

**Draft minutes for EBCC Board meeting, November 2022**

**Venue:** Virtual

**Date /Time:** Wednesday 9 November 2022 1400–1600 CET and a short break then 1630–1800 CET

**Present:** Mark Eaton (Chair, ME), Verena Keller (Vice Chair, VK), Dawn Balmer (Secretary, DB), Danae Portolou (DP), Chris van Turnhout (Treasurer, CvT), Aleksi Lehtikainen (AL), Mikhail Kalyakin (MK), Petr Voříšek (PV), Alena Klvaňová (AK), Anna Staneva (AS), Sergi Herrando (SH), Gabriel Gargallo (GG), Ainars Aunins (AA), Jean-Yves Paquet (J-YP), Eva Šilarová (ES).

**Apologies:** Szabolcs Nagy (SN), Alena Klvaňová (AK).

VK welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

**1. Organisation of work within the Board**

Thank you to VK who agreed to Chair the meeting today. Please include ME in all correspondence going forward.

**2. EBCC office update and plans**

There are two separate agreements – a general agreement and an annual one with specified rules. PV said there may be some underspend at the moment. PV will be busy working on other projects for the next few weeks.

**AP:** New agreement for next year, define the tasks (more flexible). No need to share with the whole Board – ME, VK, PV, AK.

**3. PECBMS funding update**

ES says that AK met with Anne Teller and Frank Vassen and EC on 7 November. They are feeling more optimistic about long-term funding following discussions in Brussels. It's a big achievement to advance data delivery by national coordinators by a year. Currently working on indicator checks, all on schedule.

**4. Data handling fees for PECBMS Co-ordinators when requesting data – discuss whether fees could be waived**

VK says that feedback from some Co-ordinators is that they feel uncomfortable that they are asked to pay the fee when they access the data. VK proposes that the fee is waived if they are national coordinators. SH says that for EBBA2 data they discuss case by case whether fees are applied for people close to the EBCC network. VK agreed that we should be generous towards National Coordinators but how far should it go. AL says one option is that the National Co-ordinator gets free access once or twice a year.

**AP:** Proposal by the March meeting about how to handle requests from National Coordinators - SH, PV, GG

#### 5. Communications update

The Communication group met in early summer and agreed to have a proposal regarding communication with the priority target groups. AK is preparing this proposal. EBCC remains active with communication on social media and through newsletters.

Bird Census News is progressing well. There will be five articles in the 2022/1-2 issue:

1. Response of urban birds to Covid-19 lockdown: evidence from surveys reporting complete checklists in Catalonia.
2. The impact of Covid-19 on the UK Breeding Bird Survey and the production of population trends
3. Census of breeding seabirds in Vigur Island, Westfjords, Iceland in 2021
4. Contribution to the breeding bird fauna of the Mansi language area (Western Siberia, Russian Federation)
5. Interview with Jean-Yves Paquet

Three papers are already laid out and ready. Plan to publish by the end of the year. The main issue with BCN is to getting articles from outside the Board.

#### 6. Financial update

CvT presented the positive financial update and he will look at solutions for transferring funds with lower costs.

#### 7. Small Grants Fund

We have guidelines for the Small Grant Fund but we are currently lacking funds. Funding is needed for International Census Plots. There was a suggestion to use the portal 'Donorbox' to collect donations, though there are costs associated with that. It is difficult to find the right portal to use that works across Europe so there are fewer difficulties with transfer of currencies. Plan for an appeal for funds in the next newsletter. We need to use all possible communication to raise profile of fund raising, making a high profile launch. In communication we should use the ICP examples from Serbia and others to show exactly how the data will be used.

**AP:** Appreciate advice from fund raising experts from our organisations. Feedback ideas to , PV, VK and CVT. (All)

#### 8. EBBA2 update: book sales, online version, data requests

EBBA2 work still ongoing. Updated total is 8,216 copies sold. Alada had made a new reprint of 1000 books in June 2022 and appear to be still interested in the book. They have further plans for promotion over the next few months. Alada supports the idea of pdfs of species accounts (though not whole book) online through a paywall. Also a Christmas 2022 discount, coordinated by EBCC office.

A total of 40 data requests were done since May 2022. All of them were accepted except two for which, after studying the request, the committee considered that the 50-km occurrence data (open access) would be better than abundance or breeding evidence data. Invoices coordinated with EBCC treasurer.

Changes have been made to the online access for National Co-ordinators to give access to the data they provided. Linked to developments of EBBA Live.

Support was given to BirdLife International in the production of the Wildlife Comeback Europe (<https://rewildingeurope.com/wildlife-comeback-report-2022/>), published in September 2022 by ZSL, BirdLife International and EBCC and launched in Cambridge (attended by DEB).

Support has also been given to National Co-ordinators in the development of their own projects in relation to EBBA2 data (Germany, Spain). Input to the development of a paper about the comparison of ERLoB population estimates and EBBA2 derived population estimates, working with BirdLife International. Also support to publication of changes in bird distributions in the European part of Russia (in the context of EBCC congress and its proceedings).

#### 9. EuropaBON/EBBA Live update

EBBA2 Live Farmland work developing well with good collaboration with PECBMS and EBP. Feedback received from National Co-ordinators after the EBCC conference in Lucerne, PECBMS team, the researchers in the EUROPABON project and EU policy people. Of particular importance is the alignment of the proposal of EBBA Live Farmland project with the EBP Life preparatory proposal (submitted to the EU project portal in September 2022). The first phase of the EBBA Live Farmland project (2022-2023) will be based on monitoring data (essentially PECBMS data), while the second phase (2024-2026) will be developed using EBP data as well.

Positive response from National Co-ordinators willing to participate in the project and on-going conversations with just three areas.

VK attended a EuropaBON-EBBA2 Live Farmland meeting recently and found positive support for PECBMS. It was used as a good example of a European initiative and she saw an openness with regard to the specific situation of the EBCC network regarding data provision that she had not seen before.

We had a brief discussion about open data, prompted by the EuropaBON meeting on 8 November in Brussels. AK gave an excellent presentation on PECBMS but was questioned about open data, and there was also a parallel discussion in the chat on Zoom. AK passed on an email to share with the Board as she could not be present at the meeting to summarise the discussion at the EuropaBON meeting:

“The ornithologists’ data (raw data on a national level) are often not funded by public sources, so there is no obligation to make them open access. Richard Gregory supported me very well during the discussions backstage. Once we achieve sustainable funding for the national schemes, we can push the national coordinators to make the data openly available”.

IUCN have similar challenges around open data. SH says he is working to explain the difference between access and openness

#### 10. EBCC conference proceedings

Proceedings from the Lucerne conference are progressing well and went to the printers in early November. The proceedings (10 papers) are to be published by Ala, Swiss Society for the Study and Conservation of Birds, in the December 2022 issue of its journal *Ornithologischer Beobachter*. Thanks to Peter Knaus and colleagues. Proceedings will be a PDF but a small number of printed issues will be available. We will promote the proceedings through newsletter and will update conference website (<https://www.ebcc2022.ch/programme/news-conference-proceedings>). Thanks expressed to the Editors and to everyone who reviewed papers.

**AP:** VK to pass thanks back to Peter Knaus and team.

#### 11. IBIS themed issue citizen science – contribution from EBCC?

There is potential for additional papers to be contributed to this special addition on citizen science. PV suggested there could be an EBCC paper on citizen science but has no capacity to lead on the paper. Deadline is March 2023. Ideas briefly discussed were:

- a paper describing how the EBCC projects work, and the network of coordinators (AL)
  - a paper on EBP (started by Stephen Baillie) though GG says more work is needed and not possible in the timescale (J-YP).
  - a paper describing the differences in citizen science projects across Europe from west to east (MK).
- CVT asked if there was a PhD student who could write this paper as part of their PhD. ME suggested contacting Richard Gregory to see if he is interested. Members of the Board did not have capacity to take this on at the moment.

**AP:** ME to contact Richard Gregory.

#### 12. Research: update, Biodiversa etc.

AL confirmed that the consortium proposal lead by Diego Pavon (Norway, NINA) in the spring call of Biodiversa was funded. The proposal has a title: SCENARIOS FOR PROTECTING EUROPEAN AVIAN REDISTRIBUTIONS (SPEAR). It includes WPs:

- WP1. Identifying priority areas and gaps in the pan-European network of protected areas at land and sea to meet international targets for biodiversity conservation
- WP2. Managing protected areas for multiple benefits to facilitate avian responses to climate change and ensure sustainable harvest of waterbirds
- WP3. Increasing biodiversity and developing multifunctional benefits for agricultural wetlands

The final budgets are not accepted yet but hopefully include some small level of funding for EBCC available esp. WP1. Brotons, Sattler and Lehikoinen have been in the proposal from the EBCC side.

PV shared a summary of the proposal submitted by Dan Chamberlain to Biodiversa+ (confidential for now)

AL has also submitted another proposal using PECBMS and EURING data.

There has been some progress on EBBA2 papers:

- paper resubmitted to Nature Communication led by Steve Willis
- paper submitted to PNAS and currently revising the paper, led by AL group

A paper on distribution change in Russia will be published in the EBCC Conference Proceedings. MK has plans to produce another paper, choosing an ecological group (maybe reedbeds) and describing changes. MK described another paper, in Russian, describing changes in status and distribution of birds in European Russia.

SH provided a short update of the work on comparison of population estimates between EBBA2 and European Red List, a joint project with BirdLife International.

#### 13. EBP Life funding submission

GG said there is no news yet on the submission and expects to hear by the end of the year. GG commented that it is positive that Frank Vassen oversees PECBMS and Life projects so that he can see the big picture.

GG commented on the EFSA work and a new three year project for 600, 000 euros. He is working on the final contract. Sovon will be the main contractor and they plan to sign the contract by 5 December and start delivering outputs in January 2023.

14. **Date of next meeting. Do we want a short interim meeting online in January or February?**

Date for a short interim meeting in February will be selected through a Doodlepoll.

**AP:** Send Doodlepoll with suggested dates (DEB).

We discussed the March in-person meeting in Belgium and agreed the meeting dates are 20–23 March 2023

Meeting venue is here: <https://www.labaiedulievre.be>

Rough timetable:

Day 1, between 2PM to 5 PM: arrivals in Brussels - 5 to 7PM: transport to location (or we all take train to nearest train station?? J-YP to confirm). Dinner together.

Day 2: meeting

Day 3: morning visit of the reserve and the nearby other reserves in extensive meadows or woodland for woodpeckers i.e. / meeting the rest of the day

Day 4: AM departure to Brussels.

**AP:** JYP to share the location of the train station and details of the accommodation.

**AP:** Set up a document where travel plans and timings can be shared (Dropbox, Googledrive?)

**AOB**

**African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership**

J-YP provided an update on The African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership (AEWMP). The partnership holds a “stakeholder working group” meeting (AEWMP SWG) every year in early autumn and J-YP attends on behalf of EBCC board (VK used to be the EBCC representative within this AEWMP SWG). The last meeting was hosted by Wetlands International in their offices in Wageningen.

This meeting was an opportunity for the partners to share their latest waterbird monitoring activities, projects or reports but also raise difficulties in funding (like the particular difficulties to monitoring important waterbird sites in the Sahel).

Among the important ongoing project discussed were

- the Mediterranean Waterbirds Network <https://medwaterbirds.net/> (coordinated from Tour du Valat)
- the East-Atlantic Flyway assessment 2020 (next should be in 2023): <https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/resources/east-atlantic-flyway-assessment-2020>
- Project “Ressource” from the FAO, on the Sahel sites: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CA8998EN>
- The European Goose management platform: <https://egmp.aewa.info/>

J-YP said that during the meeting, discussions were mostly running around the resolutions of the latest “AEWA meeting of the parties MOP” that are relevant to waterbird monitoring. For example, a particular focus should be given to HPAI outbreaks and the monitoring of the affected species populations. Demographic parameters and drivers of change should be better monitored. Several action points were handed out to partners.

Concerning EBCC, the following questions were raised and should thus be considered by our Board:

- There is a need for coordination at the European level for “inland” waterbird breeding colony monitoring. Would EBCC not be the best partner to lead on that subject?
- EBCC is kindly encouraged to increase the number and range of waterbird species included in the PECBMS, so as to inform better on waterbird trends. As shown in a recent paper by Chris Van Turnhout (included in the latest East Atlantic Flyway assessment report), breeding vs wintering trends are not always congruent for the same species, so these differences need to be better understood.
- In the long-term, there is a need to extend an “EBCC-like” form of cooperation with African partners. Do we want to increase our cooperation with African partners, and if yes, how?

J-YP volunteered to be part of a working group that will support “developing waterbird monitoring” and supporting “Contracting Parties to undertake a brief assessment of existing monitoring activities in 2022 and the first half of 2023” (especially in the East Atlantic Flyway).

SH asks if we need an overview of monitoring schemes in Europe. CVT says there has been a recent questionnaire on colonial waterbirds. This has been discussed by PECBMS and initial discussions about what data are available and the structure of the data (could be different protocol to common bird monitoring data). AS talked about possible links with EuropaBON and whether that could be a mechanism for developing monitoring protocols.

VK suggests that further discussions are required with PECBMS to see if additional colonial waterbirds could be included. CVT raised the issues of capacity within PECBMS. Further funds would be needed to support additional work.

**AP:** PECBMS to take this idea forward (AK, JYP, CVT)

#### EOU conference

VK reminded us of the EOU call for symposia made earlier in the year and asked if there are topics related to EBCC that would make good talks. AL is likely to submit a talk. J-YP also considering going.

#### Raptor Monitoring proposal

ME has had some recent contact with Steffen Oppel (SO). EBCC has been asked to identify any species where there is insufficient monitoring and counting on migration could be useful. SO would like EBCC to support the claim that counting raptors is useful, which would help support future funding proposals. Counting stations are vulnerable to varying numbers of volunteers attending and funding sources. AS suggested to SO to make links to the relevant projects where data are needed for Article 12 reporting or for policy or science. SO asks if EBCC would be willing to coordinate this project. AS what is the benefit to EBCC if we were involved? Would the data be of benefit to our projects? Could EBCC have an advisory role? Counting raptors can deliver different information such as age structures but this area is largely unexplored. PV points out that winter monitoring is an area that could be important for EBCC in the future.

**AP:** ME to get back to SO following this discussion.

#### Trektellen

The action at the last meeting was to further discuss the EBCC position within Board (CVT, JYP, ME, VK) and then contact Trektellen. This has not happened yet. There is no request for funding from EBCC but more involvement in governance. GG keen to explore the explicit role of Trektellen so there is a clear distinction from other portals.

**AP:** To set up a meeting (VK, CVT, JYP, ME, GG) to discuss.

EBCC conference 2025

AA gave an update on the 2025 conference planned for Riga. Two dates proposed: 7-10 April (week before Easter, limited availability of halls perhaps) and 25-29 August (more sure large halls would be available). AA asks if there are dates for EOU yet (21-25 August 2023). We discussed the dates and timing of Easter holidays in other countries. AA to ask about availability of earlier week in April (31 March – 4 April).