



Report from the Chair April 2022 to April 2025

EBCC reports to the delegates have traditionally covered the three years between EBCC conferences. This report follows that tradition, providing a more detailed overview of EBCC activities than the short reports presented at the Annual General Meetings (AGM) held by video conference since 2020.

In addition to the activities mentioned below, the Board has been dealing with more general issues. In the last year EBCC has been more and more recognised as an important player in Europe as experts in biodiversity monitoring and conservation. EBCC has been involved in the EuropaBON Proposal for an EU Biodiversity Observation Coordination Centre (EBOCC) <https://preprints.arphahub.com/article/128042/>. 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.

Globalisation is affecting not only the economy but also the capacity to share information that shapes most of our work. We had several discussions with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to identify areas of mutual interest and potential conflicts arising from the spread of EBCC and eBird portals and products, and have improved our collaboration.

Strengthening bird monitoring in eastern Europe remains a priority of EBCC, but the war in Ukraine and the increasingly difficult situation for civil society in many countries, have made it difficult for EBCC partners to develop ongoing and new initiatives. It is encouraging, however, that partners across eastern Europe continue their efforts. The Board is committed to keep up the good relationships and provide support where possible.

The increased involvement of EBCC in many discussions and initiatives has increased the workload of the Board, and the decision to establish a professional Office three years ago, came at the right time. Having an Office also means new responsibilities, including financial ones. We therefore had to find ways to formalise some aspects regarding the role of the Board, and have defined these in bylaws to the statutes of the Association.

Membership of the Board

Mark Eaton stepped down as Chair at the AGM in spring 2023 due to work pressures, but remained in the Board. The delegates elected Verena Keller as Chair and Sergi Herrando as Vice-Chair. Our treasurer, Chris van Turnhout, resigned from the Board in December 2023. Following the statutory rules, the Board appointed Julia Stahl (Sovon, The Netherlands) as a new Board member, and the delegates elected her as Treasurer in spring 2024. Following the changes in these positions in the Management Committee, several Board members changed their responsibilities within the Board.

Board members 2022–2025 (in brackets: year of election to the Board)

Mark Eaton, Chair until 2023, Bird Census News Editor from 2024 (2018)

Verena Keller, Chair from 2023, Vice-Chair 2019–2023 (2010)

Sergi Herrando, Vice-Chair from 2023 (2022)

Dawn Balmer, Secretary (2019)

Chris van Turnhout, Treasurer until 2023 (2019)

Julia Stahl, Treasurer 2024 (2024)

Mikhail Kalyakin (2010)

Aleksi Lehtikainen, Bird Census News Editor until 2023 (2013)

Danae Portolou, Delegate Officer from 2022 (2013)

Ainārs Auniņš, Conference Organiser (2019)

Jean-Yves Paquet (2019)

The Board has also called upon the expertise of the following observers:

Petr Voříšek (EBCC Office)

Anna Staneva (observer for BirdLife International)

Szabolcs Nagy and Tom Langendoen (observers for Wetlands International)

Rob Robinson (observer for Euring, since 2024)

Gabriel Gargallo (coordinator EuroBirdPortal)

Alena Klvaňová (Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme manager, EBCC Office)

Oskars Keiņš (Local Organising Team Riga Conference)

Board Meetings

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, and to reduce the climate impact of travelling, the Board decided to hold only one physical meeting per year. The meetings took place in Wallonia (Belgium) in March 2023, in Northumberland (UK) in March 2024 and in Riga (Latvia), in March 2025. Full board meetings were held online in November each year, and three short meetings were held online in between.

National Delegates

In 2022, 90 delegates represented 47 countries. By 10 October 2024, the number of delegates increased to 91, thanks to the appointment of a second delegate in Serbia. Danae Portolou actively engaged with delegates, informing them about their roles. This led to changes in the representation in several countries. Overall, up to October 2024, 11 new delegates were appointed and 10 delegates stepped down (France, Germany, Iceland, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland and Ukraine). Delegates were informed on activities via newsletters, to which several delegates contributed with information on projects in their countries. The online AGMs of 2023 and 2024, attended by 47 and 55 participants respectively, also provided a platform for the Board and delegates to share information.

Conferences

The 22nd Bird Numbers Conference in Lucerne in 2022 was attended by around 250 participants from 47 countries. Due to the war in Ukraine, which started only a few weeks earlier, we missed the participants from several countries. The proceedings were published in the journal “Ornithologischer Beobachter” in December of the same year, thanks to the great effort of Peter Knaus and the editorial team. Ten articles were published, which can be downloaded from the website of Ala, the Swiss Society for the Study and Conservation of Birds: <https://www.ala-schweiz.ch/index.php/ornithologischer-beobachter/alle-ausgaben?Heftid=892>.

Finances

The financial position of the EBCC at the moment is assessed as secure. The capital at the end of 2024 was € 100,871.99. The new responsibility for managing the costs of the EBCC Office makes it necessary to manage EBCC finances carefully, so, for the first time, a three-year financial plan was prepared in 2024, which will be updated on a yearly basis. In the period since 2022, the total income of the EBCC has increased thanks to data handling fees, donations, and royalties received from EBBA2 book sales. Donations were mostly used for project funding linked to the Small Grant Fund, from which three projects with a total amount of € 30,000 were funded. The finances of the main EBCC projects are usually handled by EBCC partners in charge of coordination. Until now this has also been the case for the costs of the EBCC Office.

A full financial report will be presented by the Treasurer at the General Meeting of the Association and incorporated into the minutes of the meeting.

EBCC Office

The EBCC Office was established in 2022, with the aim to support the Board in its growing tasks. The Office is hosted by the Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO), under a framework agreement with EBCC. The Office is managed by Petr Voříšek on a part-time basis. The communication tasks, under the responsibility of Alena Klvaňová, were integrated in the Office as well. From 2022 to 2024 specific tasks of the Office included the management of the Small Grant Fund, handling of EBBA2 data requests, managing the database of key contacts, and the organisation of the AGM online meetings in 2023 and 2024. The Office also has a networking role and provides support in strategic discussions related to research and development of EBCC in general and the EBCC core projects. Petr Voříšek led the establishment of International Census Plots in the Western Balkans, which were then integrated into the LIFE EBP Reinforcement programme.

Fundraising to cover the costs of the Office included targeted approaches to several EBCC partner organisations. The costs over the first years (2022–2025) were covered mainly by a grant from the Swiss Ornithological Institute (SOI) directly to CSO. The Board greatly acknowledges this very relevant support of SOI to the EBCC Office and encourages other partner organisations to support the EBCC in a similar way.

In recent years, the three EBCC projects required the development of strong IT capacities (e.g. database management, web development), which have mostly been undertaken by the Catalan Ornithological Institute (ICO). Increasingly, the maintenance of the IT infrastructure has become a core task of the EBCC. The Board therefore decided to set up an “EBCC Office IT Team” as part of the Office but situated at ICO and signed a framework agreement with ICO in spring 2025.

The work of the Office is overseen by the Chair and Vice-chair. Monthly online meetings with the Office team have been useful, not least to set priorities when tasks arise often at short notice.

Communication

The communication working group, led by Alena Klvaňová, developed a Communication Strategy, identifying the target groups and analysing the different communication channels. The main communication channels are the online newsletter, e-mail and social media. The newsletter is published quarterly, with information from the EBCC Board and projects as well as from the delegates and project partners. In addition to the four regular newsletters per year, a special issue about the EU nature restoration law was published in 2023. The number of newsletter subscribers has more than doubled, increasing by 136% from 314 in

2017 (first year) to 739 in March 2025. It reaches an opening rate of over 50%. Newsletter articles are usually linked to news items on the website.

EBCC is now active on one social media platform (Facebook). News were posted once every two to three weeks on Facebook and X. In early 2025, we stopped publishing posts via X, established an EBCC profile on Bluesky and plan to be active also on this new platform.

Bird Census News

Bird Census News, the journal of the EBCC, publishes articles related to our projects. Volume 35/1–2, published in December 2022, contained four articles, two of which focused on the impacts of the Covid-19 lockdowns on birds and on monitoring projects.

In December 2023, Volume 36 was published, also as a double issue, focusing on what kind of taxa in addition to birds are integrated in bird monitoring programmes in Europe. It contained an overview, based on a questionnaire to the national scheme coordinators, and six national case studies.

In 2024, Mark Eaton took over as Editor from Aleksi Lehikoinen. Volume 37 is in preparation although progress has been slow. It will largely comprise of papers from the 2019 EBCC conference following the failure of conference proceedings. The Editors were supported by Dawn Balmer, Henning Heldbjerg and Jean-Yves Paquet. Special thanks go to Olga Voltzit for the lay-out work and to Evgeniy Koblik for the free use of the bird drawings on the cover.

Bird Census News can be downloaded from the EBCC website:

<https://www.ebcc.info/what-we-do/bird-census-news/>

Small Grant Fund

Bird monitoring activities in Europe are clearly biased geographically, and gaps in monitoring data still exist. The EBCC Board has identified the development of monitoring schemes in these countries and regions as a key activity for the coming years. However, such activities are likely to fail without the possibility of providing small amounts of funding. Therefore, the EBCC set up the EBCC Small Grant Fund (SGF) in 2023

<https://www.ebcc.info/sgf/>. The income for the SGF comes from research collaboration and data requests as well as from donations.

Based on the first call for applications in summer 2023 and their review by Board members, we supported two projects from EBCC partner organisations: “Breeding bird monitoring ‘across the divide’ in Cyprus, to cover the ‘northern’ part of the island and complete island-wide coverage, and “Support for Common Bird Monitoring (CBM) and Breeding Bird Atlas in Bulgaria”. Both projects are well under way and will be completed in 2025.

A second call was launched in summer 2024. The Board decided to support the Project “National Breeding Bird Atlas of Serbia – a survey of rare forest birds and first Census of Collared Sand Martin colonies”.

Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS)

The PECBMS team, together with the steering committee, ICO and other partners invested in various technical improvements to facilitate data upload and checking. Procedures for calculating species as well as supranational indices were improved, and online tools were adapted based on feedback from national coordinators. As a consequence, annual outputs are now published just one year after data collection. With the addition of data from Andorra in 2022, the number of countries contributing to the European indices has risen to 30, including 26 EU member states. Among EU countries, Malta was the only exception until 2023, when a regular bird monitoring scheme was initiated. Including Maltese data in the EU and European outputs is planned for the 2026 update.

The new online tool for site-level data collection and quality control launched in 2022 proved to be successful. It allows automatic data checks, data visualisation in maps, better communication with national coordinators and data exports.

The funding of the PECBMS comes from different sources. The main activities (indices and indicators production) have mainly been secured through tenders from the EC on a 3-year basis. The Service Contract No 07.0202/2019/821208/SER/ENV.D.2 Technical and scientific support in relation to the delivery and development of wild bird indicators for the EU (2019–2022) ended after an extension in 2023. It took a lot of time and effort to sign a new Service contract ENV/2023/OP/0022 for providing technical and scientific support in relation to the delivery and development of wild bird indicators for the EU (2023–2026). This contract covers the production of indices, including a new Urban Bird Index and the production of flyway-specific indices of five long-distance migrant species. Activities to further develop the program, particularly to keep the programs up to date and the network of national partners active, are not included. These necessary activities are funded by data handling fees, tenders (e.g., a desk study for SOVON to explore the PECBMS dataset for delivery of time series of the abundance of waterbird populations, calculating flyway indices for Turtle Dove), or projects (Supporting the recovery of bird species of Annex II of the Birds Directive in non-secure conservation status, EBP Life project).

Detailed project reports can be found on the PECBMS website <https://pecbms.info/about-us/project-reports/>. The coordination team collaborated on ten major publications based on PECBMS data (see Appendix).

European Breeding Bird Atlas (EBBA2)

With the launch of the EBBA2 website <https://ebba2.info/> early in 2022, the EBBA2 project came to an end. The number of Atlas books sold reached 8,465 by the end of 2024. The amount of royalties received since publication (€ 55,446) has exceeded the amount that the EBBA2 project had paid to Lynx with the aim to lower the sales price. The book is widely cited, with over 500 citations by March 2025. Eight major papers based on EBBA2 data were published (see Appendix).

The number of data requests, which can be made via the website, has increased every year. 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.

In 2024 EBCC signed a contract with the company Natureguides to add EBBA2 maps to the Collins Bird Guide App. The maps can be downloaded as in-App purchases, for which EBCC receives royalties (€ 1284 by end of 2024). From the launch in December 2024 to 12 March 2025, the EBBA2 maps have been downloaded 1,446 times, mainly in Germany and the UK.

At the atlas workshop during the EBCC conference in Lucerne, the idea of a new project called “EBBA Live” to update species distributions on a more frequent manner was well received by the EBCC community. This ambitious project has started with a pilot project on farmland birds, which is called “EBBA Live Farmland”, producing modelled maps on the basis of PECBMS data. The outcomes were visualised on the EBBA2 website <https://ebba2.info/live/farmland/> in 2024. Currently, a first scientific manuscript is under production, and EBCC national partners are actively participating on its revision and improvement.

EuroBirdPortal (EBP)

EBP continues to develop nicely, with increasing numbers of portals and data.

https://app.bto.org/mmt/avian_influenza_map/avian_influenza_map.jsp.

<https://life.eurobirdportal.org/overview>. The main objectives of the project focus on improving the geographical coverage, particularly in SE and E Europe, and the overall quality and quantity of the data collected in Europe, adding all the species recorded in Europe to the EBP data flow, and producing two demonstrative outputs that showcase how the improved capabilities of the EBP project could be applied to help implement key EU Biodiversity Strategy goals. Importantly, one of these outputs includes further developing the “EBBA Live Farmland” by combining EBP data and PECBMS site-level data. The project is run by a large partnership of organisations, including all countries from the Balkans. Two workshops were held in Brno (Czechia) in 2023 and in Podgorica (Montenegro) in 2024.

Also within the LIFE project, since mid-2024, the underlying EBP technical infrastructure has been undergoing major improvements to support the addition of all species occurring in Europe, ending with the launch of a new version of the EBP viewer in spring 2026.

Verena Keller, Chair, with contributions from Board members and Observers.

Thanks

Last but not least, my thanks go to the delegates and the national coordinators of our projects. The spirit of dedicated collaboration, which I experienced during the work for the European atlas, proved that not only birds cross political borders but the EBCC community can collaborate in a good way. I am confident that the EBCC will continue its work despite the difficulties individuals and organisations across Europe are currently facing.

Appendix:

EBCC Publications 2022–March 2025

PECBMS

2024

Carboneras, C., Šilarová, E., Škorpilová, J. & Arroyo, B. (2024). Rapid population response to a hunting ban in a previously overharvested, threatened landbird. *Conservation Letters* 17: 4. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.13057>

Grünwald, J., Auniņš, A., Brambilla, M., Escandell, V., Eskildsen, D.P., Chodkiewicz, T., Fontaine, B., Jiguet, F., Kålås, J.-A., Kamp, J., Klvaňová, A., Kuczyński, L., Lehikoinen, A., Lindström, Å., Nellis, R., Jostein Øien, I., Šilarová, E., Strebel, N., Vikstrøm, T., Voříšek, P., Reif, J. (2024). Ecological traits predict population trends of urban birds in Europe. *Ecological Indicators* 160, 111926. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2024.111926>

Reif, J., Gamero, A., Hološková, A., Aunins, A., Chodkiewicz, T., Hristov, I., Kurlavičius, P., Leivits, M., Szép, T., Voříšek, P. (2024). Accelerated farmland bird population declines in European countries after their recent EU accession. *Science of The Total Environment* 946, 174281. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.174281>

Šilarová, E. & Klvaňová, A. (2024). Turtle Dove Conservation. *The Breeding Bird Survey 2023*. BTO Research Report 765. British Trust for Ornithology, Thetford.

2023

Gregory, R.D., Eaton, M.A., Burfield, I.J., Grice, P.V., Howard, C., Klvaňová, A., Noble, D., Šilarová, E., Staneva, A., Stephens, P.A., Willis, S.G., Woodward, I.D. & Burns, F. (2023). Drivers of the changing abundance of European birds at two spatial scales. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B* 378. 20220198. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2022.0198>

Lehikoinen, A., Lindström, Å., Calladine, J., Campedelli, T., DeLuca, W.V., Escandell, V., Flousek, J., Herrando, S., Jiguet, F., Kålås, J.-A., Lorrilliere, R., Meehan, T.D., Jostein Øien, I., Pladevall, C., Sandercock, B.K., Sattler, T., Seaman, B., Silva, L., Schmid, H., Teufelbauer, N., Trautmann, S. (2023). Population trends of mountain birds in Europe and North America. In: Chamberlain, D., Lehikoinen, A., Martin, K. (eds.): *Ecology and Conservation of Mountain Birds*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9781108940429

Rigal, S., Dakos, V., Alonso, H., Auniņš, A., Benkő, Z., Brotons, L., Chodkiewicz, T., Chylarecki, P., de Carlil, E., del Moral, J. C., Domşa, C., Escandell, V., Fontaine, B., Foppen, R., Gregory, R., Harriss, S., Herrando, S., Husby, M., Ieronymidou, Ch., Jiguet, F., Kennedy, J., Klvaňová, A., Kmecl, P., Kuczyński, L., Kurlavičius, P., Kålås, J. A., Lehikoinen, A., Lindström, Å., Lorrillier, R., Moshøj, Ch., Nellis, R., Noble, D., Palm Eskildsen, D., Paquet, J.-Y., Pelissié, M., Pladevall, C., Portolou, D., Reif, J., Schmid, H., Seaman, B., Szabo, Z. D., Szép, T., Tellini Florenzano, G., Teufelbauer, N., Trautmann, S., van Turnhout, Ch., Vermouzek, Z., Vikstrøm, T., Voříšek, P., Weiserbs, A. & Devictor, V. (2023). Farmland practices are driving bird population decline across Europe. *PNAS* <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2216573120>

2022

Buchan, C., Franco, A. M. A., Catry, I., Gamero, A., Klvaňová, A., & Gilroy, J. J. (2022). Spatially explicit risk mapping reveals direct anthropogenic impacts on migratory birds. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, 00, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geb.13551>

Korner-Nievergelt, F., Strebel, N., Buckland, S.T., Freeman, R., Gregory, R.D., Guélat, J., Isaac, N., Mc Rae, L., Roth, T., Schirmer, S., Soldaat, L.L., Voříšek, P., Sattler, T. (2022). Multi-species population indices for sets of species including rare, disappearing or newly occurring species. *Ecological Indicators* 140, 109005, ISSN 1470-160X, doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2022.109005

O'Reilly, E., Gregory, R.D., Aunins, A., Brotons, L., Chodkiewicz, T., Escandell, V., Foppen, R.P.B., Gamero, A., Herrando, S., Jiguet, F., Kálás, J.A., Kamp, J., Klvaňová, A., Lehtikoinen, A., Lindström, Å., Massimino, D., Jostein Øien, I., Reif, J., Šilarová, E., Teufelbauer, N., Trautmann, S., van Turnhout, C., Vikstrøm, T., Voříšek, P., Butler, S.J. (2022). An assessment of relative habitat use as a metric for species' habitat association and degree of specialization. *Ecological Indicators* 135, 108521, DOI: [10.1016/j.ecolind.2021.108521](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2021.108521)

EBBA2

2024

Herrando, S., Fraixedas, S., Brotons, L., Martí, D., Staneva, A., Keller, V., Voříšek, P. & Burfield, I.J. (2024). Improving national bird population estimates in Europe: insights from comparisons with atlas abundance data. *Bird Conservation International* 34: 348.

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Zurell, D., Schifferle, K., Herrando, S., Keller, V., Lehtikoinen, A., Sattler, T. & Wiedenroth, L. (2024). Range and climate niche shifts in European and North American breeding birds. *Phil.Trans.R.Soc.B* 379: 20230013.

2023

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E., Caffrey, B., Boyla, K., Radišić, D., Lindström, Å., Veleviski, M., Pladevall, C., Brotons, L., Karel, Š., Rajković, D.Z., Chodkiewicz, T., Wilk, T., Szép, T., van Turnhout, C., Foppen, R., Burfield, I., Vikstrøm, T., Mazal, V.D., Eaton, M., Vorisek, P., Lehtikainen, A., Herrando, S., Kuzmenko, T., Bauer, H.-G., Kalyakin, M.V., Voltz, O.V., Sjenčić, J. & Pärt, T. (2022). The future distribution of wetland birds breeding in Europe validated against observed changes in distribution. *Environmental Research Letters* 17: 24025.

EBP

2025

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2024

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Gallego-Zamorano, J., Davies, J., Reinartz, R., Robinson, R., Gargallo, G., Faverjon, C., Sierdsema, H. & Stahl, J. (2024). Updates to the wild bird abundance and movement models for the early warning system for avian influenza in the EU. *EFSA supporting publication* 21(10): EN-9000. 64 pp. doi: [10.2903/sp.efsa.2024.EN-9000](https://doi.org/10.2903/sp.efsa.2024.EN-9000)

2023

Gargallo, G., Davies, J.G., Faverjon, C., Kampichler, C., Baillie, S.R., Cameron, A., Robinson, R.A. & Sierdsema, H. (2022). Development of a prototype early warning system for avian influenza in the EU based on risk-mapping. *EFSA Supporting Publications* 19(12):EN-7762. 46 pp. doi:[10.2903/sp.efsa.2022.EN-7762](https://doi.org/10.2903/sp.efsa.2022.EN-7762)