

45th Board meeting of EBCC in Barcelona (Spain), 19-20 March 2013

Present: Ruud Foppen (RF, Chairman), David Noble (DN, Vice Chairman/Treasurer), Hans-Günther Bauer (GB, Secretary), Anny Anselin (AA, BCN Editor), Henning Heldbjerg (HH), Lluís Brotons (LB, SMOG/ SCALES), Mikhail Kalyakin (MK), Oskars Keiřs (OK), Verena Keller (VK, Conference Officer), Åke Lindström (ÅL, Delegate Officer). Observers: Rob Pople (RP, BirdLife International), Mark Eaton (ME, RSPB), Petr Vořířek (PV, PECBMS), Zoltán Szabó (ZS, Cluj conference organiser), Szabolcs Nagy (SN, Wetlands International).

Apologies: Ian Burfield (IB, BirdLife International)

Tuesday 19 March 9:00-18:30, Wednesday 20 March 9:00-12:20

TOP 1: Chairman's welcome to the Barcelona meeting

The Chairman welcomes all Board members and observers to the 45th Board meeting in Barcelona, and thanks Sergi and his team very much for organising the venue.

TOP 2: Adoption of agenda, identifying AOB

The agenda is accepted as sent out.

TOP 3: Minutes of 44th Board Meeting, checking back on Action Points

Discussion about recent problems in Dropbox use (five members of Board encountered problems, especially with back-ups of documents); maybe members of Board all lost their respective Dropbox usage rights? [Generally, use of the web version alone is insufficient, Dropbox has to be installed on the computer as well, otherwise no synchronisation with individual activities possible]. Best if all use a second service to send out and store documents.

TOP 4: Recent data requests

Currently, there are seven requests, mostly by PhD students (5 of 7). Some requests weren't followed up after first contact and in three cases the data were not actually sent out due to lacking feedback.

EBCC's rules for data delivery need to be discussed again; currently requesters are asked for voluntary contributions for the data. For the new atlas a more flexible approach will be necessary, as national coordinators might be involved in some requests (and their mandate will be needed); furthermore, new atlas data make a more complex problem, because there will be more information available than will be published in book form (or EBCC would only be allowed to provide "aggregated data", whatever this means in case of EBBA2).

Worries about cases where the EBBA1 distribution maps have simply been scanned in to obtain "EBCC" data, but we can't complain if the original publication is cited. However, community-based data in general should be protected against any misuse.

TOP 5: Bird Census News

Suggestion to ask the city of Barcelona for sponsorship of "BCN", as they (and Barcelona airport) use an identical acronym.

AA is still looking for small items for the second issue of 2012, as the 36 pages are not completely filled yet. Three articles currently available, the events section completed, further book reviews lacking. For this and subsequent issues should ask participants of the Workshop to provide further papers. Cluj Conference advertisement should also be included. Also: Report on Barcelona Workshop and other important issues (German atlas, European Red List, First results of Dutch winter atlas). Deadline for submission will be 15 April.

Problems with website; it seems rather slow; also, MK had difficulties to download pdf of digital BCN version.

TOP 6: Report on SMOG/SCALES/EUBON

LB reports that in future SMOG members will concentrate on collaborations with other researchers in specific modelling projects, with major topic being the European atlas. As a whole range of groups and individuals are working with spatial modelling techniques, the SMOG team of EBCC should form an expert advisory group, a specialist group within EBCC, with clear objectives and aims. Should invite further collaborations and discussions via contacts with BTO, SOVON and other institutions (LB will get back to DN and RF on this; potential collaborators need to be identified). SMOG shall identify itself at the Cluj Workshop to facilitate discussions about atlas work on national and European levels.

The SCALES project essentially is over; but a meeting in Helsinki in April might provide a small chance to obtain more funding for continued work.

EUBON project kick-off meeting took place in Berlin recently (main coordinator is Berlin Univ.); it is a very complex five-year project with many participants (over 40) and many aspects treated. Includes eight work packages, of which LB is mainly involved in packages 3+4. 2013 will be year of preparations, proper work will start in 2014, the group shall deliver within three years. Probably no chance for direct financial assistance of EBCC atlas, but at least in-kind assistance possible through work packages 3 and 4. Need a post-doc project within this framework to form a connection with the Atlas.

LB put pdf on Dropbox with further information on EUBON and its individual work packages.

TOP 7: Preparation of AGM in Cluj and discussion about election of (new) Board members

An official AGM is necessary in conference years. It requires presentation of (a) the Chairman's Report over last three years (which will be sent around as draft, using last report as example), (b) the Financial Report of all three years, including the approval of the two auditors (Frank Saris, Koen Devos) and the signatures of all Board members on the Financial Reports, (c) the Election of new Board, and (d) the Election of new Delegates.

There was no response received for suggestions of new Board members following the respective invitation in the Newsletter; thus Board is now free to make own proposals.

In Cluj, two members of Board will step down (ÅL and GB). The following people are proposed to stand for Board elections – these should be elected *en bloc* by AGM: DN, AA, HH, RF, LB, OK, VK, and MK. There will be some changes with respect to the Officers positions, which shall be finalized after new Board has met in Cluj.

Board will suggest candidates for the two open positions in Board.

New Delegates will have to be appointed in time by asking the existing Delegates in the Newsletter and via email for eventual suggestions.

Both Auditors are going to step down and need to be replaced.

The EBCC award, at present a wooden plate with inscription, has so far been presented to Jeremy Greenwood, Ward Hagemeijer and Anny Anselin. Board decides that EBCC awards will be presented in Cluj to Arco van Strien and Richard Gregory.

TOP 8: EBBA2: Reporting back on ASC Meeting

VK and RF report to Board on discussions and outcomes of the Barcelona meeting of the Atlas Steering Committee. Important to note that the financial situation for the general atlas coordination is still critical and unresolved both for CSO and SH's group. VK received the mandate from ASC to prepare a proposal on how to proceed with currently available funds (including those promised and pending); Board is happy with this decision.

The current situation in Russia is somewhat more relaxed, as a German foundation has provided some extra funding for (part of) this year. But neither regional coordinators nor field work can so far be financed. Some authors of a Swedish book (incl. Å. Lindstrom) on bird populations have decided to donate private money (accruing from the book's royalties) for the Russian atlas project.

Many of the funding options identified so far still need to be followed up in due course, i.e. private donors should be addressed via the BirdLife partnership (see ASC minutes), some further foundations should be asked [e.g. Jensen Fndn.]; also, atlas species sponsoring, crowd-funding, could certainly be of major importance (anybody with experience in this is asked to step forward to Board and share...). Board members are asked to start initiatives and spread further ideas among the group.

TOP 9: Preparation of next EBCC Conference, Cluj 2013

A) Logistics, general organisation

ZS reports on the advances in the conference organisation. Abstracts submitted and currently in print, but as number of participants still unclear, registration fees could not be settled yet, and the budget calculation remains unfinished. Local ornithologists have not submitted any abstracts, but are keen to participate. The local organiser can decide if he wants to accept their participation (by having them pay a small fee or by involving them in voluntary work during the conference, or even by granting them free entrance). Four additional meetings will take place during the Cluj conference apart from EBCC Board and ASC, one of the *Ornitho* platform, a workshop for waterbird census coordinators, and one on spatial modelling by Marc Kéry and Jérôme Guélat. Guesses are that the number of participants will be around 250, and 200 or 250 participants would form a good basis for the budget calculations. Using a fee of € 240, 40 participants from low-income countries could be subsidised (would leave them paying € 75). There will not be a fixed low fee beforehand, rather these people will have to apply for the subsidy. Wetlands Int. will bring in at least another 20 sponsored participants using their own funds.

Cheap accommodation will be available for many participants.

Potential exhibitors and manufacturers should be approached now.

Date for the registration deadline: for the speakers this was set to 30 June, but Board now decides to set it generally to 15 June. Late registrations will be possible until 15 August, but entail an increased fee. Poster abstract submission will still be possible until 15 June (same date as early registration). But the Scientific Programme Committee still has to assess the submissions before they will be handed over for printing. Announcement will be on the website soon (www.EBCC2013.ro), together with information on accommodation and the three excursions.

Publication of abstracts: discussions with regional journal "North-western European Journal of Zoology" have been successful: the Editors would publish the abstracts in a celebratory proceedings issue in English. Decision of Board to try having the abstracts published there, but make this optional to authors (no obligation); editing work shall be organised by the journal, but Board will offer assistance (in reviewing etc.) if required – but the person responsible within Board still needs to be determined. If everything fails (Plan B) the CATALAN Journal would take over; BCN again open to take "surplus" papers.

Decision, that the expenditure of any surplus money from the Cluj conference will be open to the local organiser. But it would be great, if EBBA2 could benefit from any potential assets.

B) Programme planning

The time table provided looks very good; the afternoon programmes run only until 6:30. Many of the abstracts have already been grouped, but changes will still accrue. The Atlas Workshop shall take place at the beginning of the Conference, best as a late evening session on the first night (making further

changes in the first draft necessary). The length of the wintering waterbirds session still needs to be decided upon.

Official closing of conference should be made very attractive and should not just follow after a coffee break. Therefore, try to have a plenary at the end, as e.g. the one by Tony Fox.

Board takes a close look at the submissions and shifts so far undecided cases either to the poster or oral sections (by trying to avoid several talks from the same organisation or too many talks on the same subject), the remainder needs to be checked back with the authors, and a few are rejected altogether. Suggestion to separate the Romanian talks (which were grouped) accepted by Board. The finalised list will be provided a.s.a.p. before getting back to the authors.

Further Workshop proposals are discussed: – P. Musil [Breeding waterbird monitoring] accepted as an evening workshop.– H. Sierdsema et al. [Deriving population estimates from atlas data] accepted as an evening workshop (probably in parallel to Musil's).

WI's Waterbird session on Saturday will be separate but still included in the overall Cluj programme, as many will try to attend it anyway. The workshop will be open to visitors.

Next conference venue still unclear. Best to choose a site in Central Europe such as B, NL, D, A, PL, UA or DK. Have to get back to the national organisations to ask about options there.

TOP 10: Delegates list, improved Delegate involvement

ÅL reports that there are no changes to the Delegates list. Contacts taken up with Andorra, Armenia, etc. have not been successful so far, thus still 3 countries with 0 and 3 countries with only 1 Delegate. Possible changes in Armenia discussed, but would have to wait for them to suggest names. ÅL will get back to Karen after the Atlas Workshop in order to find suitable candidates. Michael Miltiadou from Cyprus is not working in his prior organisation any more, and might have to be replaced.

Moldova proposed Larisa Bogdea as a new Delegate. SN could help with a second Georgian contact. These and further suggestions should be sent to ÅL by email. ÅL will have an appeal in the Newsletter that all the Delegates visit the Cluj conference, check for new candidates and get into contact with ÅL/EBCC. In future, if Delegates are completely inactive, do not attend the AGMs and do not correspond to any of EBCC's questions or appeals for three years or more, they shall be asked to be replaced.

After the Barcelona and Cluj meetings many of the individual national problems might be resolved. OK will need to wrap the news up after the Cluj conference and provide an updated list.

TOP 11: Newsletter

ÅL mentions that the last issue of the Newsletter received positive feedback from readers. The subsequent Newsletter issue is scheduled for April. News items such as the new German Atlas and others should be sent in by all of Board. The Newsletter should also include an item on the Barcelona workshop.

TOP 12: Report on PECBMS

PV sent an update on PECBMS to Board members before the meeting. Budget difficulties still persist, nevertheless work still mostly done; but stabilisation possible, since funding for 1 ½ staff members has been secured until June, and some extra RSPB money became available. Also promise by European Commission to fund a further 3-year stint of PECBMS coordination (application necessary), final decision hopefully by June. PECBMS activities (among others): Species index and trend calculations currently run in NL; individual assistance to several countries given etc.

Participation of PECBMS in the preparation of national rural development plans will provide another few years of additional funds for national schemes.

TOP 13: News updates from observers BirdLife International:

RP reported on the “IBAs in Danger” initiative, which aims to highlight severely threatened sites needing urgent conservation action, and which will be launched at the BirdLife World Congress in Canada in June (see <http://birdlifecongress.org/>).

Recent progress on guidelines for defining Favourable Conservation Status for birds has been fairly limited, mainly owing to limited capacity to take this forward, but an application is planned for additional funding to test the concept with a few species.

Stuart Butchart became BirdLife's new Head of Science in January, replacing Alison Stattersfield (who will retire in June). IB is now the Head of Conservation Action and Science for the European and Central Asian Division.

IB attended a meeting of the EURAPMON Steering Committee in Brussels in January, and can provide further details on this, as necessary. DN noted that the involvement of BTO had now been granted, and that BTO Scotland will host an intern to analyse the results of a raptor monitoring questionnaire survey in spring 2013.

In March, Christina Ieronymidou started a six-month contract at BirdLife (in collaboration with EBCC and the Zoological Society of London), working on a project for Rewilding Europe to document the recovery of c.25 bird species that have made a comeback in Europe over recent decades.

The 2013 update of the global IUCN Red List has been delayed until November to coincide with the release of the first volume (non-passerines) of a new taxonomic checklist of birds published jointly by BirdLife and Lynx Edicions. It was noted that the EBBA2 species list would have to be adapted (slightly) to reflect the taxonomic changes (mainly in the ‘Remarks’ column, where differences from BirdLife's taxonomy are captured).

Currently, the only Europe-related discussion topics on BirdLife's Globally Threatened Bird forums (<http://www.birdlife.org/globally-threatened-bird-forums/>) relate to Yellow-breasted Bunting, Lammergeier, Houbara/Macqueen's Bustard and Fea's/Desertas Petrel.

On the subject of the European Red List of Birds project, RP noted that the deadline for Article 12 reporting under the EU Birds Directive (the main process for data collation within the EU) is December 2013, and the latest indications were that national progress was largely on-track, except in a small number of Member States. In order to complete the wider dataset needed for the pan-European Red List assessments, data providers from non-EU countries (in most, but not all, cases BirdLife Partners) are being asked to provide a subset of the Article 12 data, on similar timescales. Board members requested more information, guidance and updates in order to achieve this aim.

Wetlands International:

SN reports that the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership works actively now. Its Strategic Working Group meets twice a year, and Johan Mooij was elected as Chairman in May 2012. Funding has been secured for improving the core IWC, primarily data management and network development (part of this is to modify the *Observado* platform to make possible for observers to send their data in online). There are significant improvements in servicing data requests, providing feedback to national coordinators in the form of quarterly newsletters and an annual summary report of census results (now available as pivot tables).

To improve the reliability of flyway trend estimates, an extensive capacity building programme has started. Strengths and weaknesses of the national schemes are assessed to provide the basis for developing national strategies that can serve as the basis of future projects.

The AEWA Technical Committee has a Monitoring Working Group established, led by SN (including representatives from various subregions of Europe, West Asia and Africa). It focusses on identifying appropriate monitoring methods, on assisting with guidelines and filling gaps such as the monitoring of colonially breeding waterbirds and seabirds. The next AEWA status report will be due by the next AEWA MOP in May 2015 (preparatory work for this has to be finished by August 2014), trying to establish better population definitions, sizes and trends.

TOP 14: Online platforms

DN explains the BTO's cooperation with Cornell Univ. on *Ebird*, currently sharing expertise and datasets, and eventually aiming to create an *Avian Global Database* which allows real-time data exchange; at this moment funding is sought by the Cornell and BTO partnership. The database shall include all kinds of

data, including tracking, casual/opportunistic observations, monitoring data and standardised programmes etc., and should form a global data repository. Could be an opportunity to combine the existing wealth of databases, if it is shared among all European partners, eventually allowing continent-wide analyses; but will certainly take several years to complete. EBCC might take an important role in this development, by making sure about standardisation processes and defining minimal scientific standards in data quality or about collection/storage/handling and sharing agreements in all respective schemes; also maintaining that EBCCs own partners are informed properly about existing schemes and standards – e.g. by form of a publicized guidance.

It will be important to ask national coordinators about recent developments of different platforms in their respective countries.

BirdTrack has recently been revamped, taking elements of Ebird and other sources to achieve these improvements.

TOP 15: Vision of EBCC

RF has not had time to work on the draft document of EBCC's vision. There is still need to present it at the next AGM in September 2013. He decided to include this topic as part of the Chairman's report. A brainstorming process on how EBCC should profile itself in future seems appropriate for some time after Cluj.

TOP 16: Any other business

- For the next Newsletter, the EBBA2 project development needs to be summed up; same applies to the PECBMS project; also add other short news.
- Decision on the 2016 EBCC conference venue shall be on the agenda of the next Board meeting.
- Date and venue for next get together: Cluj on Monday, 16th September 2013.

RF closes the Board meeting on Wednesday at 12:20 and thanks Board members and observers very much for their patience, participation and for their contributions.

Ruud Foppen
Chairman

Hans-Günther Bauer
Secretary

