

Minutes of the 49th Board Meeting of the European Bird Census Council, in Kiev, Ukraine

April 16-17, 2015

Attending: Ruud Foppen (RF, Chairman, Conference Officer), David Noble (DN, Vice Chairman/Secretary), Anny Anselin (AA, Treasurer/BCN Editor), Aleksi Lehikoinen (AL), , Henning Hjelldberg (HH), Mikhail Kalyakin (MK), Oskars Keišs (OK, Delegate Officer), Verena Keller (VK).

Observers: Mark Eaton (ME, RSPB), Ivan Ramirez (IR, BirdLife), Petr Voříšek (PV, PECBMS, EBBA2) and Sergi Herrando (SH, EBBA2),

Invitees: Kai Gedeon (KG, SVD, Local Organiser EBCC Conference 2016), Martin Kupka (MK, EBBA2)

Apologies: Danae Portolou (DP), Lluís Brotons (LB, Data Request Officer), Szabolcs Nagy (SN, Wetlands Int.)

The 49th Board Meeting of the EBCC was held jointly with a meeting of the EBBA2 Atlas Steering Committee. Items 1-12 are included in the minutes of the in EBBA2 ASC held earlier on the 16th April, at the same venue.

TOP 13. Minutes of last meeting.

Secretary DN reviewed the minutes of EBCC Board meeting in Evora. All actions had been carried out or were to be discussed in the relevant agenda items.

TOP 14. Annual General Meeting:

The Board agreed to postpone the AGM until the autumn Board meeting, as this would therefore be one year before the AGM to be held at the EBCC conference in Sept 2016.

AP1: EBCC delegates to be invited to AGMs and provided relevant papers, but would not be expected to attend AGMs outside conferences.

TOP 15. Report on Euro Bird Portal project and EBCC role (*Skype meeting with Gabriel Gargallo*)

- Recent two-day EBP meeting held in March in Brussels. Agreement now signed by all.
- Stephen Baillie had led discussion on perspectives paper (value of added value of opportunistic data) aimed to clarify EBP aims, i.e. on bird movements rather than maps which overlaps with EBBA remit. Paper to be produced before summer.

- GG faced problems with managing data submitted. Nicholas Titieux has developed methods of visualising data, not just empirical presence-absence data but the modelled data as well. Early stage in analyses and depends on audience for these.
- Website developed: very cool way of presenting data but possibly looks too finished. All very impressed with visualisations. Not all features in viewer are active, so need to make clear that work in progress.
- It is possible to change colour to match EBCC; everyone liked logo.
- They are launching (as suggested by Frank Vassen, who was there on 2nd day) on DG Environ Green week, this will be main launch of EBP. Green week is 3-5 June, 2015 in Brussels.
- Funding: discussed costs to conduct annually (maintenance costs) and Frank Vassen suggested going for LIFE preparatory project. FV saw opportunity to send in draft proposal in a few weeks. GG & others wrote 2-page proposal and sent in for this, went for up to 300k. The EU needs 40% co-funding. Pre-proposal sent in, and if this goes to next stage, will need to consider co-funding.
- Discussion of how time so far (NT/CC and web design people) is paid to date, from ICO and Sempach, this must add up to quite a lot. VK: Sempach has given money to ICO to take this forward.
- IR: Life Preparatory fund – maximum is €500,000, need to have 40% cofunding, not staff time and not 'in kind' and must be dedicated to the LIFE stuff. Pay 40 in advance and then 30 & 30. Cannot use other EU funding, staff cannot be double-funded.
- VK: EBP itself is unlikely to provide the co-funding, so best to link & integrate with other initiatives like EBBA2. Could we use NT, as his work on EBP is ending soon, and using that as co-funding.
- PV: similarity to situation with PECBM is that best with one organisation to handle the administration as well as providing the bulk of the co-funding – for example the RSPB support of CBM.
- VK: need to involve the EBBA2 and show the synergies between the projects, perhaps involving the EBCC spatial modelling group. FV interested in atlases as well as bird recording portals.
- DN: We also need funds for data infrastructure. For example, MAVIA only covers data collection in target countries but not analyses or data management.
- IR identified as help function for Life Preparatory bid. He notes that they will always ask for more for less. VK: key is to involve EBBA2 to make best of all.
- RF: a very positive development arising from an opportunistic drop-out from the Green Week. VK: we have been preparing him for years. Good contact with Jean-Yves Paquet.
- RF: Gabriel is the lead on this, but the bid is signed by EBCC and will involve Ruud Foppen and others.
- After launch, the website will be available with drip-feed maps etc. If there is a going to be a press release, we need time to prepare it and to get involved.
- VK: need to decide how to label maps as something that is provisional and in progress.
- This only uses species list material, not opportunistic data.

AP2. Ask GG for list of organisations, and people, that have signed the agreement, and whether this includes other partners such as RSPB in participating schemes.

TOP 16. Report on Pan European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PV)

PV has prepared a discussion document on how to take forward production and reporting of national versions of the FBIs. This has been discussed with Anne Teller and DG-Environment.

Workshop venue (Mikulov, Czech Republic) and dates have been fixed (Nov 2-6, 2015) and the PECBM network has been invited to suggest ideas for sessions. There is PECBM funding for PECBM coordinators and funding from the expected MAVA foundation grant will be used to bring key EBBA2 national coordinators to the workshop. Programme yet to be decided but intended that PECBMS and EBBA2 groups overlap for ca half a day. Ca 100 participants expected but some countries want to send more. This is helpful if includes researchers and policy people. 80 a comfortable maximum. Move to bigger and more expensive hotel not entirely positive last time. Plan is for agenda to be put together initially by the CSO team with input from Technical Group.

SH asked about inviting EBP group. Separate meeting room no issue but might be difficult for period when all groups together. RF suggested inviting someone from EU to show we are one community.

PECBMS has employed a researcher (Anna Gamero) working one week per month in Prague. Main tasks are: looking at impact of EU/European policies on bird trends, the impact of German and Czech AES and value of certification (latter request of German Gov't which could involve engagement with farmers). May look at species trends in more detail.

PECBM has funding until June 2016. PV met Anne Teller at end of March and PV has suggested actions, now circulated to TG & SG.

PV noted growth to five 'EBCC' people in Prague. Good but some stability needed given diverse sources of funding for these 2 projects. Would like an assistant to help with accounting. CSO has grown to 15, which is good but with new challenges to organisation.

PV had useful meeting with policy experts, involving Ariel. Plans meeting in June with national rural development plan experts, important to get the buy in from the EU. Until now, communication has been indirect, e.g. via difficult Eurostat contact. Need comments from TG & SG.

RF & PV attended EEA workshop about biodiversity indicators and natural capital accounting, follow-up from Eurostat conference in Brussels. EEA wanted to hear about birds, and PECBM talk from PV seemed new to most attendees. Not so interested in trends but in site-level information (in 1000s) and subsequently EBBA2 data. They have invited expert complex modellers of CO2 flux and biomass, but were interested in the bird data and invited PECBM to become part of this. Meeting valuable for potential funding opportunities, talking to key people and making them aware of us; unlikely to get a contract but useful link to ecosystem services. Too early to see benefits.

TOP 17. EBCC involvement in EUBON (SH)

Opportunity to contribute to two GEOBON initiatives. Synergy with work by Nicholas Titeux seems very good.

TOP 18. Involvement in EBCC involvement in other research consortiums

Trustee Project – from Frederic Jiguet, looking at ecosystem services so needs the local site data from national coordinators, this is a PECBM matter to be discussed by that group before back to EBCC. Overheads for data provision by PECBM could help EBCC.

RF: we were approached by a couple of groups doing Horizon 2020 bids but neither were followed up.

IR: Two of BirdLife's H2020 calls got through the first phase but not the second phase. Now focusing on one related to citizen science and with a focus on land use. Led by land use experts in Austria, also Spain, Denmark, NL. Will know outcome of first stage by May, may be opportunity to get involved if goes to second stage, if role for EBCC, may be linked to IBA monitoring. They need biodiversity data. They have mentioned / included the existence of the various bird recording apps in this first proposal (because there is now a biodiversity element and BLI interested in IBAs). Too early to contact the bird app people yet.

Update from VK on ParrotNet Cost project. Gave them the EBBA2 form which they have adapted, for going to see different national coordinators. ParrotNet also in contact with BTO about data.

IR – BLI won a contract with EU, with WCMC, to look at biodiversity indicators butterflies and birds.

DN asked about developments with Wetlands International indicators, using analogous approach to climate change indicators to quantify effects of different drivers.

OK suggested creating an emergency fund for countries in emergency situations (as in Latvia once)

TOP 19. EU Fundraising and Proposals (PV)

PV provided overview of his draft document. Rationale is that there are three main EBCC projects, potentially asking for funding support from same EU funding sources. EBCC needs to demonstrate how each is linked to EU policy needs, as we understand them, to be more proactive and to highlight synergies. Better as one package with separate elements. Needs an integrated fund-raising approach to avoid the problem of overlap in data requirements and delivery. These three elements deliver the core info for policy and hence the EU should pay for it. Research requirements are in addition to this and might need adaptation on a case by case basis.

IR noted that a prioritisation approach would be more beneficial rather than long lists, as some elements more important than others and difficult to understand. EU is not a single entity and has different departments with different remits, e.g. CMS.

RF noted that it is important for our own purposes to clarify in our own mind what these different initiatives can deliver. To have something to hand that immediately identifies how these data could be applied, especially for integrating these sets of data. IR: what we need is headings of policy.

AP3. All to add ideas to Petr Voricek's document, considering not only EU but all policy-relevant document.

TOP 20. Cluj Conferences Proceedings

No news as no answer from Zoltan or Eva on the progress on conference proceedings. Email from VK about some of the articles (eg Jeremy Greenwood's) being reviewed.

AP4: RF to contact Zoltan Szabo

TOP 21. Plans for EBCC Conference in Germany in 2016 (Kai Gedeon)

Agreed last time to change venue from Leipzig to Halle, mainly because conference hall free from university. Two lecture halls of 300 each, in same building, meeting rooms available in another large close building, space for exhibitors, posters as well as other exhibitors on 2nd floor, cafeteria for lunch about 500m (7 min away, range of hotels and hostels available

Budget: Main income – €100,000 from BFN (German authority for nature conservation) plus other, eg € 30k from DFG, €10k from sponsors. Need travel costs for plenary speakers and costs for low income countries. Expect 150 participants @ €75 and 150 @ €200.

Conference topics: 'Birds in a changing world'. Themes from data collection to policy implementation. KG presented flowchart of theme concept: changes in land use, climate, energy supply – other drivers -leads to changes in population sizes and distribution - leads to monitoring, leads to scientific analyses (correlations, predictions, leads to implementation in nature conservation and policies – maybe good to have more focus on this left side of this circle. Keen to include birds and renewable energy as well as usual themes.

In 2013, there were 72 talks, 8 plenaries, 11 themes, and 5 workshops. Plans for 2016 are similar. Expect workshops on EBBA2 and EuroBirdsPortal

Planned timetable:

- Conference name, logo & motto - 17 April
- Determining Scientific Programme Committee May 1st
- Send announcements, website, proposals for plenary speakers May 15
- Final list of plenaries, preliminary programme? July 1
- Start up conference website Sept 1

Comments from Board:

- Need to decide name and logo;
- Evening workshops should be in main hall, other meeting rooms small
- Everyone happy with budget, income and fees
- MAVA funding will help to fund people from target EBBA2 countries to attend: need to make decisions in tandem, possibility of additional funding from Waterbirds Partnership unlikely
- Student fees could be considered
- Help for low income support – should be better on a case by case basis. Rather than fixed. Some can sometimes get travel expenses

Kai Gedeon will be the Chair of the National Organising Committee. RF will continue as Chair of Scientific Programme Committee, with HH, AL, ME, OK and DN.

Discussion of main topics

- VK: main topic will be the atlas, other key topics are implementation of policy, fitness refit and how our data contributes to these questions
- PV: need to take broader view , better engagement with policy-makers
- IV: atlasing might not be sexy enough: Nature Directives and refit very important, need for proper data to evaluate
- HH: opportunity for developing initiatives in east/south to present results
- HH: value, or not, of casual bird recording
- ME: last chance before 2020 to assess progress
- Link other themes to the change theme (e.g. land use change, climate change)
- KG: implementation to nature conservation – international approach
- ME: avoid too much emphasis on groups where we might not get the full community present, e.g. renewable energy
- experience of Article 12 reporting

Ideas for plenaries:

- Ariel Brunner on links to policy
- Verena Keller on EBBA2 which will be getting near later stages – all agreed
- Franz Bairlein on migrant connectivity, birds in changing world (KG)
- Nigel Collar on the new taxonomies and implications, new technologies, how can EBCC network contribute to the discussion
- On renewable energy issue (e.g. Martin Flade)
- BirdLife person on Red List or speaker from another field: e.g. Anna Rodriguez
- Peter Marra (alternatively Loss or Cavert) – on human impacts on birds, quantifying losses
- Ian Newton on effects on birds of agriculture (six years ago)
- Bill Sutherland – entertaining, on use of evidence.com
- Speaker (eg Schneider) from major MAVA project (eg Adriatic Flyway project/western Balkans)

Board agreed on first five topics/speakers above and that hosting organisation is best placed to identify a key German topic and speaker.

AP5: RF / SPC to contact Ariel Brunner, Franz Bairlein, and Nigel Collar; and for all to consider good speaker for renewables. All to send any other good suggestions to KG within the next week.

AP6: Board to look at lists of coordinators of different groups (waterbirds, EBBA2, PECBM, etc) to see overlap; closer to period of conference registration

TOP 22. Report from the Delegate Officer (OK)

Previous decision was to approach Mary Kate. SABUKO Society for Nature Conservation is the new Georgian NGO that is now the BirdLife partner, the result of a merger with Butumi Raptor Count. May be best to ask Brecht (at BLI) who is best and follow up discussions with the new NGO. Situation in Georgia much improved.

AP7: RF and OK to put together a newsletter for May , working together on content, and send a direct email to all delegates at the timing of the first conference announcement.

TOP 23. Financial Report (AA)

EBCC currently has ca €4524 in account (actual). This is an increase of ca 2500 over last year after years of ca 2500 decline per year. This is due largely to income of €5000 for data. Other amounts have gone in and out (e.g. data charges to EBBA2).

TOP 24. Bird Census News update (AA)

Next BCN planned for beginning of May so urgent. Main articles will be on: EuroBirdPortal – Gabriel Gargallo, Mountain bird indicators by Aleksí et al, Kai Gedeon on the German Bird Atlas. Other ideas include the EBBA pilot data project (SH), promoting the EBBA2 facebook page, an update of PECBM indices and the Evora workshop. Plans for future BCNs in 2015: possibilities include something from France by Thierry from LPO, and the Kiev atlas training workshop

Discussion of wintering bird monitoring. HH: would be nice to have an overview of who has information (atlas and trends) in Europe. Idea for the workshop in Mikulov and special BCN issue on wintering bird monitoring. HGB: also moult period counts. RF: at least five countries with current winter bird monitoring, AL will write a summary of his. PV can provide someone with a questionnaire template, RF: Dutch colleague might like to put the other data in perspective. VK to ask colleagues interested in using new ways of analysing various data.

AP8: BCN editorial team (AA, ME, HH) will approach key people for BCN article on winter bird monitoring, probably for 2016 issue.

TOP 25. EBCC website

Discussion of EBCC website mainly covered during ASC meeting on previous day. Message from Aleksí's IT colleagues was that web domains 'eu' and 'info' were OK but newer; ebcc.org is too expensive, estimated to be €3000). Agreed to go with ebcc.info and ebba2.info for now unless objections raised. SH suggested ebcc-ebp and ebcc-ebba2

AP9– all to contact the IT people within their organisations to seek views WITHIN TWO WEEKS – and get back to PV with views

TOP 26. Update on EURAPMON

Final conference held in Murcia. DN reported that EURAPMON group is considering a COST action to take forward next stage. Happy for EBCC to have role, once ideas are further developed.

TOP 27. EBCC data requests

Data Officer LB absent, but spreadsheet of current requests subsequently received.

TOP 28. European Red List of Birds (ERLoB) project (IR)

BirdLife has got through work/staffing crisis (Rob Pople left project: workload taken over by Ivan, Christina Ieronymidou and Ian Burfield). EU still demanding more and more and discussions, so haven't been able to focus on non-EU part of work yet. All working 150%. Second output is the non-EU data, final work and processing just about done. Have draft agenda for the Green Week. Official presentation will be on 3rd June 2015 where Christina will be presenting the data. Before then,

hoping to arrange exclusive publications with major newspapers. State of Nature – the EU element - will be launched in early May.

Scientific paper using results led by Paul Donald & Fiona Sanderson of RSPB has been submitted with a request to fast-track but could be published any time

Preparing media package by the mid-May launch. By 22nd May, hope that BirdLife partners and consortium. VK: important that EBCC is mentioned on all these PRs.

EU reports will be released in mid-May (instead of April), most data is online, EU still checking. Global process has been postponed until autumn

AP10: IR to confirm key dates for global outputs (Nov or Dec)

TOP 29. Waterbird Monitoring Partnership (VK)

Working but not ideal. Funding of WP has been main issue over last six months. Message from WI members meeting was that last strategy didn't put enough emphasis on biodiversity: hence some WI funds will be put towards core waterbird monitoring operations. The bid for EU funding failed, and hence further African & Asian developments in monitoring will not happen. The general reporting has been done, the key is how to get member states more involved.

One interesting development is the report on the new waterbird indicator using aggregated January counts, led by SN, who is interested in synergies with breeding waterbird trends. PV noted that a pilot indicator of birds of wetlands is in the new PECBM grant bid. RF noted that in the report on the flyway, PECBM trends were used for some species, as better than waterbird trends. SN wants to discuss comparisons.

AP11: SN to contact PV and others to start discussions

TOP 30. Report from Wetlands International – covered above, rest carried forward to next meeting

TOP 31. Capacity –building initiatives in Europe – carried forward to next meeting

TOP 32. Time and Venue of Next Board Meeting

Timing of next Board meeting discussed. VK not available Oct/Nov and thinks it necessary to have only one EBBA2 ASC per year at this stage. Kai Gedeon not available in Sept for meeting in Halle. Suggestion of meeting at Mikulov workshop, including an AGM, with option to meet in Halle in spring. Or for delegation to go directly after Mikulov to Halle to see conference venue. Finally agreed on Mikulov and to keep spring 2016 meeting open for workshops in eastern Europe. Decided it was unnecessary to visit conference venue, given confidence in organisers, but essential that scientific committee takes its work forward.

TOP 33. AOB

RF suggests a new way of doing Board meetings, using a 'forum' for sharing information points and having shorter Board meetings focused on strategic topics and communications and fundraising rather than the usual agenda points. ME: most important is that we do our jobs between meetings.

RF: suggests that we put something on paper to look at, to see how to better communicate and prepare.

AP12: RF (?) to draft paper on communication between Board members

Ruud Foppen
Chairman

David Noble
Secretary