

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 and is attached [as Annex 1 to these minutes](#). 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 Hagemeijer and Uygur Özsesmi.

3. Minutes of last 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 17th International conference of the EBCC in Chiavenna and is [attached as Annex 2](#). 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 Hagemeijer, 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 Hagemeijer (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 ([Annex 1](#)).
- The published proceedings from the 16th 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) 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. 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 18th 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 Hagemeijer 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, first as 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 15.30.

Richard D. Gregory
Chairman

Hans-Günther Bauer
Secretary