

European Committee for the Conservation of Bryophytes
Minutes of a meeting of some Board members held at IUCN Brussels, Belgium,
September 26th, 2019.

ECCB Board members present:

Nick Hodgetts (chair), Neil Lockhart (Secretary), Lars Söderström (Norway); Oleg Maslovsky (Belarus); Norbert Schnyder (Switzerland)

Also present:

Irene Bisang (IUCN SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group Co-Chair)

Ariel Bergamini (IUCN SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group Red List Authority Coordinator)

Christian Schröck (Austria)

This ad hoc meeting was held at the IUCN offices in Brussels. It was called to avail of the opportunity to meet for those who could attend the press launch of the IUCN European Red List of Bryophytes on the 27th September. Nick Hodgetts extended his thanks on behalf of ECCB to IUCN staff for facilitating the meeting and providing teas and coffee etc. A brief agenda, mainly covering progress to date on actions agreed at the last ECCB meeting in Budapest 2018, were agreed.

1. Review of progress on IUCN/ECCB European Red List (ERL) project

Nick gave a brief summary of how the Red List work had progressed to reach this point and the group got its first sight of the IUCN publication *A miniature world in decline: European Red List of Mosses, Liverworts and Hornworts*. It was noted that there are 94 authors accredited for the publication.

2. Revised checklist of European bryophytes

This project is being funded by National Parks and Wildlife Service, Ireland (NPWS), with support funding for open access publication from Lars Söderström and NPWS. The manuscript has been submitted to *Journal of Bryology*, and is currently in review. Publication is expected in December 2019. Nick has maintained the two Excel spreadsheets with current nomenclature, country distributions and country threat status. It is intended to publish this data (possibly in *Lindbergia*) and also provide the spreadsheets, available to download, for the ECCB website. Neil has provided a comparison report between spreadsheet nomenclature and the *Journal of Bryology* checklist and index. This has identified discrepancies for Nick to resolve and rectify. Discussion took place on the desirability in the future of maintaining data on a database. Lars has all the liverwort data on an Access database and is willing to incorporate the moss data.

3. Important Bryophyte Areas (IBrAs)/Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)

A contract has been placed for Nick to work on this, funded by NPWS and managed by Neil. Completion date is set for end of 2021. A summary of the contract specifications and expected outputs is appended below, for information. Neil has been in contact with IUCN and the head of KBA Secretariat - Andy Plumbtre - to discuss the possibilities for developing Regional Criteria for using bryophytes to identify KBAs in Europe. Only Global Standards have been published to date (www.keybiodiversityareas.org/publications), which effectively limits the KBA approach to European endemic species. Nick's contract envisages the identification of IBrAs for Europe, using mainly the Red List assessments, but bearing in mind the future possibility of submitting these for KBA status when Regional Guidelines are published.

Nick pointed out the value of the *Red Data Book of European Bryophytes* (ECCB 1995), which contained a Bryophyte Site Register of important areas and could still be very useful. Oleg presented copies of his *Important Plant Areas in Belarus* (Maslovsky *et al.* 2006) and others noted that IBrAs had been published for some countries (Hungary, Ireland) which might also be informative. Irene will endeavour to gather further information on the KBA process when she attends the IUCN Leaders' Meeting in Abu Dhabi in October.

Nick's contract specification:

IBrA/KBA Work programme

- Review methodologies and incorporate results relating to any existing important bryophyte areas identified for Europe
- Follow the most up to date nomenclature for bryophytes in Europe
- Collate locational information on all threatened (Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable) bryophyte species in Europe and on all bryophyte species that are endemic to Europe
- Gather available data on the number of mature individuals, area of occupancy, extent of suitable habitat, range and number of localities for all threatened and endemic bryophyte species in Europe
- Consider and evaluate data for Regionally Extinct and Near Threatened bryophyte species in Europe
- Assemble records of all threatened and endemic bryophyte species into a suitable structure for import to GIS
- Decide on a suitable map projection for records
- Identify those threatened and endemic species records with poor or non-localised data and obtain more accurate data from local bryologists where necessary
- Define and identify the location of important bryophyte assemblages and important bryophyte communities
- Develop methodology and define and/or adapt criteria to select Important Bryophyte Areas in Europe
- Define and adopt an appropriate approach to the size (and number) of sites, given the variation and differing interpretations of site-size across Europe
- Obtain protected area spatial data for Europe in the form of boundary (polygon), wherever it is available, or as a single latitude and longitude coordinate (point) data where boundary data is not available
- Identify the spatial relationship of Important Bryophyte Areas with protected area boundaries (coincident, within, overlap, outwith)
- Delineate the extent of Important Bryophyte Areas that are coincident, within or overlap protected area boundaries
- Identify Important Bryophyte Areas that are outwith and do not overlap protected areas and delineate their boundaries

Outputs

- An overall report for the project, with sections on its aims, methods, results, conclusions, recommendations, references and appendices with summary lists of Important Bryophyte Areas, countries/territories of occurrence, locational data and site protection status
- Assemble site dossiers for each identified Important Bryophyte Area, to include:-
 - Location map of the Important Bryophyte Area at a country-level scale
 - Site boundary map at a scale suitable for A4 page size
 - Criteria under which the site qualifies as an Important Bryophyte Area
 - List of bryophyte species of interest known to occur within the boundary (rare, threatened, endemic species, etc.), including their European and national Red List status
 - Names, designation status and other details of protected areas contained within, overlapping with or delimiting the Important Bryophyte Area
 - Descriptive account of the Important Bryophyte Area, including location, altitude, country, vegetation types, habitats for the important bryophyte species, lists of records, current management activities, threats/pressures, recommended conservation measures and a list of important publications relating to the site
 - Photographs of the site, the important bryophyte species and their habitats, where possible
- Assemble and group site dossiers into country lists of Important Bryophyte Areas
- Publication in either a peer reviewed journal or as an Irish Wildlife Manual or similar report
- Where appropriate for European endemic species that might qualify Important Bryophyte Areas as KBAs, prepare proposals for the KBA secretariat following the published guidelines (IUCN 2016. *A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas*, Version 1.0. First edition. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.)
- Present the data in a format suitable for the development of a map browser application, in conjunction with NPWS GIS Unit, to display Important Bryophyte Areas, with links to the site dossiers, similar to the [Natura 2000 viewer](#) or the [Flora Protection Order Map Viewer – Bryophytes](#)

4. Conservation priorities/Top 10

Norbert mentioned (and subsequently circulated email links to) the recently (2019) published *Liste der National Prioritären Arten und Lebensräume*, the updated List of National Priority Species and the first List of National Priority Habitats for Switzerland.

www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/de/home/themen/biodiversitaet/publikationen-studien/publikationen/liste-national-prioritaeren-arten.html

He suggested that something similar could be done for Europe. Perhaps more criteria might need to be considered. Norbert will take the lead role in this, and Irene and Christian wish to contribute. Irene said she plans to provide IUCN with a top priority list of species and actions. Nick said he will provide and circulate the list of European endemics.

5. Monitoring

Oleg said that we first need to establish a methodology – it needs to be simple to use in order to facilitate participation. There is a national protocol for Belarus, and Beáta has protocol for Hungary. Oleg raised many questions – which species should be monitored; can we use indicator species? He mentioned the idea of regional workshops, or online workshops, and that data should be open and free to all. Beáta is collating data on bryophyte monitoring projects, and on *ex situ* conservation. Oleg and Beata aim to make a presentation at the next ECCB conference. Christian asked that we (ECCB) should define “favourable conservation status” parameters for species.

6. Social media/website

Neil reported that Rory Hodd has created a Twitter account for the ECCB website, but hasn't posted anything yet because there hasn't been much news to share. Neil noted that launch of Red List will necessitate an update of the website pages and allow the Twitter account to get up and running. Erzsébet and Beáta were mentioned as hosting an IUCN page on the website.

7. Publishing/scientific use of IUCN data

Ariel agreed to ask IUCN for the formal position on the use and re-use of the data (including map shapefiles) compiled for the IUCN Red List. Neil stated that he has received a data download (including maps) from Eve Englefield of IUCN. Ariel and Irene said that they have discussed ideas for utilising the data for various research projects, possibly including the funding of a PhD student, and that they will circulate these ideas to the group.

8. ECCB conference – Zagreb

Nick will contact Antun Alegro to confirm the date of the forthcoming ECCB Conference in Zagreb (20-23 May 2020).

Nick concluded the meeting with warm thanks to IUCN for hosting the meeting and thanked all the participants for attending.

Neil Lockhart
ECCB Secretary