

## **42<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting of EBCC in Engure (Latvia), 31 August - 1 September 2011**

**Present:** Ruud Foppen (RF, Chairman), David Noble (DN, Vice Chairman/Treasurer), Hans-Günther Bauer (GB, Secretary), Anny Anselin (AA, BCN Editor), Henning Heldbjerg (HH, Development Officer), Mikhail Kalyakin (MK), Åke Lindström (ÅL, Delegate Officer), Oskars Keišs (OK, Development Officer), Verena Keller (VK, Conference Officer). Observers: Ian Burfield (IB, BirdLife International), Mark Eaton (ME, RSPB, Development Officer), Jana Škorpilova (JŠ, PECBMS), Petr Voříšek (PV, PECBMS).

Cluj conference organiser: Zoltán Szábo (ZS).

Apologies: Lluís Brotons (LB, SMOG/ SCALES), Francesc Sardà-Palomera (FS, SCALES).

### **TOP 1:** Chairman's welcome to the Engure meeting, Chairman's report

Chairman welcomes all Board members and observers to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting at Engure Field Station and thanks Oskars very much for serving as host and local organizer.

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

In order to get through the packed programme, a strict time frame is set to make sure that all topics will be discussed sufficiently, and that those leaving early can participate. The Atlas topic (#15) is moved forward to the first day, as is PECBMS (#10). Apart from changes in the topics' order, the agenda is accepted as sent out.

### **TOP 3:** Minutes of 41<sup>st</sup> Board meeting, checking back on Action Points

VK goes through the most recent version of the Minutes. No suggestions for website changes have been received yet. Most other actions were fulfilled. The PECBMS publication list of 18 papers was completed last week but is not yet on the website.

All other actions of the last Minutes have been dealt with and will be reported under the respective TOPs below.

The Minutes of the 41<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting are agreed upon unanimously.

### **TOP 4:** Preparation of next EBCC Conference, Cluj 2013

The next EBCC Conference shall be held from 16 September 2013 (arrival day; EBCC Board Meeting will also take place on 16<sup>th</sup>), the main conference stretching from 17-20 September, until 21<sup>st</sup> (departure day), with the venue placed in the new university building.

The restaurant in Cluj can serve 250-300 people, so this might limit participant numbers. Accommodation will be concentrated in the newly-built nearby campus. Cluj has an international airport, and a good train service is also available. Plenty of hotels and college dormitories to choose from (close to the main conference building). All required facilities can be arranged within a radius of 100m around the venue. The time frame shall be similar to the one adopted in Cáceres. Excursions will be in the surroundings of Cluj (up to 250 km), and also include cultural ones. Brown bear excursions are envisaged as pre- or post-conference excursions, as they will require several days.

The next EOU conference will be held end of August 2013 in Norwich (England). EBCC and EOU Conferences might "clash" with respect to potential participants since they are very close in time. EBCC has to make sure that the thematic overlap is limited, and needs to advertise its conference with special topics (i.e. its core work which is unlikely to be covered by EOU). It may be necessary to reduce the thematic scope, and have a more dedicated conference. Main topics should be: Bird Distribution, including Atlas-ing; Waterbirds; "PECBMS package" and second generation indicators; monitoring conservation success. Five plenaries are planned, two parallel sessions as in Cáceres plus possibly one parallel workshop. Important to have a very good final plenary presentation in order to get people together for the closing session (and have no early departures). Scientific committees in previous conferences comprised of

local organisers and members of Board; a sub-group of Board is required, with VK volunteering to head this committee, and the following group to join in: AL, PV, MK, DN, RF, LB (to be asked) and HH, plus ZS and another Romanian scientist from the local committee. The poster session is very important – it shall be installed in main hall where there is a large space available; posters should be advertised during the conference (but not by individual introductions, as these would take too much time) in order to attract a maximum of people to them; this can also be achieved by having food and drinks nearby. Requirement to have handouts presented at the posters; it is also possible to collect pdfs and jpgs of talks and posters to be distributed among participants. Invited plenary speakers should be covering several of the main conference topics, including a representation of Eastern Europe. The plenaries should, apart from their scientific output, also be well presented.

Need to discuss conference fees. Some funding so far made possible through the Romanian Ministry of Education. Other possible sponsors have been contacted, the venue will be free of costs. It is thus probable that total coverage could be achieved via conference fees. Plenary lectures are often accompanied with some costs (waiving conference fees, travel costs, accommodation); participants from low-income countries also need to be taken into account. The “Central European Initiative” programme might provide payment for these participants. Selling of memorabilia is envisaged, a logo also needs to be developed (t-shirts, cups etc.). Cluj organisers are advised to contact Ardeola to find out if they would accept another batch of some 15-25 EBCC conference papers in their journal as “Cluj proceedings”. If not, we will have to contact other international journals such as Ardea, Vogelwelt, Acta ornithologica etc. A prerequisite for such a collaboration is the guarantee that the proceedings will be published soon after the conference.

The preparatory EBCC Board Meeting in Cluj 2012 shall take place in October (as close to the actual conference period as possible).

#### **TOP 5:** Bird Census News

AA sent a mail to Board members about BCN developments in advance of the Engure meeting. The proceedings volume of the Cáceres conference (Vol. 23/1+2) was finalised in May, but had not been sent out to all participants until recently due to printing problems. EBCC will cover the costs for the additional copies on top of what her institute is providing, but the mailing will be costly and be covered by AA's institute.

Issue 24/1 will appear in September including two larger papers on the interpretation of census data and the new breeding bird atlas of Wallonia, as well as the AGM minutes and some book reviews. The second volume of 2011 shall be issued in December, and will also include two larger papers, one of which has not yet been submitted (on Galapagos, seconded by Frédéric Jiguet). The first announcement for the European breeding atlas, as a follow-up to the Steering Committee meeting in Sandy, could be published in this December issue.

AA shall use the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BCN in the year 2012 to launch its new look and also to start BCN as an online journal.

#### **TOP 6:** Delegates list, improved Delegate involvement

ÅL reports that there were no changes at all to the Delegates list since the last meeting. There are still 3 countries with zero Delegates (Albania, Andorra and Georgia) and 3 countries with one Delegate (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Liechtenstein). In Greece, Theodoros Kominos is no longer responsible for the monitoring programme, and might need to be replaced as national Delegate; a similar situation prevails in Malta with André Raine.

BirdLife will try to identify a contact in Albania through a new project, and will also try to refresh contacts in Andorra; GCCW in Georgia has not reacted to any of BirdLife's questions for years, which is cause for concern. MK has contacted a Georgian scientist, who could probably identify a new Delegate (a freelancing ornithologist, whose organisational affiliation is not clear yet).

The current Delegates list still comprises 83 Delegates.

EBCC might ask Delegates if they want to join in on some of its work, i.e. improving the website, or the development of the atlas logo. Some of the action points could be checked with respect to asking for specific help. Participation requests should be advertised in the Newsletter.

#### **TOP 7:** Report on SMOG/SCALES

FS has sent a report around on the SMOG/SCALES projects, which is shortly discussed at the Board meeting.

Interesting aspects arise for the new European Atlas, since modelling procedures from monitoring data have improved considerably. Need to discuss the more detailed document with respect to the pros and cons of new developments in the frame of the new atlas. Board should directly ask LB and FS to bring the SMOG and other modelling groups together (also the “feasibility students”) in order to make loose ends meet (“join forces”) and present the current status or a research proposal, and give methodological advice to the Atlas Steering Group.

#### **TOP 8:** Newsletter

The next Newsletter shall include items on the BCN (news developments, new look), a questionnaire concerning new atlas projects in individual countries (“which are to be published, which are planned?”), a report on EBCC’s last AGM, the New Atlas discussion, a summary of MK’s overview on Russian breeding bird monitoring; date and venue of the next PECBMS workshop; the BiE3 project; mentions of the Baltic sea-duck report; the EOU Riga conference; the Eurapmon agenda. Furthermore, ÅL shall ask Delegates and other correspondents again in the Newsletter if they could provide paragraphs for the EBCC website.

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

The Danish Bird Monitoring report and several other small items have been added, but the restructuring of the website still hasn’t been achieved. Board members have not sent their ideas and suggestions out to DN yet. It would be nice, if first ideas could be exchanged a.s.a.p., as the next Board meeting will only take place next spring.

The enquiry in the Newsletter on what Delegates are missing on the current EBCC website did not receive any suggestions.

An agreement on data-sharing between online portals shall be included on the website as soon as final decisions have been reached.

#### **TOP 10:** Report on PECBMS

The recent PECBMS report, with indices including data up to 2009, was published recently on the EBCC homepage and in leaflets sent out to the data providers. A progress report of the PECBMS as well as the index leaflets were distributed to Board members before the Engure meeting.

The data request for next PECBMS update (with an extended species list and hopefully more countries involved) will be sent out to national representatives very soon. Simon Butler’s project (to be discussed under TOP 11) will have to be mentioned in a separate letter. More work required by the national coordinators to meet PECBMS demands. In the meantime, the technical and the steering group of PECBMS have been merged (essentially comprising the same persons).

The next PECBMS workshop will be held in Mikulov (Czech Republic) from 6-9 February 2012 (arrival day, two days of workshop plus a field trip day). The workshop will coincide with the BiE3 kickoff meeting just thereafter (lasting one, max. two days).

Funding for PECBMS from the European Commission will end in June 2012, currently discussions ensue on how to extend this funding or find new “sponsorship”.

CSO made a trip to Macedonia (twinning effort) to further develop monitoring work there, as it has declined after the SEED project ended. The number of potential volunteers for monitoring work there is very low (some 10-12 ornithologists available). Need for basic equipment shall be met by CSO, if possible.

#### **TOP 11:** Recent data requests

Simon Butler's request had been distributed among Board members, who also had the chance to meet Simon and discuss the project at the EOU conference in Riga. His project focuses on farmland birds, and the contribution of land-use changes in the functional space of these species. In order to achieve his aims, Simon needs site-specific data, older as well as very recent ones, and will need topical habitat data temporally related to the bird data. Despite potential limitations (e.g. availability of sufficient-quality habitat information), PECBMS is keen to cooperate. Because of practicalities, national coordinators will be asked to provide TRIM S1 files together with standard files. This will be part of forthcoming PECBMS requests for national data (otherwise national coordinators will need to run the whole TRIM procedure again). Proper explanations and proper data requests will be circulated later, the document will be prepared together by PV, RG and Simon Butler. The data request and the whole procedure must comply with Data access and co-authorship policy.

LB has sent an excel list of recent data requests around to Board members, which OK reports on; 14 requests are on the requests list of 2010 and 2011. From these requests several have been dealt with, but some are still pending or their status did not become clear to Board. LB coordinates requests (and fills in spreadsheets), asks Board for agreement, and when positive, asks Henk (SOVON) or David (BTO) to provide the data.

**TOP 12:** List of publications with EBCC affiliation

LB was not able to produce a full list of publications as yet.

**TOP 13:** Strategic direction, "2020 vision/target"

This subject was discussed cursorily only. Points raised were: New website with focal point for online portals; the New Atlas; the PECBMS project; these are the main aspects that EBCC is currently dealing with. It is still valuable to have a short overview of our current discussions (basically a summary of the discussions in 2010) to form a framework for future visions and also as a basal fundraising tool for the New Atlas.

**TOP 14:** BirdLife International update, including reporting under the Birds Directive and BiE3

Eurapmon. IB still involved in Eurapmon as an advisor. Pity that the project's funding is currently restricted to events, and that no money is available for the work package. If insufficient progress is shown, no more money might be provided in future and the system might collapse. (Eurapmon is currently limited until spring 2015, anyway). PECBMS might be in a position to take over part of Eurapmon's present role in due course, as more and more raptor data will be gathered in the PECBMS process and as the network will improve further.

Common bird monitoring questionnaire (EU) has been answered by many countries (but some coordinators were probably on holiday, or the people responsible could not be identified); the resulting spreadsheets received were distributed at the Board meeting. The Farmland Bird Index is often not taken into account by governments. Gaps shall be filled a.s.a.p., but the contract with IB's assistant working on this has run out. The resulting paper shall feed into the "10 years of PECBMS" achievement paper. Technical comments by Board members will be very much appreciated. Better to specify the budget (lump sum, or specifically administered payment). In countries, where no payment for monitoring programmes is administered, these data shall not be provided for EU reporting processes.

Forest bird risk assessment study continued. Amy Wade from Univ. Reading and Simon Butler involved. The former sent out another questionnaire across Europe in summer. Final meeting on this shall take place in September. A pool of 17 forest species has been identified to indicate the risks concerning forest development. Also regional European variation in forest bird development will be analysed and reported on in a paper soon.

Globally threatened bird update for 2012 under way. Quite a long list of species has to be treated end of this year. The book "Status of wintering waterbirds in the Baltic" will appear on the web soon implying that many waterbird species in the Baltic show drastic declines and will possibly have to be included in the IUCN Red List. However, Long-tailed Ducks, like many other species on the Swedish Baltic coast, are doing well breeding-wise, which might imply that the declining wintering numbers in the Baltic might be due to changes in wintering areas.

Cormorant issues. J.-Y. Paquet started his EU-funded project on Cormorants. In September there should be more information available. The next Cormorant specialist group conference will be held in November 2011 in the Netherlands; VK wanted to take part, but will not be able to make it. Results of the last Cormorant censuses will apparently be published soon, coinciding with the output of some INTERCAFE material, which is long overdue.

#### **TOP 15:** New EBCC Atlas, including web-based data collection

The proposal outline by VK and GB, based on the decisions of EBCC's Solsona meeting, is a living document of the new atlas project. An inventory is necessary to put together the different threads that have been followed since the last meeting. All documents arising from these different threads should always go to the Atlas Steering Committee, which wasn't the case recently. All initiatives should be discussed in the Steering Group, rather than in Board.

The current Atlas proposal needs to be updated (and reduced) again, deducting information from the other initiatives that were taking place in the last few months. Currently available, and subsequently discussed in turn, are:

- Umbrella document by VK and GB
- Online portal workshop in NL (SOVON), Data agreement proposal (S. Baillie)
- BiE3 project proposal (IB)
- RSPB's fund raising ideas (ME)
- Feasibility study (SOVON)
- CSO proposal (PV)

Discussion on the Online portal workshop report: the first aim of the workshop was to bring portal professionals together and seek agreements on collaborations, the second aim was to discuss how to use data from online portals for an European atlas. Possibilities arise as to introducing data gathering methods via portals in countries where no professional data collection has been installed yet. The question of data sharing and of legal handling of data, i.e. ownership, on national level was important as well, but has not been completed. Cornell's e-bird portal might have to be taken into account, as it might also spread into Europe. EBCC should make clear how it evaluates data sharing issues and shall get back to the representatives of these portals in order to discuss the use of individual portal data within the EBCC atlas project (but not beyond).

Second issue is how data of individual portals can be integrated easily into the atlas project. There is a need for setting minimal standards, and agreement needs to be reached on all requirements, soon. A draft proposal on data exchange should be signed in due course by all representatives in order to push things forward. But generally it is EBCC's task to set the necessary data standards and to supervise respective developments, yet accept all possible collaborators (not only the "best" provider of data); i.e. more than one scheme per country might provide data. Collaboration between the different online recording schemes shall work well beyond the atlas project. DN will take over the role as "representative" of these schemes within EBCC and will form the link between these two.

With respect to the atlas project further steps are necessary beyond these general agreements. Data standards will have to be raised to meet the atlas requirements. Only validated and nationally accepted records can be used within the atlas.

BiE3 project proposal. The Atlas project will be affected by the 10x10 km distribution maps for breeding birds required for BiE3 under the Article 12 reports by the EU Commission. BirdLife (and EBCC) wrote a proposal to the EU claiming to provide assistance with the development of the distribution maps in all 27 EU countries. The chances of receiving funds for this proposal are good. But problem arises what the provision of these analyses will entail for the new Atlas.



The end product of BiE3 is a chance for, but could also jeopardise, some of EBCC's Atlas aims, so the Steering Committee has to make sure that data provided for BiE3 are properly used in the New Atlas. Two reasons arise that the new Atlas be finished by 2019 (or 2020) at the latest: 2019 is next reporting year for the EU countries; the year 2020 is set as the EU biodiversity target year.

RSPB's fund raising ideas. An internal funding proposal by ME to support the New Atlas was met very enthusiastically by RSPB headquarters. The proposal includes ten months of staff time over a two-year period and help from the policy people within RSPB to support the development of the atlas project. At the beginning, a person at RSPB headquarters might act as a secretariat for the atlas, help atlas partners get their own funding, help in technical questions, launch the atlas etc., but would not run the project itself. There is a fairly good chance of this actually happening. The preliminary decision by RSPB will be made by mid-September, further proceeds shall be discussed by ME (and Steering Group) end of September in Sandy (independent of the funding decision), and actual work at RSPB could commence in April 2012. When this first period would phase out, a new secretariat will need to have been installed under the auspices of this first initiative. VK (and Swiss Ornithological Institute) is willing to help push the atlas forward as well, and she will have some time to devote to the development of the atlas.

CSO proposal. PV sent a proposal paper of CSO's contribution to the New Atlas around prior to the Board meeting. CSO may provide expertise of the PECBMS group to improve atlas work and also have a person work for the atlas project for 18 months (initially) at the CSO premises; this would preferably be a Czech or Eastern European person. The PECBMS Steering Group has raised two concerns over this proposal end of July: i) that this does not compromise PECBMS work; ii) that the original budget proposal might be inflated. EBCC Board agreed that the preliminary phase of 18 months should lead into a subsequent full-time position. A job description would be necessary for this, but this very much relies on the person envisaged. It is seen as favourable to have an overlapping period between RSPB and CSO project coordinators/secretaries, probably during early 2013.

Feasibility study (SOVON). The proposal for a planning study deals with methodological aspects of the atlas project, and is reflecting the ideas within SOVON considering the modelling and analysing work. It contains many questions to the Steering Group in order to define aspects at the beginning of the project. If agreed that such a feasibility study is a good basis (module) for the atlas, SOVON together with EBCC need to find financial sources to carry out such a study. Identifying gaps is one aspect of such a proposal, and should be run parallel to this project, or might be included in this one as a special module. A similar study is currently run at the Swiss Ornithological Institute by Marc Kéry and co-workers for the planned Swiss atlas. Organisational questions should be dealt with at the secretariat and should not be part of the SOVON proposal. Of very high priority should be questions of coverage in some eastern European countries, i.e. data collection protocols, and subsequent extrapolation from such data. So, if single items are dealt with by other groups, the SOVON group should concentrate on part of the listed aspects of their proposal. The paper has to be discussed within the Steering Group in order to identify which of the contents could be a module in the atlas context and which aspects should be followed by other groups.

It is still unclear, how the SCALES project could deliver to the atlas project. It could be another building block for the atlas, but this needs to be specified still (by the Steering Group).

Breaking down the atlas into different stages (blocks) seems to be the most sensible way to make this atlas project work. Developing the modular framework is one of the most important aspects the Atlas Steering Group has to work out and to define in the near future.

The EBCC Atlas pre-phase Steering Group now consists of VK, ME, RF, DN, LB, IB and GB. The group will include MK although he may not be able to attend all atlas meetings. Board decides that the group will be chaired by VK. The next meeting of the Steering Group shall take place in Sandy (Beds.) on 17 October [this date was negotiated by e-mail after the meeting].

**TOP 16:** Twinning/Development Officers report

HH reports on the discussions of which countries should be included according to their importance regarding data and according to feasibility to start a monitoring project. Western Balkan countries and Iceland

turned out to be the most important countries. Next step is to start discussions with potential country representatives on how to get them involved in atlas work and the PECBMS censusing. Most promising way forward is to concentrate on atlas work in countries where no censuses exist, and help others in improving existing census schemes. EBCC will not be proactive on this issue, but any conclusions by the Twinning Officers should be spread. Details of the situation in each country should be made known, HH will provide an overview.

ME gives a brief update on Turkey. So far, no monitoring scheme has been set up, ME met with people there trying to put more focus on this issue. So far, only 6 squares are covered per year, but a considerable increase is expected for next year. ME will try to get funding for this scheme, but some capacity is already available, anyway.

#### **TOP 17:** Eastern European development; Russian breeding bird atlas.

MK distributed a short paper on planning activities of the New Atlas in Russia. He anticipates that a team of (about three) coordinators will be necessary in order to be able to collect data from different sources (including literature data), to contact the field workers and to summarise, process and analyse the data (Data Manager). Project partner for the Atlas Group shall be MK, the team shall be situated at the Univ. Moscow, where one further staff member would be active part-time in atlas work.

Fundraising shall mainly be necessary for field work rather than for other aspects of the atlas project.

Data gaps are virtually unavoidable and should be filled by modelling exercises. Atlas data collection shall include data from as early as 2005 (in order not to have to repeat work of existing atlases like the one from Moscow). New data shall be collected by the few professionals and experienced volunteers of Russia, and probably visiting groups from other countries. The minimal level of data quality needed in this project has to be determined (with respect to observer effort, list of expected species, or other parameters). A functional website will be necessary from the onset, with feedback possibilities, probably similar to the South African site of Les Underhill. This site shall be in Russian. MK should have a look at different systems to see which of the existing systems is best suited. The Russian programme could be run under the "Worldbird database" site, but it needs to be checked if it is operable for atlas purposes.

Any data collected should be stored under the respective year (minimal standard across Europe). Guidelines on the database structure will have to be issued for all European countries anyway, this has not to be developed specifically for the Russian side. Decisions have to be made fast, though, and that is why MK has to look through the existing databases and portals quickly; RF will provide him with appropriate material. MK has to check what information is available on forest cover, land use etc.

Preliminary field work started in 2011 already, subsidised by the Swiss Ornithological Institute; the pilot phase was also entered in order to find out what financial sources and other aspects will have to be provided to make this work for all of European Russia. It will also be important to get the permission from field workers to use their data in the atlas. These volunteers are often not yet organised in organisations such as Birds Russia or the Russian Ornithological Society (RBCU, former BirdLife partner) or other competing NGOs, and collaboration on the Atlas shall hopefully bring the ornithologists of this vast country closer together.

The total number of 50x50 squares in Russia stands at around 1800; data for some 110 squares are already available. Stratification in large biogeographic zones shall be necessary and will be started soon (by a team of cartographers at Univ. Moscow). The same projection as in the old Atlas has to be used, and Henk Sierdsema saw to this when working out the Russian atlas material. Preparatory work shall include an analysis on how many sample squares will be necessary in order to facilitate calculation of areal occupancy and abundance in gap regions. This analysis might be provided by the members of the spatial modelling group (SMOG) without any need for fundraising in Russia. A species list per square shall be essential. Standardised visits of single squares within 50x50 km square are envisaged for abundance studies.

MK has taken up contacts with neighbouring countries such as Belarus and Ukraine, but talks on how to proceed there are so far only preliminary. The Atlas Steering Group will have to take over the task in explaining which steps need to be taken. Moldova produced a new atlas, but so far there is no information about work in Armenia etc. Contact with those countries, as well as Georgia, needs to be direct, not via Russia. At a later stage, MK should be made part of the Steering Committee, so that the connectivity and communication within Eastern European countries is optimised. MK should at least be informed about all aspects discussed, but has no obligation to visit all Committee meetings.

Funding on a pan-European basis seems necessary, but sufficient extra funding will certainly be necessary from within Russia and Ukraine etc. Good to seek funding for specific modules such as censusing in remote places, since visiting remote places by volunteers infers high costs. Also necessary to dedicate means in those countries to set up atlas coordination work, i.e. secretariats in places where they are insufficiently installed.

Providing GPS for Russian volunteers would probably be more helpful than providing binoculars or other equipment.

**TOP 18:** Involvement of Wetlands International and reporting back on strategic meeting with WI

RF reports on the WI meeting on the International Waterbird Census (IWC) on 20-21 June where he represented EBCC Board (in place of VK, who was on holiday).

Proposed future governance of the IWC was discussed, also the priorities, furthermore the new programmes intended (which would expand current schemes). New Terms of Reference have been laid out in a paper. A new European/African Regional Coordinator is vital to restore work in many areas, especially in Africa. A new IWC work plan will be developed in September.

Some IWC funding now comes from membership fees (plus Ramsar, AEWA), so core funding seems secured, but further money has to come from improved output and other sources.

A technical forum was set up, but might not be picked up by national coordinators. Generally, these developments will currently have not much impact on EBCC's work. But if help is necessary, EBCC will assist the development of the IWC, if at all possible.

**TOP 19:** Date and venue for next board meeting

The Board meeting shall best coincide with the Atlas Steering Group. A combination with the PECBMS and the BiE3 Group meetings in February would be difficult for logistical reasons and would lead to long absences.

The date is fixed to (Thu./Fri.) 15-16 March 2012 in Sempach (including the AGM). The atlas Steering Group will meet one day earlier (14 March, afternoon).

The Board meeting after that will have to be held in Cluj in autumn 2012 in order to prepare the 2013 EBCC meeting.

**TOP 20:** Any other business

- European Conservation Conference ECCB in Scotland in 2012. (Follow-up conference to Prague meeting in 2009, and Eger in 2006). Good for EBCC to have their own workshop there? Need for five invited talks.
- Draft agenda of Board Meeting will have to be distributed at least two, better four weeks in advance of meetings (as laid out in the EBCC "Constitution").
- AGMs preparation. Feedback from N. Petkov as to whether it would be possible to send out materials to Delegates in advance, i.e. the Chairman's report or the financial report, so these could be commented on.
- Action points for the Delegates shall be identified and exchanged between the minutes and the Newsletter.

RF closes the meeting on Thursday at 6:00 p.m. and thanks Board members and observers very much for a great meeting with stimulating discussions and many valuable contributions.

Ruud Foppen  
Chairman

Hans-Günther Bauer  
Secretary