

35th Board meeting of EBCC in Koprivshitsa (BG), 25-26 April 2008

Present: Richard Gregory (RG, chair), Anny Anselin (AA, BCN Editor), Ruud Foppen (RF, Vice President, Treasurer), Åke Lindström (ÅL, Delegate Officer), Hans-Günther Bauer (GB, Secretary), Virginia Escandell (VE, Conference Organization 2010), Svetoslav Spasov (SS), Lorenzo Fornasari (LF, Editor of 2007 Conference Proceedings), Sylvia Barova (SB, SEED BI), Petr Vorisek (PV, PECBMS), Ian Burfield (IB, Observer BirdLife International), David Noble (DN, Observer BTO), Lluís Brotons (LB).

Apologies: Uygur Özesmi, Alexander Mischenko, Frédéric Jiguet (FJ), Juan Carlos del Moral

TOP 1: Chairman's welcome to the Koprivshitsa meeting.

Chairman welcomes all members and guests, especially Virginia Escandell, who stepped in at short notice for Juan Carlos del Moral. Special thanks go to SS, SB and their team for hosting and arranging the meeting. This is the first "official" EBCC Board meeting since the registration of the EBCC as an Association under Dutch law.

TOP 2: Minutes of 34th ExCo meeting, checking back on Action points

- CSO maintenance of EBCC website to continue, new contract signed for next three years, involving grant.
 - Data request group action will be bounced to the next meeting, as FJ is not present
 - PV to send out a CD copy of Birdstats to PECBMS co-ordinators
 - IB will report to Board at a later stage on the assessment of threatened bird censusing work
 - Group photograph from Thetford by Alena Klvaňová should be sent around.
- Other actions see under respective TOPs below

Minutes agreed upon unanimously.

TOP 3: Proceedings of Kayseri Conference

UÖ sent short update on Kayseri Proceedings. Review process for 19 papers completed, however 6 papers in revised version missing. UÖ's contact to Turkish Journal of Zoology (TJZ) is currently limited, but he will urge the current or a new TJZ editor to get on with the publication. From the 6 "missing" papers, some have been reviewed, but their current status is unknown. PV had not received any review at all for his paper, and Henk Sierdsema's paper was apparently lost twice.

TOP 4: Proceedings of Chiavenna Conference

Lorenzo gives overview of the 40 Chiavenna papers, of the 21 "finished" ms. two are rejected and one resubmitted to BCN. 46 reviewers were involved; at least 4 ms not reviewed yet, but number higher since 2 reviewers are not responding (e.g. Tibor Szep, 2 papers). Ola Olsson, Dawn Balmer and H. Heldbjerg to be asked to review one paper each, and ÅL and RG each to take over another; other papers to be sent to suggested reviewers already on LF's list. RG thanks Lorenzo for his fantastic work. Suggestion to have LF as an EBCC "proceedings delegate" to be followed up at a later stage.

TOP 5: Planning of 18th International EBCC Conference in Spain

VE gives overview of plans of Cáceres EBCC Conference in 2010. Some 300 km SW of Madrid, where nearest airport; from there transport by bus, train or hire car. Several conference rooms available in same building, Cultural Centre San Francisco in Cáceres; so far three of them booked (with capacity of 300, 177, and 112 people, respectively), but not the largest with capacity of 600, or the smallest with 55. For additional meetings, round tables or workshops the smaller room would also be good, at least for part of conference, so best be reserved at this stage (and be skipped later, if not needed). But maximum two concurrent sessions envisaged.

Accommodation: 1770 beds available in Cáceres (from four-star hotel down to low-cost hostels).

Date of Conference: Board meeting and arrival day should be Monday, 22nd March 2010, EBCC Conference from 23rd to 27th March with mid-conference excursion. Social evening/banquet suggested for Friday evening, final workshops and travel day on Saturday, 27th. Lunch could be provided in big tent (marquee) or alternatively as packed lunch.

Need for Scientific Committee; also suggested to seek advice from Board members with respect to programme discussion, theme of the conference, list of topics, and (associated) plenaries. Five excursions envisaged, among them National Park Monfragüe, cultural trip to Mérida and Trujillo, Sierra de San Pedro, Llanos de Cáceres; visit of two areas in the course of one tour possible (to escape competition). Monfragüe likely to be the most-preferred site, therefore participants to state excursion wish already with their registration. Provisional title of conference: "Volunteers for monitoring and conservation of birds". Further plans: Conference website (need to provide link to EBCC website), competition for participants on internet, logo competition.

Budget costs for Chiavenna was about €90.000 (LF), main cost factors being venue (80%), buses, salaries and costs of organisers, further organisational costs (photocopies, booklets, prices, bank expenses, etc.), plenary speakers (venue and attendance fee covered, not the trip). Half of total costs balanced by conference fee (200 payers), about €48.000 from sponsors (including €2.000 from EBCC specifically to support participants from low-income countries), small amount from selling of goods etc. If no sponsorship had been available, conference fee required would have amounted to €275 per person for the venue. About 30 participants from low-income countries were sponsored.

List of possible themes and topics for Cáceres conference prepared, will be provided as attachment to these minutes. First, decisions to be made by local committee, assistance with implementation of programme incl. specific suggestions for plenaries and chair persons at next Board meeting in autumn.

TOP 6: Registration as an Association under Dutch Law

As of 17th March 2008, EBCC is officially registered as Association under Dutch Law. From now on EBCC can officially employ people, sign contracts etc.; also Board and Delegate work is now much more clearly outlined and formalized. RG thanks RF for his great contribution in achieving this important goal. Forms of registration of Board members are now filed at the Chamber of Commerce, though final Declaration from Chamber of Commerce yet to be issued. Bill of the notary has arrived, will soon be settled. RF has to request V.A.T. number from financial offices, to be used in bills, reimbursement forms etc.

Law requires a General meeting each year but this business meeting could be "virtual" (within a Board meeting and attended by Board members including some who were Delegates). Not essential to involve all Delegates in this meeting because it would be a large waste of time and money, although all would be free to attend if they wished. We need to explain this slightly

confusing situation to our Delegates carefully so that they do not feel excluded. We hope that all Delegates would attend Annual General Meetings when they coincided with our International Conferences.

Details on daily management issues and general procedures of EBCC will have to be put down in by-laws and adopted by Board and General Assembly.

TOP 7: Financial report

RF gives report for financial year 2007. Very few transactions since last Board meeting. Dutch account at some €7.000; income came from Anny's institute for BCN production, from EBCC atlas royalties by Poyser, and for data supplies.

Expenses deducted for the Board meeting (travel expenses), support for Chiavenna conference and other costs (see enclosed report). Expected expenses, i.e. costs for notary and Chamber of Commerce, and expected income, as e.g. for data supplies, listed there as well. As soon as V.A.T. number available, some postponed transactions possible. Further data requests coming in, positive financial development to continue for the time being.

Short discussion on future income of EBCC ensues. Species indicators as a means envisaged. Other potential income needs to be discussed in the near future despite the fact that currently no danger of financial shortcomings. Donations and grant applications (as partner) now possible under organisation as an Association.

TOP 8: Bird Census News

AA distributes 2nd issue of Volume 20 of BCN.

Future items to be included in BCN are articles from Chiavenna meeting, updates of SEED project, Spatial Modelling group and/or PECBMS could also be included (in future).

AA informs that all articles that ever appeared in BCN (Vol. 1-20) are now available as pdf, AA to check with PV if capacity to include on webpage?

New director at Brussels institute agreed to continue financing BCN.

TOP 9: Delegates' list

ÅL provided Board with a revised delegate list; still five countries without any Delegate. Andorran Delegates lost government support, currently only responsible on paper, so best be taken out of Delegates' list. Not known who is in charge for monitoring and conservation in Andorra at present (LB to get more information). Croatia has new Delegate (well supported by authorities; ÅL: "sets new standards for EBCC Delegates").

Delegate changes for Belgium, Italy and Turkey envisaged. According to new Articles of Association, changes to Delegates list to be formalized during next General Meeting.

ÅL provides concept of new (Delegates') Newsletter of EBCC aimed to be a one or two page affair, to be sent out as pdf to Delegates and Board members twice a year shortly after Board Meetings. Should include programme of Annual General Meeting (and be sent out in time); also to be shown on webpage. BCN to be changed to the status of a journal (after having registered and obtained ISSN number). First issue of Newsletter to be produced in May, the next probably by September.

TOP 10: EBCC website

PV reports on some aspects included on website, but general state of site virtually unchanged since October. PV introduces Alena Klvanova's access statistics of EBCC website. Annual accesses 'hits' now in very high figures. Statistics to be attached to minutes. DN reports rather little progress with web development recently due to work pressures, but suggests we add Slovenia to the website's country list. He wishes to increase attractiveness of website at some stage.

TOP 11: Recent data requests

Two new data requests after Thetford meeting, but not to be discussed in the absence of F. Jiguet.

- Szabolcs Nagy, on behalf of BioScore Project (aim: sensitivity of species to landuse changes, as calculated in a particular model). Usual EBCC charges necessary because commercial project (normal fee of some €4.000); limit access to a single-purpose project, any follow-ups/future developments in EBCC-data use to arise from the modelling process would have to be re-negotiated (data use limited, no *carte blanche*). Also, ask them for full acknowledgement of EBCC.
- Nicolas Titeux et al.: combining landscape factors with landuse and climate changes to predict and model species distributions. LB involved in scientific discussion (and EBCC representative in this work). N. Titeux with funding from Belgian research funds + Finnish government (??). Non-commercial work, service charge accordingly and amount of money to cover EBCC data costs, €1,000).

Overlapping aims of different projects noticeable, but yet scientifically inspiring.

Aim of keeping track of projects discussed, money accrued and publications produced by use of EBCC data. Small form to be sent out to project groups to be filled in and sent to FJ to this end.

TOP 12: Co-authorship policy

FJ, RG and PV finished second draft guideline paper on data provision and co-authorship policy and circulated it among Board members. Board generally in favour of this paper. Suggestions for changes still possible.

Trying to make clear who is owner of data and who is allowed to provide them, especially difficult concerning the problem of PECBMS and Spatial Modelling data. Minor problem with aggregated data and indices. Discussion about accepting authorship in publications only in cases where considerable contribution provided. Decision on co-authorship better on a case by case basis; difficulty if publication initiative comes from outside EBCC or PECBMS. Authorship decision made within EBCC on a daily management basis, including the Data Officer (currently FJ). Guideline paper has to specify that, except for Eurostat, there is no other provision of national data unless national coordinators had been contacted directly and agreed.

TOP 13: PECBMS update

Report from PV on 2007 (was sent out to Board members). Short version of report already on website. Alena will leave PECBMS office for two years (maternal leave), but would like to stay involved in some aspects of project. Replacement Jana Škorpiova already appointed.

Next PECBMS Workshop 26-29 January 2009 in Prague (usual place), length of workshop as before, no weekend day involved; travel costs for low-income countries covered. Agenda to be finished in due course (in summer, technical group of PECBMS will meet in NL); suggestions of Board members welcome.

Best-practice guide still not published, deliveries of important chapters considerably delayed; guide runs to about 150 pages; publication probably later in 2008.

Publication and outputs of new PECBMS indices due soon (June envisaged; later than last year). Query for new data (to national co-ordinators) will go out after output on old data prepared (May at the earliest).

Data quality control was improved as compared to previous indices. Data from 21 countries included after Bulgaria joined; Estonian data now updated. More species treated, some 139 included. Indices for biogeographic regions so far produced only on national-border basis, since no biogeographic differentiation possible within national data, yet.

Estimated 10.000 active volunteers contributing to data collection; shouldn't all receive the annual PECBMS brochure? Demand is increasing. Last year 3000 brochures printed.

Discussion on necessity of EBCC press releases, need for scientific organisation to be diplomatic. PECBMS has already greatly increased EBCC profile, and this "popularity" should be used more to our advantage in future. Political statements better done by lobbying organisations such as BirdLife, RSPB etc.

Funding from Commission for indices will most likely continue, but difficult to have several-year contract which were necessary.

Forest Task Force hasn't received any funding yet for the proposed risk assessment of forest birds to help indicator development and interpretation, new proposals currently being worked on, including possible joint proposals with EBCC.

TOP 14: Spatial Modelling Workgroup (SMOG)

LB informs that "SMOG" will have new introductory information on EBCC website soon.

Technical advance has been rather slow, no new results. Needs another workshop to identify new lines of procedure.

IB and Henk Sierdsema had discussed progress of Spatial Modelling with EuMon and Joint Research Council (JRC) to help establish future funding at EU level. FP7 framework consortium (SCALES scaling spatial biodiversity issues on European scale) subsequently contacted RG to ask if EBCC wished to be involved as a partner. After discussion, LB agreed to act as EBCC representative at his institute. If successful, the project would fund a post-doc for one year in Solsona, which would help to improve methodology considerably within SMOG.

Discussion of the need to create mechanism/procedure similar to PECBMS to make sure that national raw data could be used in the modelling process (complying with EBCC philosophy?, since raw data integration thought to be required). Maps produced by SMOG on a national level might instigate "ownership" problems, not least since many countries work on their own models. However, if based on raw data the modelling process would take much longer than working with maps produced on a national level and integrating these based on a best-practice basis. Same scale, resolution, and basic data (habitat, climate, altitude, e.g. CORINE land cover data) necessary to produce pan-European map, even if better data were available on national level. What is sought for is relative density map, also with respect to define specific European hotspots; research as well as conservation approach need to be addressed. Research needs to be developed much further. On other hand, population change maps called for.

Conclusion: SMOG moves towards collection of summarized national information, EBCC Board supports this. Financing of a post-doc position through SCALES would be extremely helpful in this process.

TOP 15: SEED BI project

SB explains recent developments and activities of SEED BI project. International training workshop last spring. Monitoring schemes now running in 7 countries, including Turkey, Belarus and Macedonia, and Lithuania (which re-started its project, but problems with data provision). Work with national policy makers has started in several countries. Main issues solved, now data collection called for (but slow process), also delivery, i.e. number of plots, still disappointingly weak (capacity problem: better co-ordination and more training required, in Turkey misunderstanding about required number of plots).

Clear objectives necessary for development and provision of data base format, otherwise analysis extremely difficult. Special workshop needed within PECBMS meeting for data analysis, so co-ordinators of the three new countries should be present at workshop.

So far only Poland with sufficient funds raised to run monitoring programme, but generally required in order to stabilize and continue national projects, especially in three new countries. Probably best to apply for funds on a "country-by-country" basis. Partnership support needed and also in writing proposals; contacts of Board members should be used. Required budget in the three countries varies, preliminary list available; projected budget highest in Turkey with at least €14.000, not including volunteer training. Sooner, or later, funding will come since monitoring required on European level. SEED BI could be included in PECBMS costs in a future proposal, but non-EU countries are ineligible for funding and EU wary of funding national monitoring responsibilities. Only possible if PECBMS funding base changes, especially under the auspices of an international plot design.

TOP 16: Strategic direction – profile-raising paper

Discussion of EBCC strategy, scientific ambition etc. needs to be prepared for next meeting and prioritised to give adequate time for debate. Contributions needed from all Board members within the next months. Suggestions so far included a new European breeding bird atlas, a winter atlas and other "products" issued in 10-12 year cycles, e.g. PECBM reports. A key dimension in this debate is EBCC profile-raising (identity, brand, niche), which should also form part of the brainstorm and discussion.

TOP 17: Next ExCo meeting

Since Alexander Mischenko isn't able to host the autumn meeting 2008 in Moscow, but might do next year, new venue to be found.

Meeting will now be held in Paris on 14-15 October 2008.

Spring 2009 meeting is planned to be in Cáceres and would focus strongly on conference organisation. Exact date and details on venue by e-mail to be confirmed.

TOP 18: Any other business

- Global wild bird indicator project
Contract already signed with Botswana and in discussion with other countries in Africa. Official leaflet of project ready and shown to Board members.
- Norwegian Identification webpage by Magne Husby needs moral and financial support in order to develop this further as a training tool for monitoring schemes in Europe. Need to be more precise about the kind of help EBCC could provide (e.g. branding, support on website, funding initiatives; technical support); suggestion to have one country serving as

“test case”. National specifics have to be considered more, co-ordinators should be well instructed on how to get involved (apart from sending species lists and translating relevant sentences into their languages). If national coordinators approve of page (and suggest improvements), EBCC branding possible. EU-Financing tools difficult, since Norway not in EU. But reaction to idea generally very positive, as capacity-building initiatives already in progress in many countries. See relevant website under www.hint.no/fuglekjennskap/flash/oppgaver.php

- **Changes in Global Red List**
All proposed changes went through, e.g. Dartford Warbler and Eurasian Curlew as Near Threatened etc. IB thanks people who have sent in suggestions and valuable information. Red List for birds to be launched on 19 May during CBD COP in Bonn. Full Red List to be launched in October during IUCN WCC in Barcelona. Please inform IB by end of June, if aware of any other species needing status review in 2009 Red List update.
- **SEQUIN (Seabird Ecological Quality Indicator)**
Seabird indicator now developed during ICES-funded workshop in Lisbon (March 2008); indicator not based on current trends, but on historic reference level as compared to current population size. Report not yet finished. Alert conditions for species sometimes well below reference level, sometimes well above. IB will send report round when final.
- **BirdLife plans in Europe**
State of Europe's birds planned, new trend information sought for publication envisaged for 2010. Funding not yet available, therefore currently shelved (and probably targeted for 2012 instead). “Birds in Europe III” targeted for 2014. IB still seeking funding sources. Criteria used to assess SPEC status (incl. interpretation of regional application of Red List criteria) will be reviewed by steering committee within “Birds in Europe III” project.
- **Climatic Atlas discussion**
Is role of EBCC to provide baseline for other peoples' research or to develop its own scientific excellence? Many scientists involved in EBCC. Network of European national data collections unique and essential. Need to have a list of scientific activities that EBCC wants to stand for in future (part of → strategic discussion). EBCC as co-ordinator of science in the fields of atlasing, bird monitoring, biodiversity indicators, biodiversity questions etc. (“our niche”) and can invite collaboration of other scientists that broaden the scientific scope (i.e. in direction of climatic correlation etc.).
Suggestion that EBCC should launch an initiative for new breeding bird atlas in 2010, but some homework needs to be done before then (coverage of regional atlases, time frames, wider discussion with Delegates, stakeholders and funders).
- **Succession of Board members**
At the 2010 EBCC conference there will be renewal and replacement of Board members; individual changes will need to be considered and discussed in 2009. RG's second term as Chairman ends in 2010. Board needs to consider suitable people to form a new Board as necessary.

RG closes meeting on Saturday at 16.00 and particularly thanks the local organizers for their great hospitality and perfect organization.

Richard Gregory
Chairman

Hans-Günther Bauer
Secretary