

## 32nd ExCo meeting in Radolfzell, 27-29 October 2006

**Invited:** Richard Gregory (RG, chair), Ruud Foppen (RF, Treasurer), Hans-Günther Bauer (GB, Secretary), Lorenzo Fornasari (LF, Conference Organizer 2007), Uygur Özesmi (UÖ), Przemek Chylarecki (PC), Alexander Mischenko (AM), Sylvia Barova (SB, Guest GEF SGP project), Ian Burfield (IB, Observer BirdLife Int.), David Noble (DN, Observer BTO). **Apologies:** Anny Anselin, Elisabetta Di Carli, Petr Vorisek, Åke Lindström, Frédéric Jiguet, Ward Hagemeijer.

**TOP 1:** Chairman's welcome and organizer's welcome to the Radolfzell meeting.

**TOP 2:** Minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> meeting adopted unanimously

AM reports on new (first year running) Farmland Common Bird Monitoring Project in Russia. Main problem for open-nesting birds is habitat loss and deterioration, e.g. through farm abandonment (subsequent overgrowing), burning etc. In the census project 24 volunteers took part in 2006 (including 10 professionals), 26 census sites covered (2 visits each), coverage also includes steppe zone. Participants will receive presents (t-shirts, cups with logo etc.). Censuses of woodland birds were started in 2006 by Irina Marova separately from the farmland bird monitoring. AM and Irina Marova plan to unify the census methods and the two programmes (farmland and woodland bird monitoring) in the project "Common Bird Monitoring in European Russia", based on Finnish line transect methods. Funding from Dutch Embassy has now expired, so other sources of financing now sought to continue project.

AM presents new, two-language atlas of the Moscow region, edited by Mikhail Kalyakin, supported by Dutch embassy. Atlas period 1999-2005. Hands over first copy to RG on behalf of EBCC.

Paper prepared by RG to characterize the EBCCs functioning and raise its profile, it is seen as addition to the Constitution. Demands on delegates listed under bullet points, shall be presented to them as a policy document at next conference and stuck in the web to replace existing paper on what EBCC is. Question arises (IB) what the actual network, i.e. geographical range, of EBCC is. A map with geographical coverage could appear on web. Address of website should be shown on document as well. Document could also be used as a handout at the conference (with reference to the website). Good to separate the leaflet and other items of profile raising.

**TOP 3:** Organization of the 17<sup>th</sup> EBCC Conference in Chiavenna, Italy

LF describes the (huge) progress achieved since the last meeting. The wallcreeper logo was decided upon after a competition and is greatly appreciated.

The Proceedings of the conference will be published in Avocetta; max. 6 print pages available per paper/extended abstract (30.000 characters). Clear guidance necessary to produce these extended abstracts and to review them in a speedy fashion. Comunità Montana is now co-financing the conference and helping in the organisation, this means that some more buildings are available for use during the conference. But, ExCo decision to use only two sites for symposia or workshops. An additional historical building will hold an exhibition (professional painters). Conference Centre will be accommodated in Albergo Aurora, where the plenary, some sessions and the lunches will take place.

Single room incl. Breakfast will cost 45.-€, double rooms for 38.- € per person, respectively. Volunteers will have cheaper rooms made available.

By January 12.500 € will have to be covered (paid to bank), which is equivalent to 62,5 conference fees amounting to 200.- € each. Early registration therefore essential – ExCo should encourage all to register as soon as they can.

Reduced fee of 75.- € (and free accommodation, but no travel arrangements) for those partially supported. EBCC's planned contingency fund could completely support 4 participants.

Plenary speakers will have free accommodation and food, but have to cover travel costs on their own. Costs to be covered (by EBCC) for an individual sponsored participant would amount to an estimated 450.- €.

Planned programme:

Arrival day Tuesday 17.4.

ExCo meeting from 10.00-18.00,

Opening Ceremony 18.30-19.30,

Welcome Party (Cocktail and dinner) 20.00-22.00.

Working days (Wednesday 18.4. to Saturday 20.4., with one excursion day in between)

Plenaries at 8.45 and 14.30 (all plenary speakers already fixed), after this up to 5 parallel sessions possible, including 3 symposia, one round-table discussion and one workshop. But not always feasible to have all 5.

Four excursion destinations:

- 1) Valle Codera «Il Trecciolino», submontane avifauna, very close;
- 2) Pian di Spagna, waterbirds and migrants, very close;
- 3) Parco dell'Orobìe, excursion on snow, some 30 km distance;
- 4) P.N. de lo Stelvio and Gran Zebrù, excursion in alpine region, further away;
  - additional sightseeing tour would be available at a cost as well as social excursion after the meeting
  - further excursions into Po Delta and Ligurian coast as post-conference excursions envisaged

Announcement of Birdwatching Fair (Festa del Birdwatching), which takes place at Pian di Spagna N.R. two days before EBCC conference, included in conference invitation.

#### TOP 4: Articles of Association

Legal status of EBCC: formal recognition not yet achieved. About to finalize Articles and then vote on the Constitution in Chiavenna. Need to clarify all complex issues about constitutional change. General agreement to offer opportunity for delegates to look at and comment Articles of Association during next months, therefore circulate Articles as soon as possible (Dec./Jan.) for comments. Delegates/other commentators have to be informed about changes before the actual meeting. Also, make sure that delegates have a chance to send a letter of endorsement via a proxy to the conference.

#### TOP 5: Financial report

RF has completed financial reports for two periods. Payment for CSO negotiated at a later stage.

#### TOP 6: Bird Census News

Discussion of Anny's short report on the planned BCN Vol. 19/2 (supplied via e-mail). Final assessment of reviewed papers of Turk. J. Zool. done by UÖ soon, so BCN receives all unaccepted papers for inclusion in BCN at a later stage (clarify if to print the remainder papers in one issue of BCN or spread them over several issues). ExCo recommended that Sylvia produced a piece for BCN on the GEF SGP project. IB suggested that reviews of the Moscow atlas and the third Breeding Bird Atlas of Czech Republic be included in BCN 19/2. Other papers suggested: LF could offer paper on TRIM-calculated data on Italian CBM, once translated into English. Przemek offered Polish BBS programme results for 6 years. Raptor monitoring meetings in Sicily and Harz could be reported on, as well as European CES project, a report on the Seabird indicators workshop (IB), and possibly BTO's Ptarmigan monitoring project.

#### **TOP 7:** Proceedings from Kayseri conference

19 manuscripts submitted, four of them not accepted and to be published in BCN, 15 provisionally accepted for Turk. J. Zool. (but could drop out after revisions back at editors). Three revised manuscripts already returned for publication. UÖ thanks all the reviewers within ExCo for their contributions (and of course also greatly appreciates the review work of former ExCos and other people involved).

UÖ will send a reminder to the missing revising authors starting next week and hopes that before next year all revised manuscripts are in the editors' hands. In some cases, only new formatting of the paper might be necessary before all of the manuscripts can go into print. UÖ's goal is to bring the printed journals to the Chiavenna meeting and to distribute them among participants of the Kayseri conference.

#### **TOP 8:** Delegates' list

ÅL has worked hard to provide ExCo members with a revised delegate list (beforehand). The list should be finalized as soon as the EBCC constitution is finished.

#### **TOP 9:** EBCC website

DN expands on EBCC website; basic structure virtually unchanged, included were shortened minutes of last meeting (as agreed upon in Chiavenna meeting) as well as (list) version of all previous agendas. Further new additions to the website are: a report by Petr on PECBMS, a down-loadable State of Europe's Birds, and a report on the new pilot monitoring scheme in Russia.

Example maps (6 species) of EBCC atlas are finished (Henk) but not yet on the site. If easily achieved and acceptable - feasibility assessment required by DN! - extend website exposure to all maps of EBCC atlas at later stage. Also, announcement in BCN that these maps are up on homepage. Still to be included is RGs paper on "What is EBCC?".

Draft information on national partners/organisations are being collected by DN and Susan Waghorn, but some proving difficult to collate (so far no answers from delegates of various countries). After redistribution to individual partners for corrections and additions, these shall be put on webpage under a heading such as "National Monitoring Links" (no timetable set yet). Should be living documents for constant additions prompted mostly by Delegates. RG thanks DN for progress and plans.

## TOP 10: PECBMS

Report from Petr will also be added to the website to inform all partners. Generally, programme runs very well.

RG reads out Catherine Day's very positive and encouraging letter on behalf of the EU commission to Claire (Head of European Division in BirdLife) on PECBM and (other) national indicators.

Grant of some 100.000 € from DG Environment (EU), 143.000 € in total applied for but not approved yet, would be great boost for further PECBM work. The current grant of 120.000 €, again with 100.000 € from DG Environment, will run out in September 2007. The new grant would run September 2007 to March 2009.

In future, representation of more habitats in indices (not only farmland) would be desirable in strengthening the wild bird indicator. Furthermore, additional site-based indices are being considered for development, as well as indicators for bird groups (seabirds, waterbirds, red-listed species etc.).

There was a suggestion for PECBMS to develop better political alliances. Better cooperation with EEA (Copenhagen) wished for on the indicator work, BirdLife's contacts to EEA certainly improved in recent months. Quite obvious problem of competition of EEA with EBCCs aims, but their idea of a single biodiversity index somewhat flawed.

New Rural Development Regulations request farmland bird index in all EU countries, assessment of status of such a monitoring in each country therefore necessary (Petr, Alena, Ariel Brunner etc. to see into this, maybe in questionnaire. The EU demand for farmland bird indicators (or equivalent?) per country has raised many questions and created confusion. BirdLife and PECBMS have worked together to clarify the issues and national government responsibilities, but more work will be needed to reiterate our position and guide national responses.

Iordan Hristov now at UNEP-WCMC has proposed to carry out a desk-based assessment of the European wild bird indicator project. Iordan Hristov's proposed work, once finished, might be helpful in relation to rural development regulations and more broadly (but information should be available sooner).

Importance and connection between voluntary field census work and (any) pan-European indicators has to be made clear to individual governments by EBCC.

## TOP 11: GEF SGP wild bird indicator project

SB explains the two-year project that started in September 2006. Details in summary report attached these minutes.

Discussion: Turkey has a fully-fledged field guide, so "activity 1.5" will not be necessary and funds should be redistributed to other needs. Other problem: Macedonia is not a BirdLife Partner, so BirdLife-Extranet will unfortunately not be a suitable place to set up a group to discuss matters relating to this project.

- On EBCC website a topic in the menu should be introduced, maybe also be within the PECBMS, showing it as an integrated project and part of PECBMS.
- EU-funds for PECBMS should be shown in the co-financing system for this project (as parallel co-financing), since the latter is part of the PECBMS. RG to provide details on the EU grant to SB in order to include the finance details.
- New acronym or name required for the project, since project name too long and cumbersome.
- Help from EBCC required with respect to (lacking) data provision from Lithuania, to training of and information sharing on PECBMS projects with field workers in project partner countries.
- GEF SGP meeting necessary at the EBCC conference in Chiavenna. Funding for these people required as well as question of status of these participants as delegates (? , discussed under

TOP 3). There is an argument for treating these individuals as special cases in order to help them attend the Conference and the GEF SGP meeting.

- Ideas for future funding of national schemes required in order to stabilize and continue projects in the medium and long term.

- RG asks if it is necessary to further formalize status of GEF within EBCC, for example to set up ExCo (+ observers such as Petr) as the Scientific and Technical Advisory group of this project. This was generally agreed upon. SB to consider whether she wishes to take up this offer from EBCC in liaison with her partners.

- Sylvia to leave Bulgaria (BSPB office) for work in Brussels (her husband Boris Barov will start work there as European Conservation Manager for BirdLife in January 2007), but would like to continue as GEF project coordinator (alternatively BSPB would need to find substitute).

Legal song recordings of birds required in order to produce CD for field workers within project. (Only production costs could be covered within project, not payment of bird song material). This CD + bird book (or leaflets) as package to provide to field workers for free, if at all possible (again, funds to cover costs are limited). Sponsorship would be good, for example by Dutch Birdfair, but next bird fair too late. Within-country sponsorship thus seems a better option.

## TOP 12: Spatial Modelling Workgroup

Report/paper by the Modelling group (Henk Sierdsema) sent round ExCo. Strong progress made on presentation of spatial information, but still further developments necessary. Further Workgroup meeting in February 2007 at BTO will focus methodological aspects. Proper scientific paper to be done soon to establish group's developments and show potential to funders. ExCo recognised the tremendous progress the working group had made and the importance of showcasing the work in Hamburg and Eger.

For way forward, four points raised in the paper, but critically and worryingly relationship with network not discussed (lots of work involved, who has capacity and who had competence?). Proper funding for future work to be sought, at least two opportunities, a) scientific funding via proposal to specific programmes (for example European Science Foundation, not quite suited, since work very general), b) Joint Research Council (JRC, but: no subcontracting to NGOs possible); a third way would be to get money directly from EU Commission and reach partnership with JRC (however, it took 6 years to receive funds for PECBMS!).

One can imagine Spatial Modelling Indicators and PECBMS (temporal indicators) could in future sit together or be combined (integrated), since based on (mostly) the same data.

## TOP 13: Recent data request

- Barbara Anderson: RG contact – this work is ongoing;
- Sander Terlouw: no real progress, Henk contact (better strike it out);
- Frédéric Jiguet: coauthorship suggested (Stuart Newson/BTO); - one paper in press;
- Rob Thomas: British analysis, DN is contact; – this work is ongoing;
- Colin Beale/Jack Lennon: DN also contact. – this work is ongoing - EBCC should invoice for data charge agreed at £300 (?);
- Fiona Sanderson: farmland birds, work completed, will be circulated among ExCo, publication with possible involvement of RG and IB (co-authorship requested) planned;
- Steve Willis strike out (no funding);
- K. Biala: JRC Ispera, data delivery soon, RF is contact;
- William Wint – Univ. of Oxford: insufficient information available, RG to check emails;



- Debbie Russell: climate change effects on seabirds, needs to be debated with Ward as collaborator, if EBCC data appropriate/suited to the task, but in principle a sensible request;
- Kerstin Jantke: very vague request, more details required, still pending (RF contact).

EBCC should promote availability of data on website as GIS-based, so easier for users.

#### TOP 14: EBCC co-authorship policy

Frédéric's paper on procedures for publication of papers drafted for discussion, circulated before meeting. Feedback from RG and Petr, completion and further discussion necessary at a later stage. Aim: Draft proposal to be sent to PECBMS network for everybody to agree.

#### TOP 15: Repeating the European breeding bird atlas?

Should be discussed at length during the Chiavenna conference, exploring the possibilities of a new atlas. ExCo tentatively in favour of producing a modern version of an atlas in future (including spatial modelling data, citizen science etc.), but much to discuss and consider. Outputs from the spatial modelling work will not replace the need for surveys of scarce and rare species. Changes in bird ranges in Europe will have considerable implications for climate change research and a new atlas would be eagerly anticipated.

#### TOP 16: Election of new ExCo in Chiavenna

Ward and PC wish to stand down. Several persons have been suggested to RG to become members of ExCo, among them Lluís Brotons, Henk Sierdsema, and Svetoslav Spasov. In order to keep up geographical representation, Lluís and Svetoslav would suit ExCo best as contenders to replace Ward and PC, Henk regarded as very good choice but could act in an observer capacity. LF also kindly volunteered his help as a potential member of ExCo if spaces were available.

Discussion of observer status of RSPB, BirdLife, PECBMS, and, in future, Wetlands Int. and maybe EURING (?). WI could (again) be represented, other ornithological communities (i.e. seabirds, waders, raptors etc.) could be included in specific discussions too.

#### TOP 17: Any other business

- Broadening scope of EBCC activities

Rather stick to the manifold projects already on the menu. Extension to bird groups so far under-represented in EBCC work (seabirds, waders etc.) possible, but no duplication of work wished for. So, better to improve general cooperation with these groups.

- EBCC-endorsed Best Practice Guide for Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) necessary. Should be available from other groups and endorsed.
- Seabird Group meeting.

IB reports: Following the workshop in Aberdeen in September, some seabird experts hope to meet in 2007 to start work on combining national data sets and trying to produce a pan-European seabird indicator, though funding is still required. AM would be able to forward contact details from Russian seabird specialists.

- European Raptor Monitoring programme proposal

Meeting in Sicily discussed the possibility of such a monitoring programme. Governmental representation quite high at meeting. Aspects like environmental, toxic and organochlorine monitoring were of major importance within discussions. First steps towards proper funding of scheme discussed, scheme (tentatively) approved by all British NGOs present, but need to be careful. Proper population monitoring should definitively be included in the scheme, otherwise EBCC's involvement limited. High value of PECBM also to be communicated – best to change title of Chiavenna symposium on raptors to include pan-European aspect and EBCCs work.

Need to include population monitoring as a major part, the problem of competition or lack of integration of other important European raptor monitoring groups within this framework. EBCCs role to help make projects aim for pan-European coverage including all the important players.

- RF proposes general-information poster at Chiavenna meeting about EBCC aimed at raising profile.

**TOP 18:** Next ExCo meeting

Next ExCo meeting will take place in Chiavenna on 17 April 2007 (starting 10.00 a.m.). Meeting in autumn undecided, possibly in Thetford (UK).

RG closes meeting on Sunday at 13.15 (p.m.)

Secretary: Hans-Günther Bauer

Chairman: Richard Gregory