

Club Announcements

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Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman's Message

The 989th meeting of the Club was held on Monday 19 March 2018 in the upstairs room at the Barley Mow, 104 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2EE. Thirteen friends were present and six guests. Friends attending were Miss H. Baker, Mr P. J. Belman, Mr S. Chapman, Mr M. Earp, Mr D. J. Fisher, Mr R. Langley, Mr R. Malin, Dr C. F. Mann, Mr D. J. Montier, Mr R. Pritchett, Dr R. Prÿs-Jones, Mr S. A. H. Statham and Mr C. W. R. Storey (*Chairman*).

Guests attending were Mr A. Bos, Mr G. de Silva, Miss J. Hatton, Mr J. J. F. J. Jansen (*Speaker*), Miss Z. Varley and Miss J. White.

Justin Jansen gave a talk entitled *The ornithology of the Baudin expedition (1800–04)* and provided the following summary. The Baudin expedition to Australia and Timor of 1800–04 has largely been overlooked by the ornithological community, due to the effects of the Napoleonic Wars, personal rivalries, the death of Baudin himself during the expedition, and a lack of curatorial knowledge. The Baudin collection was the first large, significant and relatively complete collection of natural history specimens ever to arrive at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. A number of the specimens were to become the types of species 'new to science', and they included at least two taxa that are now extinct. The importance of the collection was at first not fully understood, and its specimens became dispersed all over Europe, ending up in collections such as Blois, La Châtre, Edinburgh, Florence, Geneva, Leiden, Nancy, Paris, Pavia and Vienna. Nevertheless, the expedition paved the way for the 'father of Australian ornithology', John Gould, who embarked on his own journey to Australia almost 40 years later, in 1838.

The talk related the story of the remarkable avian collection acquired during the Baudin expedition, its historical context and importance, and the challenges of its preservation. The vicissitudes of history form the backdrop for the author's fascination with reconstructing the expedition's exploits and the difficulties involved in this. Over the years, only small parts of the Baudin collection have been researched and publicised. The talk aimed to provide a complete, detailed and comprehensive catalogue of the expedition's ornithological exploits. By bringing together what is known about the collection and its dispersal, it will hopefully take research a step further and stimulate the search for the pieces that are still missing.

The 990th meeting of the Club was held on Monday 21 May 2018 in the upstairs room at the Barley Mow, 104 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2EE. Seventeen friends were present and four guests. Friends attending were Miss H. Baker, Mr P. J. Belman, Cdr. M. B. Casement, RN, Mr S. Chapman, Dr R. Cheke, Mr R. Dickey, Mr D. J. Fisher, Mr R. Malin, Dr C. F. Mann, Mr D. J. Montier, Mr A. Pittman, Dr R. Prÿs-Jones, Dr P. Rudge, Dr D. G. D. Russell, Mr S. A. H. Statham, Mr C. W. R. Storey (*Chairman*) and Miss J. White.

Guests attending were Mr O. Crimmon, Mrs M. Montier, Miss J. Springett and Dr B. G. Stokke (*Speaker*).

Dr Bård G. Stokke gave a talk entitled *Host use by the Common Cuckoo*. Dr Stokke's presentation opened with a brief introduction to the Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* and its brood parasitic lifestyle, accompanied by unique photos spanning the whole breeding season, taken by Olda Mikulica. Common Cuckoo is a generalist brood parasite at the species level, known to have utilised more than 100 host species in Europe alone. However, individual females are generally host specific, utilising and often mimicking the eggs of a particular host species. Dr Stokke focused the rest of his talk on the spatial variation in host use in Europe, and he discussed characteristics that are important for parasite utilisation of passerine hosts. The research and results that were described stem mostly from a thorough search for cuckoo parasitism events throughout Europe, which has taken eight years to accomplish and so far has recorded c.65,000 cases of parasitism.

The database discloses that 123 species have been utilised by Common Cuckoos in Europe, although c.30 species are used regularly in larger geographical areas. In addition, 18 more species may be used on a more local spatial scale. Risk of parasitism in host species is dependent on various characteristics like nest placement, habitat, food brought to chicks and female body size of the host. Spatial variation in host use may depend on several factors like host population size, breeding phenology, co-occurrence of several potential host species, habitat composition and spatial scale. The talk ended with a lively and cheerful discussion between the enthusiastic audience and Dr Stokke.

Interested readers are referred to Mikulica, O., Grim, T., Schulze-Hagen, K. & Stokke, B. G. 2017. *The Cuckoo. The uninvited guest*. Wild Nature Press (<http://www.wildnaturepress.com/our-titles/cuckoo-uninvited-guest/>).

2017 Annual Review Meeting

The 990th meeting was preceded by the Annual Review meeting at which the Chairman presented his Review and the Trustees' Report and Accounts for 2017 (<http://boc-online.org/wp-content/uploads/BOC-Report-and-Accounts-2017.pdf>). The meeting was attended by Miss H. Baker, Cdr M. B. Casement, RN, Mr S Chapman, Mr R. Dickey, Dr R. A. Cheke, Mr D. J. Fisher, Mr R. Malin, Dr C. F. Mann, Mr D. J. Montier, Mrs M. Montier, Mr A. Pittman, Dr R. Prŷs-Jones, Dr D. G. D. Russell, Miss J. Springett, Mr S. A. H. Statham, Dr B. G. Stokke and Mr C. W. R. Storey (*Chairman*).

Introducing the Report and Accounts, Chris Storey reminded the meeting that whilst under the terms of the BOC CIO constitution there was no requirement for a formal AGM, the annual review is an important opportunity for the Trustees to give an account of their stewardship during the past year. Summarising the main events set out in the Report and Accounts, he highlighted:

- BOC CIO and legacy arrangements affecting the final winding-up of the old style BOC (intended for 2018).
- Continuing success of *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* under Guy Kirwan's editorship. (In answer to a question from the floor, it was confirmed that Vol. 137 onwards would be archived on the BioOne site. Previous volumes are archived on the BHL site and the Club is in the process of completing the transfer of Vols. 132–136 to BHL.)
- Publication of Robin Woods' Falkland Islands checklist.
- Celebration on 6 October 2017 of the 125th anniversary of the Club's first meeting. Stephen Chapman produced a suitably decorated cake, which was ceremoniously cut by Dr Claire Spottiswood.

Dr Robert Prŷs-Jones outlined the highly successful meetings programme and said that starting with Dr Nigel Collar's talk the Club intended, with the agreement of speakers, to record the Barley Mow talks and place them on YouTube.

Richard Malin introduced the Accounts. He reported that the Club was in a strong financial position: more than 50% of expenditure in 2017 was accounted for by the one-off costs of the Falkland Islands checklist publication and the final BOU settlement. The Herbert Stevens Trust continued to provide a healthy income stream.

In answer to a question concerning use of funds, the meeting was reminded that in the absence of a paying membership the Club was dependent on income generated by the trust funds. The Checklist series would also require periodic capital expenditure.

Closing the meeting, Chris Storey thanked the many people on whom the Club depends.

Trustees

The Trustees regret to report that Mike Earp has decided to resign as a Trustee of the BOC, owing to other commitments. Chris Storey's Trustee term, due to end in October 2018, was renewed for a further three years as Trustee and Chairman at a Trustees' meeting on 19 March 2018.

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 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. **The talk will start at 6.30 pm** and, with questions, will last c.1 hour.

Monday 17 September 2018—6.30 pm—Huw Lloyd—Crabs, cranes, and cuckoos: developing bird conservation science in China.

Abstract: China is making tremendous efforts to reach out to the international bird conservation community to help develop its next generation of bird conservationists. Since 2010, Huw Lloyd and colleagues have been

working with Chinese universities and the China Ornithological Society, helping to develop these young scientists. These research collaborations have shed new light on the ecology of migratory Red-crowned Cranes *Grus japonensis*, revealing how they respond to the pressures of habitat change, and what sustains their wintering population. We have discovered how some of China's threatened bird populations are likely to respond to climate change, and how vocal individuality in populations of male Common Cuckoos *Cuculus canorus* can be used as a non-invasive marker for monitoring their population.

Biography: Dr Huw Lloyd is Senior Lecturer in Wildlife Biology at the Division of Biology and Conservation Ecology, Manchester Metropolitan University. For the last two decades, he has been conducting research on the ecology and conservation of threatened bird populations in Peru, Brazil, Ethiopia, China, Tonga and the UK.

Monday 12 November 2018—6.30 pm—Joe Tobias—*The shape of birds, and why it matters.*

Abstract: Birds vary widely in size from the Bee Hummingbird *Mellisuga helenae* to Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus*, and come in a staggering range of shapes. Last century, the field of ecomorphology began to shed light on the way birds are shaped by habitat preferences and foraging behaviour, but studies focused on relatively few species and left numerous gaps in understanding. This talk will explore recent research based on detailed measurements of almost all of the world's bird species, describing how this new influx of information has been combined with spatial, phylogenetic and ecological data to help answer some fundamental questions, such as how does bird diversity arise, and how can it best be conserved?

Biography: Joe Tobias studied the behaviour of the European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* for his Ph.D. at Cambridge University, then worked for ten years in environmental NGOs including BirdLife International, focusing on bird research and conservation projects in South-East Asia, Madagascar and the Neotropics. Returning to academia, he developed a research programme in evolutionary ecology and conservation biology as a Lecturer at Oxford University, before taking up a Senior Lectureship at Imperial College London. His current research focuses on the evolution and conservation of avian diversity.

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), if you would kindly inform him if you intend becoming a Friend of the BOC.

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 prospective submissions or look at <http://boc-online.org/bulletin/bulletin-contributions>. Back numbers up to volume 132 (2012) are available via the Biodiversity Heritage Library website: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/46639#/summary; vols. 132–136 are 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. 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).