

## 41st EBCC Board Meeting, Solsona (Cataluña, Spain), 31 March-1 April 2011

**Present:** Ruud Foppen (RF, Chairman), David Noble (DN, Vice Chairman/Treasurer), Hans-Günther Bauer (GB, Secretary), Henning Heldbjerg (HH, Development Officer), Lluís Brotons (LB, SMOG/SCALES), Mikhail Kalyakin (MK), Oskars Keišs (OK, Development Officer), Verena Keller (VK, Conference Officer). Observers: Ian Burfield (IB, BirdLife International), Mark Eaton (ME, RSPB, Development Officer), Francesc Sardà-Palomera (FS, SCALES), Petr Voříšek (PV, PECBMS).

**Apologies:** Anny Anselin (AA, BCN Editor), Åke Lindström (ÅL, Delegate Officer), Jana Škorpilova (JŠ, PECBMS).

### TOP 1: Chairman's welcome to the Solsona meeting.

Chairman welcomes all Board members and observers to the 41<sup>st</sup> Board meeting at the new Forest Technology Center of Catalonia in Solsona and thanks Lluís and Francesc very much for organising the meeting.

### TOP 2: Adoption of agenda, identifying AOB

Following the discussion on handling the packed programme, a strict time frame was set to make sure that all items can be dealt with properly within one day. The second day of the meeting would be dedicated to the atlas discussion. The draft agenda was adopted.

### TOP 3: Minutes of 40<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, checking back on Action points

- All Board minutes will be filed permanently (in electronic form) at the RSPB headquarters in future, so GB shall send these to ME
- RF will look through the First Atlas files for important items of interest with respect to the development of the new atlas [the most interesting papers will be selected, scanned and archived at RSPB]
- Discussions on EBCC's strategic direction were postponed in order to allow enough time to discuss plans for a new atlas (itself a very important strategic discussion).
- The question about introducing colour in BCN was postponed due to lack of time and since AA could not attend this meeting
- All other actions of the last minutes will be dealt with under the respective TOPs below
- The minutes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting are agreed upon unanimously.

### TOP 4: Proceedings of former conferences

Board noted the record publication time of the Cáceres proceedings, as the main papers have been published in Ardeola already, and AA will issue "Cáceres BCN Volume" immediately after return from her holidays.

Proceedings of the Chiavenna conference were sent out two weeks before this Board meeting, so there are none of these legacies any more – a milestone in the history of EBCC. The Board congratulated those responsible, especially the organisers of the conferences in Cáceres (Juan Carlos del Moral) and Chiavenna (Lorenzo Fornasari) and their colleagues responsible for editing and producing the proceedings.

The conference part on the EBCC website and the next Newsletter have to be changed/adapted accordingly to make sure that this information is passed on to everybody.

### TOP 5: Preparation of next EBCC Conference, Cluj 2013

Holidays in Romania are not very compatible with those in other countries. The best time to hold a conference therefore is the period around 15-20 September, as the EOU conference will be held about three weeks earlier, at the end of August (in England). The Board agrees on this period, but exact dates will be finalised at the EOU Riga conference in August 2011. The Board felt that the conference structure, in terms of days, in Cluj should be similar to the one adopted for the Cáceres conference (i.e. three days of talks and 1 day of excursion).

EBCC and EOU Conferences might “clash” with respect to potential participants since they are very close in time, so we have to make sure that the thematic overlap is limited (Global partnership meeting of BirdLife will be held in Ottawa, Canada, in June 2013, but attendee overlap will be limited, anyway).

For next conference make sure that the scientific programme committee is easily identified by conveners and oral presenters, as the lack of announcement of specific responsibilities led to quite some confusion among participants in Cáceres. So a person being on both the local organizing committee and on the scientific programme committee would be very helpful, also to ensure that decisions on the programme are adequately settled and communicated.

#### **TOP 6a:** AGM preparation

The Chairman's report for 2010 was sent out before the meeting as well as the financial report for 2010. Short comment by VK on a necessary change of the Chairman's report, namely that only three positions within Board have actually been elected into their positions by the AGM in Cáceres, the others have been appointed within Board; should make sure that this is clearly stated.

#### **TOP 6b:** Discussion on improvement of Delegate involvement/information

The EBCC Articles of Association do not provide for an “electronic members meeting”, which is held by some other international organisations such as Wetlands Int.

Decision is reached to announce the AGM in the Newsletter and on the website to Delegates together with provision of the necessary documents (e.g. Chairman's report) for commenting.

#### **TOP 7:** Delegates list

ÅL had distributed the new list around for Board members prior to the meeting. Currently, three countries are without any Delegates and three countries have only 1 Delegate; altogether, 83 Delegates are listed. Two changes have been made, one for Greece, one for Turkey. These have to be officially approved at the upcoming AGM (see minutes there).

Still no contacts available for Albania, and in Andorra the contact will be re-established by BirdLife; a Georgian contact may be possible through the BirdLife European meeting in Budapest (April 2011).

“Signs of life” of some Delegates have been sparse in some instances and need to be renewed.

#### **TOP 8:** Bird Census News

AA sent a mail to Board and authors on 1<sup>st</sup> March, to inform them about the current status of BCN. The publication of the Cáceres conference proceedings is in preparation (to be finished shortly after her return). The current volume will be much bigger than earlier issues and will cost EBCC approximately €200 on top of the €500 that AA's institute continues to provide annually. Board agrees to reimburse INBO for these extra costs.

#### **TOP 9:** Newsletter

HH agreed to pull together items for the next Newsletter and to work with ÅL to produce it. Topics that should be mentioned in the next Newsletter are: a report on the AGM, the New Atlas discussion, the next EBCC conference, several newly-published atlases, e.g. Moldova, Vorarlberg, Hessen, Catalonia [winter

atlas], etc.); update of PECBMS indices including information on the increased national involvement (i.e. 3 new countries); the new PECBMS methods section; date and venue of the next PECBMS meeting. It was also suggested that AL ask Delegates and other recipients of the Newsletter to provide paragraphs bird monitoring and atlas work in their country for the EBCC website.

#### **TOP 10:** EBCC website

DN provided a quick overview on the website. There have been few changes since the last meeting except for the PECBMS section, BCN news, and the inclusion of the minutes of recent EBCC meetings. The structure hasn't changed yet, and responsibilities of Board members for individual elements have not yet been taken up. Merging of country reports and PECBMS parts on website is progressing (all are to be shown under the country headings). This shall motivate more people to fill the gaps.

Further changes envisaged:

- Update sections on past conferences, including links to proceedings
- "Useful reading" part requires much more input, same with "important links" section
- "New Atlas" section shall be introduced
- Introduce a "summary" on activities over all countries, maybe in form of a "time line", when specific works and programmes of atlases and monitoring work were started in different countries of Europe
- Do we need to be linked or connected to social networks like facebook, twitter and youtube?? (Would be better if we had a secretariat person who could commit enough time, but certainly necessary at a stage when a major increase of contacts seems necessary). Could a facebook account for Delegates be feasible in future?
- Provide information on further learning possibilities and methodological courses (could also be included on the individual country pages)
- Front page to be revamped, with New Atlas and PECBMS and individual involvement the main issues, and others to be dealt with on "second level"
- More material/info on research initiatives and active working groups (e.g. the one on climate change, SCALES) connected with reference lists - or even pdfs of relevant papers at a later stage

There was also a discussion on the need for a retrospective view of how PECBMS has developed and what impacts it has had since its official launch in 2002 (and perhaps throughout its history, which dates back to the 1990s). This should lead to a publication of high interest to policy makers and the public alike. A similar work or involvement could also be envisaged for the SCALES project. IB, PV and LB should try to dedicate some time to develop such a retrospective – also Richard Gregory might be interested to join in. Generally, this has to be considered as a highly important profile-raising subject for EBCC.

All should send further suggestions for improvements or changes to DN.

#### **TOP 11:** Report on PECBMS

The PECBMS report was distributed to Board before the meeting, but PV provided a quick overview. Next European update a bit later than last year, but is scheduled for the end of June. More schemes are involved, so the procedure is more complicated than the last, with data from three new countries involved, namely Cyprus, Greece, and Slovenia. [Latvian scheme very important, as it fills the "Baltic gap" which is partly due to data-handling problems]. There are still some EU countries not involved in the PECBMS index production, i.e. Malta, Luxemburg, Lithuania, and Romania. Data from Estonia is currently not updated due to data-handling problems.

Date of PECBMS workshop (probably) in Mikulov (Czech Republic) will be 6-9 February 2012. This workshop will have a similar focus as the previous one in Prague, but additionally might include a session on TRIM maps and a session to assess the value of the current approach to producing the indicator.

There will be money available in the PECBMS budget to support travel of participants from low-income countries as well as to cover food and (medium-range) accommodation.

Should run parallel sessions, which might help to reduce crowdedness. Envisaged to have 70 people attending (focus should also be on inviting Eastern European country representatives in need of assistance in their schemes).

Lots of PECBMS leaflets are still available and could be distributed; if you request any, please get back to PV on this.

#### **TOP 12:** Recent data requests

LB circulated two recent requests, one has been delayed because it required data which EBCC could not provide, in the other case data delivery is still pending. The only other two requests not dealt with yet are from Sven Trautmann (DE) and Johan Östergren (SE).

It future have to be clearer to the requesters about how financial matters are settled. The Guidelines have to be very clear and shall be checked again. Currently, there are about ten requests for old atlas data per year.

#### **TOP 13:** List of publications with EBCC affiliation

This list should be part of the research section on the website.

#### **TOP 14:** BirdLife International update, including reporting under the Birds Directive

Forest bird risk assessment study received funding through BirdLife Europe from ACE (the European federation of beverage carton manufacturers for the environment). BirdLife has sub-contracted CAER at the University of Reading to do the work, following the successful approach taken by CAER, RSPB and PECBMS with the European farmland birds two years ago (published in AGEE by Butler et al). A post-doc at CAER, Amy Wade started work in January 2011, reporting to Simon Butler (IB and Richard Gregory are also involved). She already sent out a questionnaire to many people across Europe on forest habitat use by some 90 species; about 70 people have already responded to the questionnaire. IB summarised the gaps in the list, highlighting those countries providing data to PECBMS from which no response has been received.

BirdLife European partnership meeting will be held in April 2011 in Budapest, Hungary, and will include Central Asian participants as well. The main objective is to gather initial high-level ideas for the 2013-2016 European Programme, but if subjects with EBCC relevance appear, IB will let Board know

2010-11 Globally threatened bird update – the global threat status of several European species was revised and will become official when the 2011 Red List is launched in June. IB reports that it concerns mostly downgrades, including all three species of Macaronesian laurel pigeons and Lesser Kestrel, due to improved status thanks to conservation action. Fuerteventura Chat was downlisted due to better knowledge. Blue Chaffinch, Steppe Eagle and Greater Spotted Eagle retain their previous threat level. In 2012, a comprehensive new assessment for all species will be due, so BirdLife will be requesting new information on the status of all globally threatened and near-threatened species, and any others whose status may need to be uplisted from Least Concern. IB encourages Board to participate in this process.

Eurapmon meeting's draft minutes will be finalised soon and sent to EBCC Board members. Two questionnaires will help define future needs, and IB is involved in the development of these. There is ongoing concern, if the existing schemes will be sustained and be able to cover the whole scope.

Cormorant issues. J.-Y. Paquet (Aves/Natagora, Belgium) will represent BirdLife in the new EU-funded project on Cormorants. GB reports on a recent court ruling in SW Germany that Cormorants have to be left unharmed within an EU-SPA, since the data provided by fisheries were seen as inadequate to show direct a direct relation between fish population dynamics and cormorant presence. Details of this court ruling are available through the NABU.de homepage (alas, only in German).

A better provision of topical European Cormorant data is urgently needed, but there is likely to be some reluctance of some national coordinators to collate it, due to failure to publish results of previous efforts..

Reporting under Birds Directive and BiE3 Consultation results of ORNIS committee on redundancy of data reporting was sent around by IB recently.

Draft checklists of bird species to be reported on were sent to all countries last year, many have already responded back. Danish ornithologists raised most concerns, but these mainly legal problems have mostly been dealt with in the last years, anyway. Other concerns and problems concerning the reporting business are expected by May or June this year. Final revisions of reporting format will be worked out subsequently. In future, the consulting process should start earlier, so some countries (as e.g. CH) could be involved more strongly.

By 2012, all Member States are expected by EC to establish national mechanisms (e.g. expert panels) to reach consensus on the data to be provided for each species: (1) population size, (2) short- and long-term population trends, (3) distribution maps and range size, (4) range trends. Data will go both to the EU Commission and to BirdLife (to be combined with equivalent data collated from other, non-EU countries, and used to produce BiE3), aiming at maximum data harmonisation.

Main problem lies with the ability of member states to actually provide some of the requested data, especially concerning the distribution and range trend data, which are hardly available outside GB and NL (change in occupancy on the basis of 10 km<sup>2</sup> areas required). Necessary, that a consultation draft be distributed among members before the actual publication of BiE3. Also necessary to involve the EBCC partners more strongly in this process and mention EBCC (and other groups such as WI, Wader SG) clearly in the final publication (as in BiE1); this is necessary as national coordination is often done by EBCC members which are not BirdLife partners.

A kick-off meeting of the new Birds Directive reporting process will take place at the Commission in Brussels on 13 October 2011, incorporating max. 2-3 people from each Member State hopefully including one BirdLife Partner staff per country (i.e. national BiE3 coordinators). A day later, on 14 October, a meeting will be held on same subject at the BirdLife Europe office in Brussels, but just for BirdLife Partner staff, to discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by this new system.

The Birds Directive reporting process should be repeated every six years, so if this first round goes well and the collaboration with BiE3 proves successful, then it may provide a regular source of funding for BirdLife/EBCC - but also strengthen the case for Member States to monitor all their birds properly.

EBCC network and representatives in non-EU countries have to be informed about BiE3. IB will keep Board up to date, also re funding for the coordination role.

#### **TOP 15:** Collaboration with Wetlands International concerning IWC, report of recent developments

VK reported on the problems with IWC (Intern. Waterbird Census). A letter from the national coordinators in Europe was sent out to WI expressing concern on the recent developments (cuts in funding and staff, lack of feedback and data analysis). EBCC also sent a letter. VK presented the coordinators' view at a Wetlands International meeting in Edinburgh; the workshop was generally considered a very positive step. A consortium including BirdLife, EBCC, the Ramsar and AEWA secretariats, and one or the other funders, was supposed to steer the coordinative work in future.

The steering structure will probably be divided according to the three sub-regions of the IWC: (1) Europe and Africa, thus covering the AEWA region, (2) Asia-Pacific and (3) the Americas.

It was agreed that VK should be the person to represent EBCC Board within this consortium ("Liaison Officer"). It would also be good to have a person of WI as an observer to the upcoming EBCC Board meetings.

#### **TOP 16:** Date and venue for get together in autumn 2011

Board will meet for its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting after the EOU Riga conference on 31 August and 1 September in Engure Field Station (some 100 km from Riga) in Latvia, OK offers to organise this meeting.

The subsequent 43<sup>rd</sup> one-day Board meeting will best coincide with the PECBMS workshop in February 2012; PV will see to that. The AGM will best be held in the evening of the final PECBMS workshop day. The 44<sup>th</sup> Board meeting will have to be held in Cluj in order to prepare the 2013 EBCC conference there.



**TOP 17:**        **AGM**  
see separate minutes

**TOP 18:**        Report on SMOG/SCALES

LB provided a short overview of new development within the EBCC's Spatial Modelling Group (SMOG). The development of "TRIM maps" has been driven further, now the development of guidelines (a "tool box") will be necessary to make it more user friendly, not just relying on the statistical techniques alone. Very good habitat data are required to derive reliable distribution maps; Cristi Domsa (Romania) will be using and further developing these maps during his PhD, testing the quality of the mapping method. Validation of maps has to be done independently of map production. Different types of modelling techniques and data have so far been integrated. Financial assistance for developing TRIMMaps, a statistical procedure to use monitoring data to produce maps, has been granted to SOVON from the Dutch Government. These modelling techniques could be part of the Atlas process (fitting specific objectives of the atlas) – "potential distribution maps".

FS provided an update on the SCALES project, in particular the elements undertaken by the Forest Technology Center of Catalonia, which is developing valid statistical tools to predict habitat/species relationships on the basis of different data sources and monitoring methods (on the basis of Catalan Atlas data, data from online bird recording schemes such as Ornitho, and other sources; discussions about integrating French data have started). An expansion of this approach could be extended to all existing monitoring methods in Europa, at present major types of monitoring methods are looked at, not fine-grained differences between them. The group is currently working on the problem of down-scaling the data, and coping with different kinds of biases. This project could eventually feed into the methodology of the New Atlas via first ideas (guidelines) and feasibility assessments.

In April, there will be a SCALES meeting in Sofia. There are plans to combine pan-European trends (PECBMS) with habitat data and data of other possible drivers of change.

The group could apply for a grant (PhD) within this project that could directly serve the Atlas project.

**TOP 19:**        New EBCC Atlas, including web-based data collection

VK (and GB) explain the history and rationale of the two papers that form the basis of this Atlas discussion. The "proposal paper" is in its initial stages and should be seen as such. The "question paper" should be used to inform and focus the discussion and essentially lead to decisions and action points. An aim will be to produce an information paper directed at Delegates, but there is also the need for a questionnaire addressed at Delegates to find out more about their ideas and problems.

**Part A** (Introduction): Policy relevance aspects shall be added in due course.

**Part B** (Aims): There was agreement on the main aspects (types of data) needed for this atlas in order to achieve the desired outputs (i.e. current distribution, change in range since last atlas, but also potentially population size and changes, and relative abundance), but it is important to clarify where modelling processes come in (for example, before or after the data have been made available). Two levels of output are envisaged: 1) empirical data output, 2) various underlying data levels used for modelling purposes. Discussion arose around which of these outputs would actually be shown in the atlas and which would form additional output "sources".

There was agreement that the baseline level is the national data set, although in some cases the country data would have to be "upgraded" to achieve the best output for the atlas. We could present data quality differences with black dots for real/good data and grey dots for modelled (or insufficient) data.

Population size and trends: It was suggested that we could use overlap with BiE3 (and national) reporting, but that the focus should not be on gathering information on population size (this would only "repeat" BiE3 work). However, abundance data form an added value, at least for most countries involved, so their presence in the atlas is required. The New Atlas should employ analyses of regional "abundance differences", but this idea needs to be further explored..

**Part C** (Methods):

Atlas methods should be discussed mainly within the pre-phase Steering Committee, but the technical workshop on online platforms on 23-24 June (see below) will help in defining some important parameters.

**Part D** (Atlas Outputs): Only discussed cursorily due to lack of time.

**Part E** (Other points to consider):

Lifewatch ([www.lifewatch.eu](http://www.lifewatch.eu)) builds infrastructure on the topic of biodiversity data, and is looking for programmes working on these issues (but mainly on national level). Klaus Henle strongly recommended (EBCC) to pursue this possibility. First ideas were discussed amongst a number of pan-European biodiversity network organisations like EBCC, SEH, BCE during a workshop in Prague at the Conservation Biology conference (ECCB) in 2010. Even pan-European projects might be funded under Lifewatch. RF sent a draft proposal around to Board members recently which reflects first ideas on how to approach this platform in cooperation with similar organisations covering other organismic groups. Currently, we are not only registering our interest, but also exploring synergetic effects that could assist us in our work.

Online data systems. An “o.d.s.” workshop based on the initiative of Hans Schmid in Cáceres is to be held on 23-24 June in Nijmegen (at the SOVON office, but under the “stamp” of EBCC), discussing their potential importance for a European atlas and for reporting under the Birds Directive as well as other aspects (technical standards for data exchange, data sharing and ownership etc.). Almost all of these systems still concentrate on casual records, but usage for atlas purposes in the near future is a possibility we need to explore and which could have many advantages, if adapted accordingly. Still work needs to be done in order to set minimal international standards with respect to data types and their storage, atlas code usage etc.

**Part F** (Project organisation):

It was agreed that data collection should happen at the national level, and that national coordinators would need to work with the New Atlas organisers (Coordination team). Apart from established national atlas coordinators, where appropriate, in some countries the first entry could be Delegates or national PECBMS coordinators, or others active in this topic.

National issues and problems will not generally be solved from outside the country, but the New Atlas coordinators will need to be aware of any issues that might affect delivery of data for the atlas.

We also discussed the need for a Plan B for non-“complying” countries, e.g. those unwilling or unable to deliver (at least within the time frame given). Also necessary to advocate a Plan C for “gap” countries in need of additional field workers or partners.

Coordinator (or team). A coordinator (team) shall be responsible to set up the atlas and run the project. In addition to this, the decision was to have a Steering Committee under the auspices of EBCC, consisting of EBCC Board members (which report back to Board, the “general control agency”) as well as members of BirdLife and other stakeholders.

The Steering Group would manage the work of the coordinator(s) based at the Host Organisation (to be determined later and dependent on support), which in turn should also have a say within the Steering Group and would have to deal with functional and financial issues as well as communication and development processes. Technical support could either arise through sub-contracts or through in-kind contributions and assistance (e.g. seconding people on short-term basis) from outside institutions.

It is hoped that host organisations among the EBCC partnership, for example the BTO, SOVON, or the Swiss Ornithological Institute could either invest money to get the New Atlas project running (i.e. funding the coordinator in the initial phase) or devote time in the steering process, or both.

Need of a pre-Atlas phase: Major parts of pre-phase should be fundraising, networking, organisational issues, and methodological workshops. This could be in the hands of an organisation with the capacity to follow each of these lines in succession, or of a person who is able to take over all these tasks.

It was noted that costs of basing a coordinator in eastern Central Europe are considerably less than hosting staff in western Europe, although the support base may be smaller. A link with PECBMS coordination in Prague would have many advantages (e.g. shared network, location in central Europe with good links to the east, prior experience) but care should be taken not to weaken PECBMS.

A Pre-phase Steering Group needs to be formed; one first action for this group would be to talk to PECBMS Steering Committee about its opinion where the atlas should be hosted (e.g. within the CSO). The EBCC Atlas group currently consists of VK, LB, IB, RF, DN and GB. Everybody in Board shall see if she/he is able to devote time or can contribute to these first Atlas tasks. All should also consult with their individual organisations to find out other views and ideas on these issues.

#### TOP 20: Any other business

- EOU conference in Riga. There is a talk on EBCC matters presented by VK on PECBMS in the session on Monitoring. Organisers will have a chance to present the Latvian monitoring project, but this is not settled yet; they do not want to invite ministers to this, but possibly will ask for a resolution to be passed.

A pdf of accepted abstracts for this conference is now available on the website.

- Twinning/Development Officers report on their activities. The group tried to identify countries in most need of assistance in becoming part of the PECBMS process according to the likelihood of success in achieving this goal (in order to achieve this a scoring system based on four main questions was deployed): 1) is there an existing monitoring system?; 2) are there any EBCC Delegates?; 3) are data provided for PECBMS?; 4) is there a relevant organisation? Additional questions circled around existing collaborations, potential help from neighbouring countries and national needs and problems. Prioritisation of activities is necessary. For the identification of problems one could look at groups of countries with similar issues. But with respect to the help offered to solve existing problems the group needs to adopt a country-by-country approach. Necessary to find funding, which provisionally could be provided by RSPB (for Turkey) in the next year. Other possibilities to ask for funding can arise, but this requires that initiatives be developed in time in order to become substantiated. In parallel, help through EBCC's Best Practice Guide is possible for new scheme coordinators. But as these are usually inexperienced, this needs much more personal assistance, best through twinning with larger (western) organisations. Recent PECBMS workshop proceedings do identify the main needs of the "underdeveloped" countries.

Further reports: Cyprus has improved its scheme's design, Romania and Bulgaria received massive government funding for their schemes, but still lack the experience and thus need good consulting and advice (provided by ME as part of RSPB support for BirdLife Partners there).

- Eastern European development, incl. Russian breeding bird atlas. MK presents draft paper on the planning and preparation of the New Atlas in Russia; the main items were discussed under TOP 19.

Relevant "players" in Russia are The Zoological Museum of Moscow represented by MK and one co-worker, which could afford to spend some time on such a project. The Russian Geographical Society might be interested in cooperating in an interactive website (otherwise help of EBCC would be required to set this up).

Geo-referenced data will not be easily achieved, at least in remote places. Even internet usage is restricted to big towns. PV asks which technical assistance should be provided by outside bodies and organisations to help the project make more progress.

The funding issue was discussed extensively. A financial input to the pilot study could get things moving. VK and others offered to look for possibilities.

- Invasive species. Should be treated similarly to the Climate Change topic, as it is an issue where EBCC data can certainly be used. Could eventually have the capacity through PECBMS to eventually introduce a non-native species indicator. Following discussions, it was felt by most that other involvements by EBCC, such as defining "alien invasives", were currently not advisable.

Reporting of non-native species to EU Commission reduced to 3 species on Appendix II of the Directive (Canada Goose, Turkey, Pheasant), reports on other non-natives is voluntary. BirdLife thinks about including some of these species in its BiE3, but again – where to draw the line?

- Best practice guide for population estimates. Problems arise when assessing input from different countries for pan-European schemes (New atlas, PECBMS, BiE3) as the provided population estimates vary vastly in quality and reliability. An EBCC guideline could make sure that no bias is introduced through this problem. In the near future need to develop a best practice guide, since difficulties will arise very soon with BiE3. Should start with a review on current practices. But currently very limited capacity to tackle these questions; pragmatic approach certainly needed.



- Funding bird monitoring in Latvia. OK thanks EBCC members again (e.g. Swiss Ornithological Institute in 2010, the Swedish Ornithological Society for 2011) for providing money to the Latvian monitoring scheme. A letter to the Latvian Government from EBCC and from BirdLife is necessary to make sure that such outside funding is not required every year. Necessary that Latvian government takes their responsibility since they have obligations under the EU Rural Development Regulation (and Birds Directive). Board agrees that these monitoring funds will be provided.

RF closes the meeting on Friday at 8:00 p.m. and thanks Board members and observers very much for their participation and for their contributions.

Ruud Foppen  
Chairman

Hans-Günther Bauer  
Secretary