

# Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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## CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Chairman's message

After the AGM on 21 May 2013, Helen Baker handed the chairmanship to myself. Helen carried out her responsibilities with tenacity, vision and good humour. She saw the need to make absolutely certain that our constitution was in good order and that the Club made proper provision in the digital age for online access to the Bulletin. Both tasks, which she skilfully completed, could have worn down a lesser person and the Club is very much in her debt. I too am in her debt and I am grateful that her immense store of knowledge, both ornithological and about the BOC, will continue to be available to the Club and myself. I am delighted that Nigel Redman has joined the committee, while the Club's grateful thanks go to Steven Gregory and Ken Heron Jones whose terms on Committee ended at the AGM. There are many challenges ahead and I look forward to hearing from members in the UK and abroad with their views about the Club and its future.

*Chris Storey*

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### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club was held in the upstairs room at the Barley Mow, Horseferry Road, Westminster, London SW1P 2EE, at 5.30 pm on Tuesday 21 May 2013 with Helen Baker in the chair. Fifteen members were present. Apologies for absence were received from Nigel Crocker, Steve Dudley, David Fisher, Steven Gregory, Guy Kirwan and Robin Prytherch.

1. **Minutes of 2012 AGM.** The Minutes of the AGM held on 12 June 2012, which had been published (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 132: 137–138, and the BOC website) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2. **Minutes of 2012 SGM.** The Minutes of the Special General Meeting held on 12 June 2012, which had been published (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 132: 138–139, and the BOC website) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Chairman's Review, Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for 2012.** The document had been on the website for several days and copies were available at the meeting. The Chairman thanked Committee members, Guy Kirwan, Steve Dudley and Eng-Li Green for their contributions and support in 2012. She mentioned in particular Ken Heron Jones and Steven Gregory whose terms on Committee were ending and were not standing for appointment in another capacity. The Chairman said that 2012 had seen the Club enter into an agreement with the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) under which all Bulletins (except the most recent five volumes) and Supplements were freely available on the BHL website. The Club also supported two research students, enabling them to attend the International Ornithological Congress of Southeast Asia in Thailand last November. Her concerns remained the falling membership and shortage of volunteers to run the Club.

The *Hon. Secretary* introduced the Trustees' Annual Report. He reminded members that the Club's new Rules, approved at the SGM in June 2012, came into effect immediately thereafter. The Committee had met three times and had continued to conduct much of its business by e-mail. He agreed that the fall in membership was a cause for concern. While the percentage decline was small, it was part of an ongoing trend. There had been three very good evening meetings, with talks on Black Guillemots *Cepphus grylle*, colour aberrations in birds and a double bill on John Gould's hummingbird cases and Dr George Murray Levick's unpublished notes on the sexual habits of Adélie Penguins *Pygoscelis adeliae*. In addition, the Club had supported a very successful Natural History Museum and South London Botanical Institute one-day meeting on Allan Octavian Hume last October. The two research students (from Cambodia and Indonesia) supported by BOC had expressed their appreciation to the Club. Each would receive a free copy of the 2013 Bulletin. The Bulletin continued to go from strength to strength. Vol. 132 contained a wide range of interesting, well-illustrated papers. There had not been any new BOC–BOU Joint Publications in 2012. The BOU was currently conducting an online questionnaire concerning the Checklist series and he encouraged anyone who had not completed it to do so.

The *Hon. Treasurer* drew attention to the income and expenditure details, which showed a deficit on Unrestricted Funds of £3,499 and a marginal surplus on Restricted Funds of £179 compared with an overall

surplus of £808 in 2011. However, that had included over £4,000 non-recurring items. The increase in members' subscriptions had boosted revenue and there was a small increase in investment income but sales were down, primarily because there was no new Checklist in 2012. Expenditure on the Bulletin was c.£1,000 more than in 2011 while grants had been made to the Allan Octavian Hume meeting and the students attending the IOC Southeast Asia meeting.

Stephen Chapman asked whether consideration had been given to making the Bulletin available electronically for those who wish as this would reduce production costs. The *Hon. Treasurer* said that he had discussed this with Steve Dudley but it did not appear feasible. *Ibis* is produced online by Blackwell but it was most unlikely that they would be willing to take on a journal with a much smaller distribution. Clive Mann asked what had happened to the project to produce the Bulletin on CD. The *Hon. Treasurer* said that only volumes 1–40 had been produced on CD (available for sale) and this project had been superseded by the arrangement with BHL. The *Hon. Treasurer* proposed the adoption of the Report and Accounts and this was seconded by Stephen Chapman.

**4. Election of Officers and other Trustees.** The Chairman proposed that Chris Storey be elected as Chairman, in her place, Robert Prŷs-Jones be re-elected as *Hon. Secretary*, David Montier be re-elected as *Hon. Treasurer* and Nigel Redman be elected to serve on the Committee in place of Ken Heron Jones whose term had ended. This was seconded by Ken Heron Jones.

**5. Any Other Business.** There was none.

The meeting closed at 5.54 pm.

The Chairman's review, Trustees' Annual Report and the Accounts are available on the BOC website ([www.boc-online.org](http://www.boc-online.org)) and hard copies can be obtained from the *Hon. Treasurer*, D. J. Montier, Eyebrook, Oldfield Road, Bickley, Bromley, Kent BR1 2LF, UK, e-mail: [djmontier@btinternet.com](mailto:djmontier@btinternet.com)

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The 973rd meeting of the Club was held on Tuesday 21 May 2013 in the upstairs room at the Barley Mow, 104 Horseferry Road, Westminster, London SW1P 2EE. Nineteen members and four non-members were present. Members attending were: Miss H. BAKER, K. BETTON, Cdr. M. B. CASEMENT, RN, S. CHAPMAN, M. GAUNTLETT, K. HERON JONES, J. HUDSON, R. LANGLEY, Dr C. MANN, D. J. MONTIER, R. PRICE, Dr R. PRŷS-JONES, N. J. REDMAN, P. RUDGE, P. SELLAR, A. SIMMONS, S. A. H. STATHAM, C. W. STOREY (*Chairman*) and P. J. WILKINSON.

Non-members attending were: Mrs M. H. GAUNTLETT, MRS J. HERON JONES, MRS M. MONTIER and H. WRIGHT (*Speaker*).

Dr Hugh Wright (previously Univ. of East Anglia, now Univ. of Cambridge) spoke on *White-shouldered Ibis Conservation and the value of traditional land use*. The ecology of the Critically Endangered and little-studied White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* is of interest to conservationists concerned for its survival, and to scientists intrigued by its association with traditional human land uses. Hugh presented data on ibis foraging and breeding ecology, and the relationship between livelihoods and ibis conservation, collected in Cambodia for his Ph.D. Recording ibis sightings in dry forest at Western Siem Pang Important Bird Area, Hugh and his team revealed the importance of waterholes and open habitats (such as abandoned rice paddies) to foraging ibises (Wright *et al.* 2012. Foraging ecology of sympatric White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* and Giant Ibis *Thaumatibis gigantea* in northern Cambodia. *Forktail* 28: 93–100; Wright *et al.* in press. Amphibian concentrations in desiccating mud may determine White-shouldered Ibis breeding season. *Auk*). They also studied the role of local land use practices in maintaining these habitats, experimentally excluding domestic livestock grazing and human-induced fires, and finding significant increases in ground vegetation as a result. These land uses are important for keeping habitats accessible to the ibis, especially in the near-absence of natural ecosystem engineers such as large herbivores, which have been lost to hunting. Local activities may not all be beneficial, however, as conservationists suggest that exploitation and interference is a limiting factor at nests. Nevertheless, deterring these actions by employing local people as nest guardians did not improve ibis nest success, and Hugh provided evidence that natural predation may be the greater threat to nests, at least at Western Siem Pang (Wright *et al.* in press. Experimental test of a conservation intervention for a highly threatened waterbird. *J. Wildl. Manag.*).

The dry-forest landscape and low-intensity agricultural land uses within it are important to local people (many of whom live in poverty) as well as to the ibis. Hugh studied livelihoods in 64 households, finding that forest products were a major source of subsistence and income, while livestock provided a valuable form of savings and insurance. Opportunities to build on mutual interests and link ibis conservation with local livelihoods may be short-lived however, as, in particular, the rise in tractors used for farming and transport is likely to replace livestock and diminish the grazing upon which the ibis depends. Mechanisation and an increasing human population are likely to change local land uses considerably; although there are now more ibises than previously thought (the global population is c.1,000 birds), the development of agriculture towards cash crops and industrial-scale agro-forestry plantations is a severe threat (Wright *et al.* in press. White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* population size and the impending threat of habitat conversion.

*Forktail* 29). Hugh concluded that conservationists face a difficult challenge to reconcile rapidly advancing economic development (vital for local people) with the needs of a species reliant on more traditional farming and forest use.

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#### ADDENDUM

In *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 133: 146, the Frankfurt specimen of Cuban Macaw *Ara tricolor* was referred to as being from the Hartert Coll. (No. 2399). In fact, this number refers to the catalogue prepared by Hartert during his fixed-term contract at the Senckenberg Museum in 1890/91 (Hartert, E. 1891. *Katalog der Vogelsammlung im Museum der Senckenbergischen Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Frankfurt am Main*. Gebrüder Knauer, Frankfurt). The specimen was also listed in Mayr, G., Peters, D. S. & Böhm, K. 2004. Ausgestorbene und gefährdete Vögel in den Sammlungen des Forschungsinstitutes und Naturmuseums Senckenberg. *Abhand. Senckenberg. Naturfor. Gesell.* 560: 1–101. I am grateful to Dr A. Manegold for drawing this matter to my attention.—THE HON. EDITOR.