

## CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

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# Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

See also BOC website: <http://www.boc-online.org>

**BOC MEETINGS** are open to **all**, not just BOC members, **and are free**.

Evening meetings are in an **upstairs room at The Barley Mow, 104 Horseferry Road, Westminster, London SW1P 2EE**. The nearest Tube stations are Victoria and St James's Park; and the 507 bus, which runs from Victoria to Waterloo, stops nearby. For maps, see [http://www.markettaverns.co.uk/the\\_barley\\_mow.html](http://www.markettaverns.co.uk/the_barley_mow.html) or ask the Chairman for directions.

The cash bar opens at **6.00 pm** and those who wish to eat after the meeting can place an order. **Talks start at 6.30 pm** and, with questions, last c.1 hour.

**Saturday 26 October 2019—One-day joint meeting with the Neotropical Bird Club and Natural History Museum** in the Flett Theatre, Natural History Museum (NHM), London SW7 5BD. The nearest tube station is South Kensington and attendees should use the NHM entrance on Exhibition Road. There is *no charge* to attend, no need to book and all are welcome. The programme is provisionally planned to include the following talks, but a full final programme, including additional talk and speaker details, should be posted at <http://www.boc-online.org> by about late June.

*Avoiding extinctions in the most threatened area in the Neotropics: the Pernambuco Centre of Endemism*—Luís Fábio Silveira (University of São Paulo, Brazil)

*Diversity in avian mimicry*—Alexander Lees (Manchester Metropolitan University)

*Frontiers of knowledge: a quarter-century of Neotropical discovery*—Joseph Tobias (Imperial College London)

*The physiology / behaviour nexus in a Central American cloud forest songbird, Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus mexicanus**—Samuel Jones (Royal Holloway London)

*Using science to protect Ecuador's most threatened birds*—Martin Schaefer (Fundación Jocotoco)

*Conservation of dry forest endemic birds in north-west Peru*—Christian Devenish (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Access to NHM is possible from 10.00 h, when coffee / tea will be available adjacent to the Flett Theatre. The meeting will begin at or shortly after 10.30 h, with a break for lunch around 12.30 h; many food outlets are available both within NHM and nearby in South Kensington. The conference will end by 17.00 h and NHM closes at 18.00 h. For up-to-date details, please check the BOC website: <http://www.boc-online.org>.

**Monday 18 November 2019—6.30 pm—Tim Birkhead—*The wonderful Mr Willughby: the start of scientific ornithology.***

*Abstract.*—The first scientific bird book was *The ornithology of Francis Willughby*, named in Willughby's honour by his friend John Ray after Willughby's death at the age of just 36 in 1672. These two men were pioneers of the scientific revolution and changed the way we think about birds. Until recently it was widely assumed that Ray was the brains and Willughby a mere 'talented amateur', but after a decade of research I have been able to show that Willughby was every bit as brilliant as his co-author and friend John Ray. In this talk I will tell the story of Willughby's short but spectacularly productive life—a story every ornithologist should know.

*Biography.*—Tim Birkhead is emeritus professor of behavioural ecology at the Univ. of Sheffield. He



completed a D.Phil. at Oxford on guillemots (Alcidae) in 1976, before taking a lectureship at Sheffield where he has been ever since. Tim is a Fellow of the Royal Society—the UK's most prestigious scientific body. His main research is on promiscuity in birds, but he is also interested in the history of science. He has maintained a long-term study of Common Guillemots *Uria aalge* on Skomer Island, Wales, for the last 47 years and raised UK£150,000 through crowd funding to keep the study going. Tim has won several awards for his undergraduate teaching. He is also an award-winning author and has written 15 books, including several popular science works. He has featured on BBC Radio 4's Life Scientific, The Infinite Monkey Cage and Inside Science, and his book *The most perfect thing: the inside (and outside) of a bird's egg* was made into a TV programme with David Attenborough, who referred to the book as 'Magnificent'.

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**Monday 23 March 2020—6.30 pm—Beth Okamura—How birds shape freshwater biodiversity.**

*Abstract.*—Ever wondered how volcanic islands, garden ponds and gravel pits develop a rich biota? Or why rowan trees grow near pines? The answers in part involve patterns of bird visitations. Darwin appreciated that avian activities might help to explain the widespread distributions of taxa that live in disjunct habitats. This conundrum famously led him to examine the attachment and survival of recently hatched snails on ducks' feet. This talk will consider how our understanding of dispersal of freshwater invertebrates has improved since Darwin's era. I will particularly focus on evidence for waterbird-mediated dispersal of freshwater animals that are poorly known but that have substantial ecological and practical impacts—colonial invertebrates called bryozoans (or 'moss animals') and their myxozoan parasites ('slime animals'). I will illustrate how these unappealingly-named animals serve as 'model systems' that demonstrate the profound effect of waterbird movements on the development and dynamics of freshwater communities, and consequent impacts on water supply and emerging fish diseases.

*Biography.*—Beth Okamura is a Merit Researcher at the Natural History Museum, London. Prior to this she held positions at the Univ. of Oxford and Bristol, before becoming a Prof. in Aquatic Biology at the Univ. of Reading. Her Ph.D. from the Univ. of California, Berkeley, focused on the ecology and evolution of marine invertebrates, but her move to Oxford led to her long-term interests in how animals that live in isolated lakes and ponds manage to disperse and persist across the landscape. She has particular interests in the role of waterbirds as vectors of dispersal—a question that she is now beginning address in new ways by analysing DNA contained in faeces of ducks, geese and godwits (*Limosa* spp.).

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**Friends of the BOC**

The BOC has from 2017 become an online organisation without a paying membership, but instead one that aspires to a supportive network of Friends who share its vision of ornithology—see: <http://boc-online.org/>. Anyone wishing to become a Friend of the BOC and support its development should pay UK£25.00 by standing order or online payment to the BOC bank account:

Barclays Bank, 16 High Street, Holt, NR25 6BQ, Norfolk  
Sort Code: 20-45-45  
Account number: 53092003  
Account name: The British Ornithologists' Club

Friends receive regular updates about Club events and are also eligible for discounts on the Club's Occasional Publications. It would assist our Treasurer, Richard Malin (e-mail: [rmalin21@gmail.com](mailto:rmalin21@gmail.com)), if you would kindly inform him if you intend becoming a Friend of the BOC.

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**The *Bulletin* and other BOC publications**

From volume 137 (2017), the *Bulletin* of the BOC has become an online journal, published quarterly, that is available to all readers without charge. Furthermore, it does not levy any publication charges (including for colour plates) on authors of papers and has a median publication time from receipt to publication of six months. Prospective authors are invited to contact the *Bulletin* editor, Guy Kirwan (GMKirwan@aol.com), to discuss future submissions or look at <http://boc-online.org/bulletin/bulletin-contributions>. Back numbers up to volume 136 (2016) are available via the Biodiversity Heritage Library website: [www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/46639#/summary](http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/46639#/summary); vols. 132–136 are also available on the BOC website: <http://boc-online.org/>

BOC Occasional Publications are available from the BOC Office or online at [info@boc-online.org](mailto:info@boc-online.org). Future BOC-published checklists will be available from NHBS and as advised on the BOC website. As its online repository, the BOC uses the British Library Online Archive (in accordance with IZCN 1999, Art. 8.5.3.1).