

46th Board meeting of EBCC in Cluj (Romania), 16 September 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/EUBON), Mikhail Kalyakin (MK), Oskars Keišs (OK), Verena Keller (VK, Conference Officer), Åke Lindström (ÅL, Delegate Officer). Observers: Ian Burfield (IB, BirdLife International), Mark Eaton (ME, RSPB), Jana Skorpilova (JS, PECBMS), Zoltán Szabó (ZS, Cluj conference organiser), Szabolcs Nagy (SN, Wetlands International).

Monday **16th September**, 9:15-12:30, and 14:00-16:10

1. **Chairman's welcome, short report** – Ruud Foppen
2. **Adoption of agenda, identifying AOB** –
3. **Minutes of 45th Board Meeting, checking back on Action Points** – Ruud Foppen
4. **Newsletter** – Åke Lindström
5. **EBCC Conference in Cluj: final discussion of programme, logistics publication details etc.** – Verena Keller/Zoltán Szábo
6. **AGM, election procedures** Åke Lindström, Ruud Foppen
Lunch break
7. **Discussion on EBCC conference venue 2016** – all
8. **Bird Census News** – Anny Anselin
9. **Delegates List, Delegate involvement** – Åke Lindström
10. **EBBA2 update, reporting back on ASC meeting** – Verena Keller
11. **News updates from Observers:**
A: **Report on PECBMS** – Petr Voříšek/ Jana Škorpilova
B: **BirdLife International** – Ian Burfield
C: **Wetlands International**– Szabolcs Nagy
12. **Date & venue for Board meeting (and AGM) in spring 2014** – all
13. **Any other business**

TOP 1: Chairman's welcome to the Barcelona meeting

The Chairman RF welcomes all Board members and observers to the 46th Board meeting in Cluj, and (subsequently) thanks Zoltán and his team very much for organising the venue. RF points to the report that he will present at the AGM and everybody received by email before the meeting.

TOP 2: Adoption of agenda, identifying AOB

The agenda is accepted as sent out.

TOP 3: Minutes of 45th Board Meeting, checking back on Action Points

Problems with Dropbox mostly settled. Many Action points have been dealt with, some to be discussed during the meeting.

TOP 4: Newsletter

With ÅL stepping down OK will take over the duties of Newsletter editor, starting today. Congratulations go to him, and thanks to ÅL for his great work and initiative.

TOP 5: EBCC Conference in Cluj, final discussion of programme, logistics, publication details etc.

ZS reports that everything concerning the conference is running smoothly; the number of participants currently stands at some 180, so ZS gathers that there would be some 200 people attending, including the organising team. ZS will need help of Board with regard to the Proceedings in asking people to submit the papers to the not very well-known Romanian journal. The list of attendees is almost finished and will be handed out during the conference.

Three staff members will be responsible for the technical issues.

Everybody's happy with the conference materials that are distributed to Board in the coffee break.

Conference dinner will be outside Cluj, not in the city. Transport is organised directly from the excursions, but some not joining any excursion will have to be transported from Cluj (this will be seen to).

ZS will have some housekeeping announcements at the beginning of the plenary sessions, otherwise there will be a notice board announcing programme changes etc.

VK reports that the programme was rather easy to accomplish, as there were not many cancellations after the abstracts had been submitted. Some talks had to be changed though, including some oral presentations that were originally intended as posters, and some wanted to change the schedule within their sessions. It was intended not to have abstracts for the plenary talks in the programme book.

Instruction for chairs (recruited mainly from Board): time frame is most important, 15 min plus 3 min discussion, at the end leave 1-2 min for room changes.

Papers for the Proceedings volume should be sent to the editorial team, with all of Board involved in the process. A core team will be making the decisions (if a paper is suited for the main volume or rather for BCN - unless authors make the decision for BCN themselves), and all others will help with the work, especially by reviewing. The core editorial team shall consist of ZS, DN, HH, ME, and AA (will ask new Board members to join as well), with ZS leading the group. Papers from posters will also be accepted, and these could also be put up on the BCN website, if the authors wish so (have to bear in mind that difficulties may arise with respect to citing these). Submission of papers terminated for 1 November 2013 on the website, which will have to be announced to all speakers and participants. ZS will contact the core editorial team as soon as there is relevant information available, to set a time frame (e.g. 1 February) for editing to be finished.

ZS reports that a lot of sponsorship has been acquired for the Cluj conference, often not involving direct payment, but rather by support, i.e. free service or reduced service fees. The budget balance will be positive, a complete balance will be provided by ZS after the conference.

Lack of attendance of national atlas coordinators is seemingly due to limited funding, and the problem of overlap (or proximity) with other conferences (e.g. BirdLife, EOU etc.); another reason may be that the conference was not announced very widely outside the usual interested groups (i.e. Newsletter, BCN, IWC, BirdLife e-letter, websites), for example, the attendants of previous conferences were not addressed directly. Will be interesting to see how many Delegates are present. In future, have to consider ways of helping the important national representatives to get to these meetings.

TOP 6: AGM, election procedures

Agenda was sent around, time for the AGM will be limited to one hour.

Election of national Delegates should be made in one go, as there are some 12 persons to be elected. Have to make sure we know the number of Delegates present, or if any proxies exist (which need to be in written form). AL shall ask AGM to approve the proposed voting system and then lead through it. New candidate proposals will not be accepted (have to wait for next AGM).

Board member elections can be done person by person, as only two stand for election, with a couple of observers (namely ME, IB) counting the votes. Re-election of eight remaining Board members shall be in one go, after having told AGM about their roles in new Board (limited to the four main positions).

Koen Devos and Chris van Turnhout will have to be elected as the Treasury Commission.

EBCC Awards (specially commissioned pictures of Tree Sparrows) and accompanying documents will be presented to Arco van Strien and Richard Gregory, with a short eulogy by DN for Richard and RF for Arco; RF thanks PV for having arranged production of the documents and pictures.

TOP 7: Discussion on EBCC Conference venue 2016

Venue for the 20th EBCC conference is still unclear, as there are two options. Germany's DDA was willing to organise the conference in the east of the country (in Saxony near Leipzig, by VSO), but the Netherlands' SOVON would also invite EBCC to Wageningen, if EBCC decided for it. In this case DDA would step down. J. Rabaça wrote to RF that he would organise one of the forthcoming conferences in Portugal, but preferably in 2019, as the 2010 conference in Cáceres was very close to Portugal. There were also negotiations to hold one of the next conferences in the Czech Republic. Decisions on how to proceed shall be made during the Cluj Conference.

TOP 8: Bird Census News

AA reports that she was unable to produce a new BCN issue due to work overload. She reports that there is enough material for the next issue, which she will hopefully assemble very soon. Consequently she announces that this might be her last issue as the sole editor, and discussion ensues about a new line-up. ME and HH offer to assist; they will join AA to form an editorial team, which others could join (DN will see into this); AA will stay editor-in-chief. Current problem is that layout costs are now too high to be covered by her organisation; MK offers that Olga (museum in Moscow) could provide the layout in future. RF thanks AA very much for her great work, and is thankful for the quick decision to form an editorial board.

TOP 9: Delegates list, Delegate involvement

ÅL sent the Delegate status report out before the meeting. Two new Delegates have been appointed for Andorra, and ten further changes need to be approved by the AGM. Two countries will remain without Delegates, namely Albania and Georgia, and three will have only one Delegate, otherwise ÅL hand over a "full house" to his successor OK. Since there will be a Georgian representative at the Cluj conference, he shall be asked to join the Delegates list.

There are only 46 European countries on the Delegate list, but 51 countries listed for the European atlas. We need to clarify this and cross-check the lists. RF thanks ÅL very much for his great work with regard to the Delegates list and involvement.

TOP 10: EBBA2 update, reporting back on ASC meeting

VK reports on yesterday's ASC meeting, the topics of which will be dealt with mostly in the EBCC workshop tomorrow. A lower grid level of 10x10 km is now envisaged for the atlas in addition to the 50x50 km grid in order to be able to make more specific modelling work. PV collects feedback from all atlas countries, of which most showed very good progress, but there are some problems, e.g. in Turkey or Albania. Funding attempts have not been very successful so far, just covering the minimum funding for core co-ordination. But there are hopes that this will change soon.

There have been contacts with Kazakhstan delegates, who would be interested in joining the atlas project covering their European area.

If possible, feedback and comments from people outside the ASC shall be invited on the atlas document. Within crowd funding, atlas auctions could be one of the aspects to be envisaged (for example, by inviting skilled bird painters to provide/donate some of their work to EBCC).

TOP 11: News updates from Observers

A Report on PECBMS

PV sent a report on PECBMS to Board before the meeting. No subject really 'burning' at the moment, since finances are settled for the time being (with new EC grant for 2013-2016 confirmed since last Board meeting), but PV invites questions from Board. Index calculation now finished, after some problems with late submission of data (e.g. by Germany).

This Friday, there will be a PECBMS Steering Committee meeting.

B BirdLife International:

IB reports on the "Wildlife comeback" study organised by *Rewilding Europe*, which includes some 20 bird species currently recovering throughout Europe. PV and JS helped with lots of the trends and graphs. The project and results will be launched in London at the Zoological Society on 26 September with high-level press and TV coverage involved ("big splash"); EBCC will be receiving a prominent position in this, next to BirdLife.

The European Red List of Birds (ERLoB) process is marching ahead - contracts with non-EU countries are mostly settled, especially with Russia, which is crucial. Turkey, Ukraine and others shall also be sorted out very soon.

'State of the World's Birds' booklet was produced for the World Congress and is now distributed among Board. There are three new European affiliates within BirdLife (in Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia).

Changes to BirdLife's Global IUCN Red List will be published in November 2013, with the status of only one European bird, Yellow-breasted Bunting, changed (moved to EN, owing to threats in Asia).

The taxonomic checklist update has also been postponed slightly, but shall be finalized early next year.

The EURAPMON update will be provided during the conference; current situation is settled again, with a new Chairman (Al Vrezec, Slovenia) and some other changes occurring. In the long run, the collaboration might end in 2015, if no new developments accrue. The Board felt that EURAPMON has missed some opportunities to improve raptor monitoring, and encouraged the ERLoB Consortium to convey to the EC and ESF that it is important to support groups directly involved in data acquisition and data flow, as this is what could produce and improve the material necessary for official reporting processes.

A replacement for IB within BirdLife has not been recruited yet, so it is still unclear which role IB can play in future EBCC Board meetings.

C Wetlands International:

SN explains that there are several IWC activities during and after the conference, including the Waterbird Coordinator Workshop on Saturday.

There are difficulties with attracting funding for the next year, so continuation of work is not secured yet. SN will leave his senior position within IWC, but he will stay attached as an associate expert, also including representative duties such as Observer in EBCC Board. There are no other major changes envisaged within the group.

A wetland management organisation will be formed from members of WWT, Tour du Valat, Euronatur, IWC etc.

The data management standard of IWC has been much improved, so in future better indicators will be produced.

TOP 12: Date and venue for Board meeting (and AGM) in spring 2014

Generally considered to be a good idea to go to an Eastern European country, and also include atlas fieldwork, if possible. Board shall follow this further during the conference. This would show that Board is very active in improving situations in countries having difficulties to get the atlas project running. Candidate countries would be Macedonia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iceland, Belarus, Ukraine and Albania. First, need to answer the question where Board can have most impact and would have an added value for the project.

TOP 13: Any other business

- Finances of EBCC are dwindling, second time in a row that resources have diminished. Expenditure mainly due to website and travel expenses. Have to think about new ways to increase income. One option is to ask for overhead costs in project proposals and data provisions in the future.
- Online recording schemes are discussed with respect to the cooperation and data sharing across borders; an agreement on the principles of how to run this are currently on-going; currently leadership and endorsement from EBCC sought. Once finished, agreement should be shown on the website for every fieldworker to get back to. Comments on the agreements shall be sent to DN within two weeks. Representatives from the online platform organising groups involved should probably report to Board from time to time.
- The *Worldbirds* platform will work only for two more years, after which it will be substituted by some other platform; *e-bird* currently in discussion. Also, negotiations with *Observado* are getting difficult, since no agreement could be reached with them. For the time being probably better not to promote these platforms, and instead invite a representative to Board meetings to investigate future co-operations. But an agreed and working online platform seems absolutely essential for the atlas process, as long as it is able to control and correct the data input. Good platforms will have to be able to support the Atlas next to PECBMS, waterbird counts, etc.

RF closes the Board meeting at 16:10 and thanks Board members and Observers very much for their participation and contributions.

Ruud Foppen
Chairman

Hans-Günther Bauer
Secretary

