

European Committee for the Conservation of Bryophytes

Minutes of a meeting of the ECCB Working Group, Ekenäs, Sweden, 22nd-23rd March 2013.

Present: Beáta Papp (BP, Chair), Tomas Hallingbäck (TH, Vice-chair), Nick Hodgetts (NGH, Secretary), Neil Lockhart (NLt, RDB Steering Group), Belén Albertos (BA), Nadezda Konstantinova (NK), Norbert Schnyder (NS), Niklas Lönnell (NLn).

A two-day Red Data Book Working Group meeting was held at Ekenäs, Flen, Sweden. The aim was to update the 2006 list of liverworts, finalise the production of a moss checklist list for Europe, and to shortlist candidate species for IUCN threat assessment. This was achieved by identifying and then excluding those species considered with certainty to be Least Concern. A further short-listing process to filter out more species is envisaged as a future next-step in the process. The Working Group consisted of six Regional Co-ordinators (BP, TH, NGH, BA, NK & NS), with NGH also acting as central co-ordinator, NLt as recorder and NLn as assistant to TH.

Opening address

The meeting was opened by TH, who welcomed members to Ekenäs and introduced the main themes of the meeting. TH stressed the importance of meeting personally from time to time, although the possibility of Skype meetings could also be considered. TH reiterated the need for revision of the 1995 Red List, noted the difficulties in the application of IUCN criteria over such a large area and encouraged the meeting to think creatively in how to apply the criteria for bryophytes. He emphasised that assessment of 'decline' can be especially problematic in the absence, or patchiness, of species records and that decline can also be inferred by considering loss of habitat. Secondly, he advised caution in setting thresholds for species rarity, as some species that occur in many places may still be of conservation concern if all the known populations are small.

TH noted that the 1995 Red List is still used effectively in many countries and that as a plant group, the bryophytes are unique because no comparable European Red List exists for vascular plants, lichens or fungi.

The minutes of the previous Steering Group meeting in Mullaghmore, Sligo, Ireland in September 2012 were agreed.

Red Listing

NGH thanked TH for arranging the meeting and expressed the gratitude of the group to the Oscar och Lili Lamms Foundation for their generous support in facilitating the workshop. NGH reported that the checklists for liverworts and for mosses had been mostly reviewed and updated, with distribution and threat status (where available) for each species per country identified on spreadsheets. Lists had been circulated to Country Contacts and responses had been incorporated.

NGH outlined the approach to be taken when reviewing the checklists to exclude species that are considered with certainty to be Least Concern. NGH advised taking the precautionary principle and species should only be assigned Least Concern status if unanimously agreed by all Regional Co-ordinators. If any doubt was expressed, or even if discussion of any length had taken place, the species should be retained in the candidate list for future consideration. During the process it emerged

that some species, though common in some part(s) of Europe, might be declining or Regionally Extinct in others. Such species might not be selected for consideration though the IUCN procedure, and although strictly speaking are probably Least Concern for Europe as a whole, may nevertheless be of conservation concern. These were termed ‘*Paludella*-type cases’ and were noted as ‘Regionally Threatened’ and retained on the lists for future consideration.

The majority of the meeting was then spent working through the lists, with NGH updating the master spreadsheets and NLt keeping records of the views expressed. Species that were listed as Least Concern on the 2006 hepatic evaluation (ca 308) were critically reviewed, and ca 55 species added back in for future consideration in the IUCN threat assessment process. The moss list (ca. 1515 taxa) was examined and ca 832 taxa were either agreed as Least Concern, or removed from further consideration because of sub-specific or varietal rank; ca 683 species were retained for future consideration in the IUCN process. TH stated that the next step will be to further limit the number of species for IUCN assessment by applying a second filtering process, and to do this will require further information from the Country Contacts.

A number of specific action points arose:-

Action Point 1: NS to ask Geert Raeymaekers for an update on Belgium (or ask Herman Stieperaere).

Action Point 2: NS to ask Gerard Dirkse for an update on the Netherlands (or ask Kim Lotterman, in Zürich).

Action Point 3: TH to ask Irina Goldberg for an update on Denmark.

Action Point 4: TH to ask Kristian Hassel for an update on Norway.

Action Point 5: BA to ask Michele Aleffi for an update on Italy.

Action Point 6: NGH to include France list from Lars Söderström’s hepatic paper and send to BA.

Action Point 7: NGH to check emails for Bosnia-Herzegovina list that BP sent on January 7th.

Action Point 8: All to send updated country checklists, assessments and comments to NGH in the next two weeks (by Friday April 12th).

Action Point 9: NGH to ask David Holyoak for his views on the taxonomic status of *Bryum versicolor*, considered a good species in Central Europe by NS and others. Ref. Pedersen, Niklas; Holyoak, David T.; Newton, Angela E. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*: **43** issue 3 June, 2007. p. 891-907.

Action Point 10: BA to ask Michele Aleffi if *Bryum versicolor* reported from Italy.

Action Point 11: NGH to ask Mark Hill for his views on the taxonomic status of *Sphagnum subtile*, evaluated as Endangered in Spain.

Action Point 12: BA to send reference for *Entosthodon longicollis* in Spain (synonym of *E. hungaricus*) to NGH.

Action Point 13: NGH to ask David Holyoak for his views on the taxonomic status of *Bryum barnesii*, reported from France.

Action Point 14: NGH to ask David Holyoak for his views on the taxonomic status of *Bryum lonchocaulon* reported from Switzerland, Germany, Serbia, Albania, considered a good species (BP).

Action Point 15: NGH to check references in *Arctoa* for *Encalypta pilifera* and *Schistidium sibiricum* in Russia.

Action Point 16: BA to send reference for *Leptodon corsicus* (new species from Corsica) to NGH. *Journal of Bryology* (2009) **31**: 186–196?

Action Point 17: NGH to collated all the resulting data and circulate lists, including the Least Concern lists, to the Regional Co-ordinators for review.

BA suggested that the finalised checklists could be split into Regional groups, then sent to the relevant Country Contacts, stating that the lists are ‘drafts’, and that Country Contacts should be informed that it is intended to ‘publish’ the lists on the ECCB website. If the website has an ISBN number (see Action Point 22) and can be cited as a reference, this might encourage participation from Country Contacts.

A number of issues were discussed in relation to the adequacy of country lists and evaluations, and some additional species were considered for the liverwort and moss lists. Some countries with no lists (e.g. Monaco, Vatican, Gibraltar, Liechtenstein) might have to be left blank for the moment.

Some discussion took place on future activities, how to apply IUCN criteria and which criteria might be feasible to use. It was agreed that a way forward will be to test assessment criteria on a limited number (5–10) of species, representing a range of likely situations (e.g. different habitat groups, single locality species, species with good data, species with limited or no data, etc.) and produce maps and data sheets. This will help in estimating the degree of difficulty in collating data from all over Europe and will be useful to give a ‘feel’ for the species accounts. BA mentioned ‘Quantum GIS’, a free to download mapping package which has been used for the Spanish Red Data Book.

Action Point 18: NGH to choose a draft list of species for test evaluation and circulate to the working group.

Finance

NLt reported that National Parks and Wildlife Service, Ireland will continue to fund NGH in 2013 (€15,000). TH announced that SLU, Sweden has provided some money to NGH at the end of the 2012 financial year, and will seeking further funds in 2013 to match the Irish contribution. Some discussion took place on the desirability of funding BA for her work.

Action Point 19: TH and/or BP to ask Kristian Hassel on how to seek support from Norway.

BA advised the group of the possibility of funding meetings (e.g. travel, subsistence, local organiser support, conferences, workshops) through the EU COST programme (European Cooperation in Science and Technology [<http://www.cost.eu/>]). Collectively the group submitted a COST Action Preliminary Proposal in time for the next deadline (March 29th 2013). If approved, a Full Proposal will be invited by 30th May 2013 for submission by 26th July 2013.

BA initiated discussion on a potential LIFE project as an objective for the COST application and stated that the University of Valencia has some experience and can advise us.

Website

BP demonstrated the ECCB website <http://eccbbryo.nhmus.hu/>. Thanks were expressed to Erzsébet Szurdoki, who has redesigned the website. It was noted that the old website is still available and should probably now be deleted. BP called for submissions of new photographs for the website, as Irish and Hungarian species and localities are over-represented at present.

Several action points arose from the review of the website pages:-

Action Point 20: Erzsébet should contact BA if she needs advice for modifying the password access to portions of the website. BA suggested using only one username and one password for all, as this is much easier.

Action Point 21: NGH should, in due course, upload the completed checklists to the website, or ask Erzsébet.

Action Point 22: BA suggested that an ISBN number would be desirable for the webpage, as this will allow citation for the checklists.

Action Point 23: NGH to include acknowledgement of all Country Contacts in the checklists.

Action Point 24: Erzsébet. NGH suggested that 'What are bryophytes?' should come immediately after 'Welcome' on the navigation pane.

Action Point 25: TH to annotate names to the people in the 1990 Uppsala photograph.

Action Point 26: BP to ask Regional Co-ordinators to check that Country Contacts are correct, including email addresses.

Action Point 27: NGH to ask Lars Söderström for photographs of the 1998 Trondheim meeting.

Action Point 28: NK/BP to seek a photograph for the 2001 Prague meeting.

Action Point 29: BP to arrange for a photograph of the 2007 Cluj meeting from Irene.

Action Point 30: NK to organise for a link to be established to the ECCB website from the Arctoa website.

Action Point 31: NGH to organise for a link to be established to the ECCB website from the BBS website.

Action Point 32: BA to organise for a link to be established to the ECCB website from the Spanish Bryological Society website.

Action Point 33: Erzsébet. NGH suggested changing 'Revision of the Red Data Book of European Bryophytes' to 'New Red Data Book of European Bryophytes' on the first heading under 'Current projects'.

Action Point 34: BP/Erzsébet. On the 'Current projects' page - update 'Red List' with text of next steps from the COST Action proposal.

Action Point 35: Erzsébet 'Red lists and checklists' to be a main heading in the navigation pane.

Action Point 36: BP/Erzsébet to include Minutes of previous ECCB meetings on the website.

Action Point 37: BP/Erzsébet to include list (and contact details) of Regional Co-ordinators on the website.

Action Point 38: NGH to publish a note in *Field Bryology* about the list of country checklists and country Red Lists that are now available on the ECCB website.

Action Point 39: NGH to publish a note in *Bryological Times* about the Ekenäs meeting.

The meeting concluded with evening presentations from members of the group:

NLt – photographs of Irish bryophyte habitats

NS – video of NS and Heike Hoffman surveying *Tayloria rudolphiana* in Switzerland

NK – photographs of bryophytes and bryophyte habitats in Svalbard

BA – photographs of research into anthropogenic disturbance to bryophyte habitats in Antarctica

TH – photographs from bryophyte field research in Sarek National Park, Sweden

BP – photographs from field visit to Albania

Neil Lockhart

28th March 2013