Barbara Anderson (University of York); Rob Thomas (University of Cardiff); Colin Beale/Jack Lennon (University of Glasgow); Fiona Sanderson (RSPB); Katarzyna Biala (JRC Ispra); Frederic Jiguet (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle); Sander Terlouw (Forest & Nature Conservation, The Netherlands); Debbie Russell (University of Leeds); William Wint (University of Oxford); Matthew Wood (University of Oxford); and Fabian Peter (EAWAG).

The breeding bird atlas continues to act as the main source of income for the activities of EBCC Executive Committee. We operate fixed guidelines on the costs of atlas data provision and on how EBCC should be acknowledged. We often ask for mention of EBCC data use and input in the Acknowledgements of published work, although sometimes we work more closely with collaborators, and here EBCC co-authorship is often appropriate. In recent times, the atlas has been used increasingly in studies looking at the potential impacts of climate change on birds in Europe. One major product from this work has come from the Modelling Natural Resource Responses to Climate Change (MONARCH) project (<http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/research/biodiversity/monarch.php>). A second will be the publication later in 2007 of an atlas projecting the future distributions of all European breeding birds under a moderate climate change scenario (*A climatic atlas of European breeding birds* by B. Huntley, R. Green, Y. Collingham & S. Willis).

#### **7. EBCC on the web**

EBCC's website [www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info) has continued to grow and has been regularly updated. ExCo has contracted CSO (Czech Ornithological Society, BirdLife Partner in Czech Republic) to develop and maintain the website. ExCo members and observers have contributed to the site. We are especially grateful to David Noble from BTO who has temporarily taken the post of EBCC Web Champion and overseen recent developments. The most active area relates to the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS), where news and information is regularly updated. We have introduced two new sections recently, entitled 'Country Reports' (short summaries of national monitoring activities and contacts provided by EBCC Delegates) and 'SEED Bird Indicators' (a summary of the Supporting Eastern Europeans to Develop Bird Indicators project - see below). Work led by SOVON has also allowed us recently to make available interactive web-based species distribution maps from the EBCC's breeding bird atlas. We also have regular updates of *Bird Census News* and all recent issues are available in .pdf format. A further technical change is for individual web pages to be referenced (rather than the generic [www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info)), which allows more specific links to be provided to potential users.

Very special thanks to Lukas Viktora, Thomas Telensky, Petr Vorisek and Alena Pazderova at CSO, to David Noble and Susan Waghorn at BTO, and to Henk Sierdsema at SOVON, for assistance in developing and improving the EBCC's website.

#### **8. The legal status of EBCC**

Following earlier discussions and decisions, the Executive Committee has taken forward a proposal to register EBCC as an Association under Dutch Law and thereby formalise the legal status of EBCC. EBCC's Chairman and Treasurer met with Dutch Notaries in 2006 to finalise details and clarify outstanding points. The new Articles of Association have been drafted by the Notary and circulated around EBCC Delegates on two occasions for

comments and feedback. This circulation included background information on why the change was needed (essentially to allow EBCC to better meet its stated aims), and detailed explanation of the new clauses. Delegates will be asked to support the adoption of the new constitution in a vote at the Board meeting in Chiavenna in April 2007.

**9. Planning for the 17<sup>th</sup> international EBCC conference in Chiavenna, Italy, April 2007.**

Lorenzo Fornasari (Chairman of the organising committee of the conference) has joined the Executive Committee at each of its meetings since Kayseri to discuss the preparation and organisation of the Italian conference. In April 2006, the Executive Committee visited Chiavenna to see the proposed facilities and to help plan the conference. The organisation of its international conference is clearly a high priority for the Executive Committee.

**10. Support for establishing new common bird monitoring schemes in Europe**

EBCC's Executive Committee, including members or observers, have provided support and advice in various ways, to help establish pilot or new common bird monitoring initiatives in Slovakia, Portugal, Romania, European Russia, Turkey, Belarus, Macedonia, Greece, Malta, and Cyprus. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is providing financial support to common bird monitoring schemes in Bulgaria and Romania.

**11. Liaison with Delegates**

The establishment of a Delegate Officer, currently Åke Lindstrom, has allowed EBCC to update and expand the list of Delegates (and their contact details) substantially over the last three years. EBCC covers 46 countries where currently we have 73 confirmed national Delegates. We have 2 confirmed Delegates in 35 countries, 1 confirmed Delegate in 3 countries, and 8 countries without confirmed Delegates. Åke has actively pursued potential contacts and previous Delegates across Europe. The Executive Committee is eager to re-energise the Delegate network and include Delegates more closely and actively in its work. Simply maintaining contact with Delegates is a time-consuming process and we would ask all Delegates to do their bit to help keep in touch with Åke and EBCC's work.

In addition, if you are not currently a national Delegate, but would like to become more involved in the work of EBCC, or learn more about what this entails, please do not hesitate to make contact with Åke ([ake.lindstrom@zooekol.lu.se](mailto:ake.lindstrom@zooekol.lu.se)).

**12. Pan-European monitoring: The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme: report from Petr Vorisek**

The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) project follows on from a series of EBCC initiatives to develop Euro-monitoring dating back to the 1980s, most notably the Villa Cipressi workshop held in Italy in 1996. The PECBMS began in January 2002 with financial support from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB: BirdLife Partner in the United Kingdom). The Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO) hosts the project co-ordinator, Petr Vorisek, and now a Technical Assistant, Alena Pazderova. The project manager is Richard Gregory, based at RSPB. The PECBMS is an association of individual experts and expert organisations cooperating through the EBCC and BirdLife International, with the support of the RSPB, EBCC, BirdLife International, CSO, and Statistics Netherlands.

The PECBMS aims to collate national survey data on common birds in a harmonised way from its European network of expert ornithologists. It aims to increase both the number of countries collecting and submitting data on trends, and the number of bird species covered, to help develop and promote the concept of biodiversity indicators in Europe, and thereby promote bird conservation. More widely, the project aims to improve the scientific standard of bird monitoring across Europe by fostering co-operation and sharing best practice and expertise. For details: <http://www.ebcc.info/pecbm.html> .



**Activities implemented, main results & achievements  
over the period September 2004 – April 2007**

***Pan-European indices and indicators***

Produced 3 times, with continuous improvements in species and country coverage, species classification, computation procedure and data quality control. First in 2003, second in June 2005. Last version (March 2007 update) contains data from 20 countries on 124 species.

***Species classification***

Species habitat classification for bird indicators has improved, from first version based on expert assessment, through second based on Tucker & Evans classification to third (and hopefully near final) based on species classification within biogeographical regions.

***Project outputs publications and dissemination***

\*State of Europe's Common Birds 2005 published, next update planned in 2007.

\*Promotional leaflet published.

\*Selected scientific papers, talks and other presentations at meetings and conferences:

4. Common birds as the first structural indicator for biodiversity. Brussels, June 2005. European Commission Indicator launch.
5. New approaches to the development of population level indicators of biodiversity. Brasilia, July 2005. Society for Conservation Biology Conference.
6. Bird monitoring at a European scale. Berlin, October 2005. DDA Anniversary Conference.
7. Monitoring and surveying bird populations in Europe. Blenheim, Australasian Ornithological Congress, December 2005.
8. Population trends of widespread woodland birds in Europe. Leicester University, April 2006. British Ornithologists' Union Conference.
9. Measuring biodiversity: using birds as indicators of environmental change. Paris, May 2006. Joint meeting of Royal Statistical Society, French Statistical Society & International Biometric Society.
10. Using birds as indicators of environmental change in Europe. Brussels, May 2006. European Commission, Green Week event.
11. Measuring biodiversity: using birds as indicators of environmental change. Patuxent Research Centre, Washington D.C., August 2006
12. Using birds as indicators of environmental change in Europe. Hamburg, International Ornithological Congress, August 2006

\*The project has published a series of scientific publications including:

14. Gregory et al. 2005. Developing indicators for European birds. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B.* 360, 269-288.
15. Gregory 2006. Birds as biodiversity indicators for Europe. *Significance* 3, 106-110. Royal Statistical Society.
16. Gregory et al. In press. Population trends of widespread woodland birds in Europe. *Ibis*.
17. Voříšek et al. In press. Population trends of 48 common terrestrial bird species in Europe: results from the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring scheme. *Turkish Journal of Ornithology*.

***Use of PECBMS outputs***

Take up and use of the wild bird indicators includes:

- Very high impact – used in a very wide range of environmental reporting processes in Europe (and in global reporting processes too).
- Farmland Bird Index adopted as an official EU Structural, Sustainable Development, IRENA indicator and Rural Development Regulations indicator.
- Highlighted the decline of farmland wildlife - one of *the* issues in European nature

conservation. Has helped to shed light on emerging declines of forest birds.

- Recommended by a number of science forums and journals.
- Published the first 'State of Europe's Common Birds' report and several scientific papers (available at: <http://www.ebcc.info/>).
- Good example of international cooperation on biodiversity research.
- The project has delivered and updated the first ever biodiversity indicators of their kind in Europe and has communicated and disseminated its results.
- The project provides an example and template for other taxa and other biomes

Increase geographical coverage

New schemes in Portugal, Bulgaria, Russia (Moscow region). Pilot schemes or planned schemes in Romania, Greece, Slovakia, Slovenia, Luxemburg, Cyprus, and Malta. Through SEED Indicators project, reaching Macedonia, Lithuania, Turkey and Belarus.

#### ***Project management and communication***

- Steering Group
- Technical Group
- Long-term plan till 2008
- Initially financially supported by RSPB, since April 2006 funding from European Commission and RSPB; EU funding confirmed until spring 2009
- Two people at central coordination level in the office in Prague: project coordinator plus new staff (technical assistant) recruited in August 2006
- Maintenance of PECBMS network of cooperating organisations and individuals
- Assistance to PECBMS contacts with technical issues, management, data management, funding, new software for production of indices by TRIM etc.
- Best Practice Guide under preparation
- Maintenance of web site
- Regular reports on the web site
- Regular reporting to EBCC ExCo
- Mini-workshop on species selection in March 2005 (Lednice, Czech Republic)
- Full PECBMS workshop in September 2005 (Prague, Czech Republic)
- Cooperation with other initiatives – e.g. EBCC Spatial Modelling Working Group or Global Wild Bird Indicator project

#### ***Further development planned***

- production and publication of indices and indicators on regular annual basis
- new national/regional monitoring schemes
- development of regional indicators, improvements in forest bird indicator, exploration of other habitat indicators

### **13. EBCC Spatial Modelling Workgroup: report from Henk Sierdsema, Lluís Brotons & Stuart Newson**

#### ***From monitoring data to maps: the first steps***

Bird monitoring programmes provide us with a great deal of spatial data that have the potential to be used to create maps showing changes in species distribution and abundance. Various initiatives on this issue within the EBCC became apparent at the last EBCC conference held in Kayseri, Turkey, in September 2004. These were recognised by a number of people from different organisations working on different subjects involving large scale mapping of bird monitoring data.

The way to exchange information on this subject and move forward in a common way was discussed. It was agreed that a workshop be organised, aimed at setting the stage on spatial modelling of bird monitoring data by attracting different groups working on the topic. Furthermore, and given the role of EBCC in coordinating and integrating monitoring

programmes at a pan-European scale, the idea arose of exploring the possibility of using the existing pan-European bird monitoring network as a seed to integrate data for different countries and explore the potential of these data for mapping purposes.

On 8-9 April 2005, a fruitful workshop was held at Solsona in northern Spain, on the creation of Pan-European distribution maps from monitoring data. At this workshop, we were able to combine data from Ireland, United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, Spain, Hungary and Italy into one map depicting the abundance pattern of 10 farmland-species in these countries. These maps were the first abundance maps based on monitoring data of more than one country, and already looked very interesting and potentially useful (Brotons et al 2005). In 2006, the number of countries included in the maps was increased from 6 to 14, and in addition we were able to produce the Pan-European trend maps for a large region of Europe.

### ***The EBCC Spatial Modelling Workgroup***

During the Solsona-workshop, a new EBCC-workgroup, called "EBCC Spatial Modelling Workgroup", was established to deal with the issues relating to the production of maps from monitoring data. In 2005-2006 the workgroup consisted of Henk Sierdsema (The Netherlands), Lluís Brotons (Spain), Richard Gregory (UK), Stuart Newson (UK), Marc Kéry (Switzerland) and Frédéric Jiguet (France). With an increasing interest in the work of the workgroup, we observed an increase in the number of people that wanted to be involved in the spatial modelling work. In particular, at the IOC (Hamburg) and ECCB (Eger) in August 2006, several people showed an interest in our work and were invited to become more closely involved. In 2007, the workgroup was extended to include Patrick Osborne and Pedro Leitao from the University of Southampton (UK) and Lechoslaw Kuczynski from the University of Poznan (Poland).

Presentations on the work of the workgroup were given at IOC in Hamburg and the ECCB in Eger. At the IOC, Lluís Brotons gave a general presentation on spatial modelling of monitoring data and the work of the EBCC-workgroup at the European level. Henk Sierdsema showed how monitoring data could be used in an early warning system of spatial changes in the range and abundance of species. Here, we also presented our very first European trend map. In Eger, Henk Sierdsema presented the results of the pilot work in a symposium dedicated to spatial modelling of flora and fauna. Results of the 2005 workshop were also published in several national magazines. National distribution maps were made for Hungary and the Czech Republic and presented at volunteer meetings. A small course on spatial modelling was also given to the organisers of the Hungarian bird monitoring scheme.

### ***The way forward***

We have made a good start in showing the potential of the Pan-European Monitoring for the creation of abundance and trend maps. The workgroup meeting in February 2007 concluded that the group should probably be kept quite small, at least in the short-term, but talk actively with the wider EBCC network. Henk Sierdsema, Lluís Brotons and Stuart Newton will coordinate the workgroup.

We are now facing the challenge of formally organising the spatial modelling network and creating maps in a scientifically sound way. Currently, the workgroup receives no funding and the employers of the workgroup members pay for all costs. Without some kind of funding, the profile will remain low level and progress will be slow. Funding would also enable the possibility of writing project proposals. Projects with clear targets involving people and research groups from various countries will greatly raise the profile of the workgroup. In order to show the possibilities of Pan-European mapping of bird monitoring data and to set a thorough scientific standard, we are currently working to publish our aims and current results in a scientific journal. This should also enhance the possibilities of raising funds, the involvement of scientific research groups at universities and help to establish more clearly the challenges ahead. We thank all our colleagues from across the EBCC network who have assisted in the development of this new initiative and we look forward to working with you in

the future.

#### **14. SEED Bird Indicators: Support Eastern Europeans to Develop Bird Indicators: report from Sylvia Andonova**

In September 2006, bird conservation NGOs from Belarus, Macedonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Turkey and Bulgaria started a project for strengthening their capacity to run successful national Common Bird Monitoring Schemes (CBM). These monitoring schemes are citizen science initiatives, which use data collected by volunteers to analyse how the populations of common and widespread birds change in response to environmental conditions. The results produced by the analysis are used to develop indices for the quality of the natural habitats and the environment. The duration of the project is 2 year; it is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Small Grant Programme and is the first of the so-called Strategic projects. The total budget is c. 316,000 USD, with c. 169,000 USD co-financed by RSPB, BVCF and the participating organisations. EBCC is a partner in this project and contributes mainly in providing expertise.

Organizations involved in this project are the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (which is the leading the project), Romanian Ornithological Society, Akhova Ptushak Batsakaushchyny in Belarus, Doğa Derneği in Turkey, Polish Society for the Protection of Birds and Lithuanian Ornithological Society (all of which are BirdLife partners), Macedonian Ecological Society and the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS), which is joint initiative of European Bird Census Council (EBCC) and BirdLife International.

The countries involved in the project have different levels of experience with CBM schemes – some of them are quite advanced, but some of them just started to run the scheme with this project. Because of this, different activities and approaches will be used. Among the main planned activities are: capacity assessment of the countries to start and implement full CBM or international census plots; training workshops and forums for decision makers; setting up a system to collect field ornithological data from the volunteers via the Internet; production of information materials for participants, such as simple bird guides in local languages and CDs with bird songs; and awareness materials for policy and decision makers, like annual reports with results from the CBM, species population trends, and bird index 'audit' of national policy and legislation use of CBM outputs, etc.

The project is expected to deliver a wide range of benefits for the countries involved, as well as to the participating organisations. One of the main outcomes is shared experience and improved knowledge across the countries in establishing and running a CBM scheme as a successful citizen science based initiative that produces scientifically accurate and meaningful biodiversity impact indicators based on wild bird populations, and at the same time strengthens the organisations involved (see: <http://www.ebcc.info/seedbirdindicators.html>)

#### **15. Strategic planning and promotion**

The Executive Committee has spent some time looking forward to major new work areas, strategic directions, identity, and its links with birdwatchers. We take the view that Pan-European monitoring will remain a significant work area, and this will remain a very high priority for EBCC. The Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring scheme (PECBMS) is currently EBCC's flagship project, and it has done much to promote the reputation and professionalism of EBCC in Europe over the last three years. This is demonstrated for example by EU funding for the core operation of PECBMS and official EU adoption of wild bird indicators as Structural and Sustainable Development Indicators. Our up and coming projects, such as SEED Bird Indicators and the Spatial Modelling Working Group, are also attracting attention and admiration. We have also actively encouraged parallel development of, for example, seabird and butterfly indicators in Europe.

We would like to initiate discussions with a view to possibly repeating a European Breeding Bird Atlas at some point in the future. We are not sure what from this atlas would take, as the boundaries between count schemes and atlas projects are growing ever smaller, and mapping technologies are advancing fast. We would like to start a debate in Chiavenna about the possibility of a new atlas project. It seems obvious that while the expansion of common bird monitoring schemes might give us mapped information on these widespread species, additional work is required at least to map scarce and rare species. Arguably, climate change might be the biggest driver in arguments in favour of repeating a breeding atlas for Europe.

Executive Committee sees the need to raise the profile of EBCC with a range of audiences, from policy and decision makers in EU and Europe, to general birdwatchers. Developing an attractive, dynamic web site will be central to achieving this goal and EBCC has worked to this end. The EBCC Chairman has presented many talks in the last three years promoting EBCC's objectives and work, especially in the area of bird monitoring and biodiversity indicators, and has also attended meetings of the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Biodiversity Indicators Sub-committee and the EU's Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators. Executive committee members have also provided considerable input to SEBI2010 (Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators), a Pan-European initiative run by the European Environment Agency (EEA), which aims to develop a set of biodiversity indicators to measure progress towards the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss.

## **16. Overview**

The last three years have seen steady progress in the development and growth of EBCC activities. Our financial position is relatively secure, although we remain heavily reliant upon income from atlas data sales, which will certainly dwindle in time. The EBCC bank account has been moved from Belgium to The Netherlands with the new Treasurer. Considerable effort and some expense have been put into clarification of the EBCC's legal status. We strongly believe that a move to Association status under Dutch Law will resolve this issue and provide a firm foundation for future development.

EBCC work under the banner of 'Euro-monitoring' has grown through the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme, the SEED Bird Indicators, and the EBCC Spatial Modelling Workgroup in recent times. Our work on developing and delivering biodiversity indicators using information on bird population trends in Europe has been particularly prominent. This activity, along with other work, has helped to raise the scientific reputation and profile of EBCC in Europe and further afield. By concentrating so heavily in this area, however, we have inevitably perhaps given less attention to studies of distribution, demography, and other groups of birds, which are all key areas of interest to EBCC.

As an Executive Committee, we have talked strategically about for example increasing the profile of EBCC, of potentially broadening our activities, of engaging more actively with national Delegates, of improving communication within our network, with policy/decision makers and general birdwatchers, and of initiating a new atlas European project. Overall, we recommend EBCC maintain its current focus on studying and monitoring the numbers, distribution and demography of European birds, thereby playing to the strengths of the EBCC network and building on what it has already achieved.

**Richard D. Gregory**

On behalf of EBCC's Executive Committee  
(10 April 2007)

**ANNEX 1. Financial Report for the period 15.08.2004-15.04.2007  
European Bird Census Council**

In 2005 in line with the transition of the Treasurer position from Anny Anselin to Ruud Foppen, and the foreseen transition of EBCC to an association under Dutch law, it was decided to open a Dutch account and to close the Belgian account. An internet account was opened with the Dutch Postbank. In April 2005, the account was opened. By May 2006, all the money from the Belgian account was transferred to the new Dutch account

1. Total Assets on 15.08.2004 (in Euro)

Cheque Account Euro	6148.26	<b>A1</b>
Cheque Account GBP (presented in Euro)	1603.11	<b>A2</b>
Savings Book Account	5286.29	<b>A3</b>
Total assets	<b>13037.66</b>	<b>=A1+A2+A3</b>

2. Total Assets on 15.04.2007 (in Euro)

Cheque Account Euro	9124.36	<b>B1</b>
Bank cheques GBP	153.68	<b>B2</b>
Total assets	<b>9278.04</b>	<b>=B1+B2</b>

**Report on income and expenses period April 2005-April 2007**

**Income (in Euro)**

<sup>1</sup> Data deliveries	6800.00
<sup>2</sup> Royalties	153.68
<sup>3</sup> Subsidies	1613.76

<sup>1</sup> From various contracting parties that requested atlas data.

<sup>2</sup> A.C. Black Publishers Ltd credits us royalties for sold atlases

<sup>3</sup> The production and mailing of Bird Census News is kindly provided by Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO) in Belgium

**Expenses (in Euro)**

Data extraction costs	1100.00
Banking costs	151.08
Notary costs	1785.00
BCN production	1613.76
ExCo meeting travel and lodging expenses	1364.60

**Creditors**

JRC data request	4414.00
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**Debtors**

CSO website development	1100.00
Data extraction costs	1024.00

**R.P.B. Foppen** - 15th April 2007

## **Minutes of the Board Meeting of the European Bird Census Council, Chiavenna, Italy, 19th April 2007**

### **1. Chairman's welcome**

Richard Gregory, as current Chairman of the European Bird Census Council (EBCC), welcomed all Delegates, Board members and guests to the 2007 EBCC Board Meeting. Altogether, some 71 people attended the meeting. An attendance list was circulated. A draft agenda was handed out to all those present. The Chairman outlined the agenda for the Board meeting and asked for any additional items of discussion. As none were forthcoming, the agenda was accepted.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Received from Ward Hagemeyer and Uygur Özsesmi.

### **3. Minutes of latest Board Meeting**

Minutes accepted. These were printed in *Bird Census News* 17, 48-64.

### **4. Chairman's Report on behalf of the Executive Committee**

Richard Gregory gave a summary of the progress in the work of EBCC since the last conference in Turkey in September 2004. An extended report was included in the conference packs of all those attending the 17<sup>th</sup> International conference of the EBCC in Chiavenna (see Chairman's Report). Special thanks were extended to the Members of the Executive Committee (Anny Anselin, Hans-Günther Bauer, Ruud Foppen, Frédéric Jiguet, Åke Lindström, Przemek Chylarecki, Alexander Mischenko, Ward Hagemeyer, and Uygur Özsesmi), along with the Observers (Sylvia Barova, Ian Burfield, Lorenzo Fornasari, David Noble, and Petr Vorisek), for their tremendous work over the last three years in promoting and advancing the work of the EBCC. Very special thanks must go to the two members of Executive Committee who are about to stand down: Przemek Chylarecki and Ward Hagemeyer (the latter not present).

The following points highlight some of the main messages from the Chairman's report.

- In financial terms, EBCC remains in a relatively healthy position, largely because of income generated from the sale of atlas data. The main expenses for EBCC are the travel expenses for ExCo meetings and production of *Bird Census News*. The new treasurer, Ruud Foppen, has opened a new bank account in The Netherlands and the former account in Belgium is now closed. An overview of the budget and financial report is attached (See Chairman's Report).
- The published proceedings from the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Kayseri in 2004 have been taken forward with the help of ExCo and other reviewers. Regrettably, the process has been slightly delayed. Around 15 papers will be published in the *Turkish Journal of Zoology* in autumn 2007.
- Some five volumes of BCN have been published since the last Board Meeting; special thanks go to Anny Anselin and her institution for help with the publication (also financial).
- ExCo has worked to increase the transparency of its work through development of EBCC website, where for example, the minutes of all ExCo meetings are now routinely posted. The website ([www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info)) itself has grown considerably in recent years. The aim has been to develop much better communication amongst EBCC members and with the wider world. Our goal has been to showcase and advertise the excellent work EBCC is supporting and leading through the website, and thereby engage Delegates more actively in the work. There are regular updates on key projects, such as PECBMS and SEED Bird Indicators, and updates on activities, such as on BCN, country reports and forthcoming

workshops/conferences. A recent innovation, thanks to SOVON, is access to the web-based breeding bird distribution maps from the EBCC atlas. Special thanks to David Noble, who has acted as a temporary web champion for EBCC, along with Susan Waghorn, Alena Pazderova, Petr Vorisek, Henk Sierdsema, and Lukas Viktora for their considerable assistance in maintaining and developing the EBCC website. RG asked the audience to seize the opportunity to use the website and provide national information and news on relevant monitoring themes and projects.

- A good deal of effort has gone into formalising the legal status of EBCC under Dutch Law over the last three years. The current 'uncertain' status of EBCC as an organisation has caused a number of problems for ExCo and these issues will remain and re-emerge if this is not resolved (for details on this process, see Minutes from Kayseri Board Meeting). This issue comes to a head at the Chiavenna Board meeting where Delegates are asked to vote on constitutional change (see Agenda Item 5).
- Another important role for ExCo has been in supporting in a number of ways new pilot or full common bird monitoring schemes in a range of countries.
- Great strides have been made to improve the interaction between ExCo and Delegates with Åke Lindström as the new Delegate Officer. The number of countries and Delegates has never been greater than at present, with new members constantly coming in. Huge thanks to Åke for his energy in driving this forward in recent times.
- The EBCC's flagship project is the PECBMS, which now receives core EU funding for its operation. Satellite projects include the EBCC's Spatial Modelling Working Group, which has endeavoured to develop a spatial dimension to our work using monitoring and other data. A range of talks has been devoted to this subject at the Chiavenna conference, as well as a dedicated workshop. In addition, the SEED BI project aims to extend monitoring work and indicator initiatives to seven countries currently at the eastern fringe of bird monitoring programmes in Europe.
- ExCo has also spent some time thinking strategically about the direction and aims of the EBCC going forwards. There has, for example, been discussion on the potential for organising a new breeding bird atlas in Europe, considering whether EBCC should extend and diversify its activities, or concentrate on its core strengths, and some discussion of how EBCC might increase its profile and scientific reputation.
- In summary, the EBCC has made very steady progress in the last three years: the financial status is secure, the legal status now almost formalized, its monitoring schemes are constantly growing and extremely successful, the scientific profile and reputation of EBCC has been greatly increased through our flagship projects and research publications. ExCo has consciously focussed its energy on key areas and elements of work during last three years – the core areas of EBCC strength and expertise - but discussion is open for possible changes in the future. Finally, Richard Gregory extends his warm thanks to all ExCo members and observers for their hard work, and also to the national Delegates for their help, support and cooperation during the last three years.

### **5. Formalizing the legal status of EBCC**

Resolution (1) was a direct vote in favour, or against, constitutional change to the EBCC to be taken by a show of hands. Ian Burfield and Ruud Foppen kept a count of votes cast. The vote was unanimously in favour of formalizing EBCC's legal status, with 52 Delegates voting in favour, and zero votes against the proposal. Resolution (1) adopted.

### **6. Election of new Executive Committee**

Resolution (2) was a direct vote in favour, or against, the election of a new EBCC Executive Committee to be taken by a show of hands. Again, Ian Burfield and Ruud Foppen kept a count of votes cast. Richard Gregory proposed that Delegates vote for the adoption of a new Executive Committee as a group, rather than one by one. There was general agreement among the audience with this proposition. Richard asked the two potential new members, Lluís Brotons (Spain) and Svetoslav Spasov (Bulgaria), to give short personal introductions; eight current members of the Executive Committee were standing for re-election. The new Executive Committee was unanimously elected with 46 Delegate votes in favour, and none against. Resolution (2) adopted.



## Bird Census News 2007: 20/1

The new Executive Committee will be:

1. Richard Gregory (Chairman, UK)
2. Hans-Günther Bauer (Secretary, Germany)
3. Anny Anselin (Editor *Bird Census News*, Belgium)
4. Ruud Foppen (Treasurer, Netherlands)
5. Åke Lindstrom (Delegate Officer, Sweden)
6. Uygur Özesmi (Turkey)
7. Frederic Jiguet (Data Officer, France)
8. Alexander Mischenko (Russia)
9. Lluís Brotons (Spain)
10. Svetoslav Spasov (Bulgaria)

### 7. Timing and venue of 18<sup>th</sup> EBCC Conference

The EBCC's next international conference was scheduled for 2010. Very kindly, Juan Carlos del Moral, on behalf of SEO/BirdLife, came forward with a proposal for the nomination of Spain as the venue and host for the next conference in 2010. Resolution (3) was a direct vote in favour, or against, the proposal to hold the next EBCC conference in Spain. The vote was unanimously in favour and no votes against. Resolution (3) adopted. Spain was accepted as next EBCC conference venue. Richard Gregory extended his great thanks to Juan Carlos del Moral and his SEO/BirdLife colleagues, for their generous invitation to host the conference, and very much looked forward to the prospect of meeting again in Spain in 2010.

### 8. Any other business

Juha Tiainen raises a point from the floor that PECMBS is not always seen as the EBCC indicator scheme, but often as BirdLife's indicator. In future, EBCC's role should be made clearer in the public. Richard Gregory sympathises with Juha's point and agrees that the work, which is formally a joint initiative of EBCC, RSPB, BirdLife and Statistics Netherlands, is sometimes misrepresented in Europe (often by Commission officials, who are more familiar with BirdLife due to its high-profile presence in Brussels). This is frustrating, and we should all, as members of the Executive Committee or Delegates, promote EBCC's leading role in the PECMBS and other projects when opportunities arise.

The EBCC has not historically given awards to those who have made an outstanding contribution to its work. However, in recognition of the important contributions to EBCC's work, an engraved EBCC plaque was awarded for the first time at the Chiavenna conference. The first two deserving recipients of the new EBCC award were:

- 1) Ward Hagemeyer for his enormous contributions to the work of EBCC over many years, especially in promoting EBCC in policy circles, and in the production and publication of the atlas of European breeding birds.
- 2) Anny Anselin for her outstanding and long-term support for the work of EBCC's, working continually and tirelessly as a member of the Executive Committee for fifteen years, as Secretary, Treasurer and currently as Editor of *Bird Census News*.

Richard Gregory thanked the audience for their presence and participation and closed the EBCC's Board meeting at 15h30.

**Richard D. Gregory**  
Chairman

**Hans-Günther Bauer**  
Secretary

**Executive Committee of the European Bird Census Council**

**Chairman:** Richard Gregory, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL United Kingdom. T: +44- (0)1767680551; richard.gregory@rspb.org.uk

**Secretary:** Hans-Günther Bauer, Max-Planck Institute for Ornithology, Dept. Vogelwarte Radolfzell, Schlossallee 2, 78315 Radolfzell, Germany, T: +49- 7732150150, bauer@orn.mpg.de

**Treasurer:** Ruud Foppen, SOVON Vogelonderzoek, Rijksweg 178 6573 DG Beek-Ubbergen, Netherlands, T: +31-024-6848115, ruud.foppen@sovon.nl

**Editor BCN:** Anny Anselin, Research Institute for Nature and Forest, INBO, Kliniekstraat 25, B-1070 Brussels, Belgium, T: +32-25581826, anny.anselin@instnat.be

**Delegate officer:** Åke Lindstrom, Dept. of Animal Ecology, Lund University, Ecology Building, S-223 62 Lund, Sweden, T: +46-46-2224968, M: +46-70-6975931, ake.lindstrom@zoekol.lu.se

**Data officer:** Frederic Jiguet, CRBPO, 55 rue Buffon, 75005 Paris, France, T: + 33-140793080, fjiguet@mnhn.fr

Uygar Ozesmi, TEMA, Çayır Çimen Sokak Emlak Kredi Blokları A-2 Blok Kat:2 Daire:8, 34330 Levent-İstanbul, Turkey, Handy: +90 533 655 3689, uygar@tema.org.tr

Alexander Mishenko, Russian Bird Conservation Union, Shosse Enthusiastov, 60, bld.1, 111123 Moscow, Russia, , T/F (095) 176 1063, almovs@mail.ru

Svetoslav Spasov, BSPB, BirdLife Bulgarian P.O. Box 50, BG-1111 Sofia, Bulgaria, T: 00359 971 5855, svetoslav.spasov@bspb.org

Lluís Brotons, Institut Català d'Ornitologia (ICO), Museu de Ciències Naturals, Zoologia, Passeig Picasso s/n, 08003 Barcelona, Spain, T: 93 458 78 93, recerca@ornitologia.org

**or :** Area de Biodiversitat, Centre Tecnològic Forestal de Catalunya, Pujada del Seminari s/n, 25280, Solsona, Spain, T: 34-973481752, lluis.brotons@ctfc.cat

**Observers:**

Ian Burfield, BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, United Kingdom, T: +44 (0)1223 279829, ian.burfield@birdlife.org

David Noble, British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, United Kingdom, T: +44-1842750050, david.noble@bto.org

Petr Vorisek, PECBM Scheme Coord., Czech Soc. for Ornithology, V Olsinách 449/41, CZ-100 00 Prague 10, Czech Republic, T: 00-420274780601, EuroMonitoring@birdlife.cz

Sylvia Barova, SEED, BirdLife Bulgaria, Avenue Général Médecin Derache 104, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium, T: + 32-28501760, 0495460368, Sylvia.barova@bspb.org

Juan Carlos del Moral, Conference 2010, SEO BirdLife Spain, Melquiades Biencinto 34, E-28054 Madrid, Spain, +34-914340910, jcdelmoral@seo.org

## **Your text in the next issue?**

Bird Census is meant as a forum for everybody involved in bird census, monitoring and atlas studies. Therefore we invite you to use it for publishing news on your own activities within this field:

- you have (preliminary) results of your regional or national atlas,
- you have information on a monitoring campaign,
- you have made a species-specific inventory,
- you are a delegate and have some news on activities in your country,
- you are planning an inventory and want people to know this,
- you read a good (new) atlas or an article or report on census and you want to review it.

Do not hesitate to let us know this!

Send text (in MS-Word or OpenOffice), figures and tables (and illustrations!) by preference in digital format. Figures and tables in colour will be visible in the pdf version on our EBCC website: [www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info).

\* By preference by email to:  
[anny.anselin@inbo.be](mailto:anny.anselin@inbo.be)

\* or by mail on CD to:  
Anny Anselin,  
Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Kliniekstraat 25,  
B-1070 Brussels, Belgium

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**Bird Census News**  
**2007 Volume 20 number 1**

**Contents**

Preface <i>Anny Anselin</i>	1
European atlasing and monitoring memorised in two decades of Bird Census News. <i>Rob Bijlsma</i>	2-5
The second Estonian Atlas on breeding bird distribution. <i>Jaanus Elts</i>	6-8
Voluntary-based Bird Monitoring in Denmark. <i>Michael Grell, Henning Heldbjerg, Timme Nyegaard &amp; Thomas Vikstrøm</i>	9-29
Monitoring common birds in Flanders: a new step towards an integrated system. <i>Glenn Vermeersch, Anny Anselin, Thierry Onkelinx &amp; Dirk Bauwens</i>	30-35
EBCC Chairman's report for the period September 2004 to April 2007.	36-44
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the European Bird Census Council, Chiavenna, Italy, 19th April 2007 <i>Richard Gregory &amp; Hans-Günther Bauer</i>	45-47
The new EBCC Executive Committee 2007-2010	48