

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the European Bird Census Council

Venue: House of Nature of the Academic Centre of the University of Latvia, Riga

Date /Time: Wednesday 2 April 2025 1430–1545 hrs

Delegates present: Agu Leivits, Ainārs Auniņš, Åke Lindström, Andrej Vizi, Anton Morkovin, Benoît Fontaine, Brian Caffrey, Carlos Godinho, Clara Pladevall, Danae Portolou, Daniel Palm Eskildsen, Danka Uzunova, David Noble, Dimitrije Radišić, Dražen Kotrošan, Fredrik Haas, Gianpiero Calvi, Gintaras Riauba, Henning Heldbjerg, Jakob Katzenberger, Jean-Yves Paquet, Jérémy Dupuy, Jozef Ridzon, Katharina Klein, Mark Eaton, Marko Šćiban, Mattia Brambilla, Nermina Sarajlić, Nick Galea, Nicolas Strebel, Nicos Kassinis, Norbert Teufelbauer, Oskars Keišs, Patric Lorgé, Petr Musil, Qenan Maxhuni, Samuel Wechsler, Savinavan Boheemen, Sergi Herrando, Silvia Ursul, Stoycho Stoychev, Sven Trautmann, Tatiana Kornienko, Taulant Bino, Tibor Szep, Tomasz Chodkiewicz, Tomaz Mihelič, Virginia Escandell González, Vitalie Ajder, Vlatka Dumbović Mazal, Zydjon Vorpsi.

1. Chair's welcome

VK welcomed everyone to the meeting. VK explained that EBCC are an association under Dutch Law so will follow the rules around proxy votes.

2. Apologies for absence

Four proxy votes were received in advance of the AGM.

Clara Pladevall (Andorra) to Sergi Herrando

Patric Lorgé (Luxembourg) to Katharina Klein

Silvia Ursul (Republic of Moldova) to Vitalie Ajder

Albert de Jong (The Netherlands) to Sharina van Boheemen

3. Minutes of last AGM

Available on the website: <https://www.ebcc.info/about-us/agm/>

The Minutes of the last AGM were accepted.

Chair's report

The full written report was circulated on 31 March and will be published on the website. EBCC will continue with the format of the Chair report covering three years but there will also be short online AGMs in between AGMs at conferences. As well as Board members, Observers participate at Board meetings and they are valued members of the discussions we have. We have a new Observer from EURING, Rob Robinson. We now have just one in-person Board meeting per year – Virelles, Belgium in 2023, Northumberland, UK in 2024 and Riga, Latvia in 2025. In between we have online Board meetings which have proved successful.

Bird Census News Volume 36 was published at the end of 2023 and Volume 37 is in preparation and will be published soon and will include some updated papers from the Evora

conference.

Communication is an important part of EBBC work. The newsletter is an important mechanism for communication and we have a 60% opening rate (which is good!). The website and Facebook remain popular and we plan to move from X to Bluesky.

We set up a Small Grant Fund in 2023 to support projects, mostly in areas where it is difficult to access funding for bird monitoring. We have supported the following projects:

2023 – Bulgaria (monitoring and atlas) and Cyprus (monitoring).

2024 – Serbia – National Breeding Atlas of Serbia – a survey of rare forest birds and first census of Collared Sand Martin.

The projects we support are dependent on the funds we have, which are mostly donations and also through royalties and funds from data requests.

VK referred to a quote by Jeremy Greenwood in the chair report 1992–95 which explained that it would be easier if there was an EBCC Office. In the 2010 minutes, the Chair, Ruud Foppen also referred to the need for a full-time staff member. EBCC are delighted that an office was established in 2022, in Prague, and there is a part-time post for Petr Voříšek. The role covers management, coordination, communication. Alena Klvaňová and Marina Kipson also support EBCC work.

IT issues are a continuing need in EBCC as we need to maintain databases and web portals and we have recently created an EBCC Office IT Team and have signed a Framework Agreement with the Catalan Ornithological Institute (ICO) in 2025. This will cover the maintenance of databases of the EBCC projects and the development of IT tools. Funding is currently through existing projects but we'll need to think about future funding models.

Work on PECBMS continues to operate very well. Production of indices, urban bird index, alpine bird index and Turtle Dove flyway-specific indices have been undertaken. EBCC are exploring the possibilities of collating waterbird data in the future.

The EBBA2 book sold 8465 copies and there is a current discount for participants of the conference. The website also hosts EBBA Live Farmland maps. Data requests continue to come in and are serviced. In the period 2022 to March 2025, 121 requests were made for open-access occurrence data, 12 for breeding evidence, 29 for abundance, 15 for change, and 19 for modelled probability of occurrence.

We have a relationship with NatureGuides and have provided EBBA2 maps for use on the Svensson/Collins Bird Guide app. 33% of the fee goes to EBCC and so far has had 1440 downloads and yielded 1200 euros as royalties.

The Life EuroBirdPortal Reinforcement project has had a focus on SE Europe (two workshops held – Brno (Czechia) in 2023 and in Podgorica (Montenegro) in 2024). There is also excellent collaboration with EFSA bird flu project.

Returning to the vision, EBCC has been involved in the EuropaBON Proposal for an EU Biodiversity Observation Coordination Centre (EBOCC). We joined forces with Butterfly Conservation Europe to bring in our expertise of collaborating in a network of partners across Europe, recognising the important contribution of volunteers.

VK announced this would be her last AGM as she was stepping down from the Board and thanked the Board for excellent meetings and good company. VK also thanked the network and commented on the importance of collaboration, especially across borders. She said times are more difficult now but we have to look after the network even if everyone is not present physically. VK thanked all the delegates and EBCC community.

4. Financial Report for the year 2024

JS introduced herself as the Treasurer of EBCC and explained that she manages the finances and the annual report and the EBCC archive. EBCC is a society under Dutch Law and she manages the communication with organisations in The Netherlands. The Financial report will be attached to the minutes.

EBCC has a sound financial basis and has profited well from the EBCC royalties and research cooperation/data handling fees. There was capital of 100,871.00 euros in the bank account at the end of December 2024. There is a negative balance but given the good financial situation EBCC Board agreed we should spend some money in areas that it will make a difference such as the Small Grants Fund.

The Financial report is audited by the treasury commission (Ruud Foppen and Koen Devos). Ruud Foppen and Koen Devos suggested the financial report is approved. JS proposed the budget for 2025 and 2026 based on expectations.

A question was asked about presenting a short update on the finances of the main projects such as EBP, EBBA2 and PECBMS. JS and VK explained that EBCC Board does not oversee these budgets directly, as they are managed by organisations like CSO or ICO on behalf of EBCC.

The Financial Report was voted on (Vote For: 51, Against: 0, Abstain: 0)

5. Election of Board members and audit committee

The following Board members wish to resign:

Verena Keller, Chair (Switzerland)
Ainars Aunins (Latvia)
Mark Eaton (United Kingdom)

The following Board members wish to be re-elected, partly with new roles:

Sergi Herrando, Spain (Chair, new)

We voted on these changes (Vote for: 51, Against: 0, Abstain: 0)

Jean-Yves Paquet, Belgium (Vice-chair, new)

We voted on this change (Vote for: 49, Against: 0, Abstain: 0)

We proposed the following Board members will be re-appointed:

Dawn Balmer, United Kingdom (Secretary)
Julia Stahl, Netherlands (Treasurer)

Mikhail Kalyakin, Russia
Aleksi Lehikoinen, Finland
Danae Portolou, Greece

We voted on this in one go (Vote for: 50, Against: 0, Abstain: 0)

We then voted for re-appointment of the Audit committee:
Ruud Foppen
Koen Devos

The auditors were re-appointed (Vote for: 51, Against: 0, Abstain: 0).

There are three nominations for the three vacancies:
Mattia Brambilla, Italy
Dimitrije Radisic, Serbia
Nicolas Strebel, Switzerland

Vote for: 50
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Congratulations to our three new Board Members.

6. Changes in National Delegates

47 countries and 91 delegates

Belgium

Wouter Courtens (Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forest - INBO) replaces **Koen Devos** (Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forest - INBO)

Denmark

Daniel Palm Eskildsen (Dansk Ornitologisk Forening - BirdLife DK) replaces **Thomas Vikstrøm** (Dansk Ornitologisk Forening - BirdLife DK)

Germany

Jakob Katzenberger (DDA) replaces **Johannes Kamp** (DDA)

Iceland

Aldís Erna Pálsdóttir (Icelandic Institute of Nature Research) replaces **Gunnar Thor Hallgrímsson** (University of Iceland)

Ireland

Helen Boland (BirdWatch Ireland) replaces **Lesley J Lewis** (BirdWatch Ireland)

Lithuania

Gintaras Riauba (Lithuanian Ornithological Society) replaces **Petras Kurlavičius** (Lithuanian Ornithological Society)

Poland

Tomasz Chodkiewicz (Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP) replaces **Przemysław Chylarecki** (Museum & Institute of Zoology Polish Academy of Sciences and Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP)

7. Next Bird Numbers Conference

We discussed the next Bird Numbers Conference in three years time. A conference was held in Prague in 1989 and Petr Voříšek spoke about a possible conference in Czech Republic and was 'realistically optimistic'.

8. Any other business

SH invited ME, VK and AA to join us for vote of thanks and presentation of gifts from the Board for their contribution to EBCC Board.

We presented VK with a painting of a Ring Ouzel and gave her flowers from friends that cannot be with us, ME with a painting of Purple Sandpiper and AA with one of Black Storks.

The meeting ended with a big applause to their long and devoted commitment to the EBCC.

Dawn Balmer
Secretary

Date: 12 June 2025