

European Committee for the Conservation of Bryophytes Minutes of ECCB meeting held at Budapest, Hungary, 17 November 2018

ECCB Board members present:

Nick Hodgetts (chair) (UK); Beáta Papp (vice-chair) (Hungary); Neil Lockhart (secretary) (Ireland); Tomas Hallingbäck (Sweden); Christian Berg (Austria); Steffen Caspari (Germany); Marko Sabovljević (Serbia); Lars Söderström (Norway); Oleg Maslovsky (Belarus); Antun Alegro (Croatia); Norbert Schnyder (Switzerland); Rory Hodd (Ireland); Nadya Konstantinova (Russia); Cecília Sérgio (Portugal)

Also present:

Marta Cáliz (IUCN Global Species & Key Biodiversity Areas Programme)
Irene Bisang (IUCN SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group Co-Chair)
Ariel Bergamini (IUCN SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group Red List Authority Coordinator)
Erzsébet Szurdoki (Hungary, ECCB website manager)

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last ECCB meeting in Montenegro 2016 were agreed.

2. Apologies

Board members who sent apologies and were not present at the meeting:

Kristian Hassel (Norway)
Annalena Cogoni (Italy)
Niklas Lönnell (Sweden)
Mesut Kirmaci (Turkey)

Beáta kindly hosted the meeting and warmly welcomed everyone to the Hungarian Natural History Museum. Nick thanked Beáta, Erzsébet and their colleagues on behalf of ECCB and summarised the purpose of calling the meeting – to update progress on the European Red List (ERL), to introduce Marta to the group and to chart future actions for ECCB.

An agenda for the current meeting was approved. Neil Lockhart agreed to record the minutes.

3. Composition of ECCB Board.

Discussion took place on the composition of the board. Some members have not attended any recent meetings. It was decided to retain the current board (20 members) until review at the next ECCB conference in Croatia in 2020. Cecília is happy to continue until the next meeting. Marko suggested Vincent Hugonnot; Christian suggested someone from Spain; Beáta met Jesús Muñoz recently and thinks he would be interested. **ACTION: all to consider further before next Board meeting.**

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

Irene outlined the role of IUCN and summarised the history of ECCB involvement with IUCN. She thanked and congratulated IUCN and all contributors to the ERL project. She emphasised the importance that the IUCN brand will bring to the new Red List and stated that continuing co-operation between IUCN and ECCB is a win-win for bryophyte conservation.

Marta gave a PowerPoint presentation on overall progress on ERL and answered questions. Publication and completion is expected by September 2019.

Nick summarised the involvement of ECCB in the ERL project. He is maintaining 2 spreadsheets (mosses and liverworts) which are kept up to date with nomenclature and species occurrence data. Nick will be writing text for the report with IUCN.

Marta said that she has photographs for nearly 1000 bryophyte species but still needs photographs for the rest (ca 800 species). She urged members to submit their photos for the missing species. She will send the wanted list to Nick, who will circulate. **ACTION: Marta then Nick.**

Nick raised the question of ‘common’ names for bryophytes. Some discussion took place but concluded that there is so much variation, in so many languages, that it probably isn’t worth pursuing.

Neil raised the issue of potential disparity between Country of Occurrence data on the Species Information System (SIS) and the IUCN maps. Marta said that IUCN will endeavour to match the maps to the countries list. **ACTION: Marta.**

Cecilia mentioned new bryophyte records recently published for Macaronesia (Lars to send *Cryptogamie* pdf to Nick), which prompted Lars to ask there is a cut-off date for inclusion of new data? Marta and Nick said we’re now past that date, but Nick proposed end of 2018 as a definitive cut-off date. Marta agreed and stated that only 1 (possibly 2) species could be added before the end of the year, but only if the assessment process time would to be very quick. Nadya mentioned problems with *Nardia japonica/N. pacifica* and newly described *Lophozia silvicoloides*. Nick advised to assess as DD rather than NE. Marta said they could be mentioned. Oleg prefers that we list such taxa, at least in the Red List book. **ACTION: All to submit any remaining contributions before 31.12.18.**

5. Revised checklist of European bryophytes

Nick described his work on a revised European checklist for mosses and liverworts. Ideally it would be exactly the same nomenclature as used in the Red List, except that the checklist will cover Caucasus. He suggests the same cut-off date of end-2018. The intention is to publish in a peer-reviewed journal – his preference is *Journal of Bryology*. The spreadsheets could be published as an *Irish Wildlife Manual* (like the 2015 version) and made available as Excel files on the ECCB website.

Some discussion took place: Lars approved of publishing the spreadsheets in an unalterable form (such as an *Irish Wildlife Manual*); Irene prefers the checklist to be published in *Journal of Bryology*; Lars prefers open access journal, and noted that *Lindbergia* is downloadable. Cecilia said that *Cryptogamie* is now only on-line. Christian prefers *Lindbergia* as open-access. It was finally agreed that there should be two publications: the checklist, open-access, in a peer-reviewed Journal (*Journal of Bryology* or *Lindbergia* preferred), and the spreadsheets as an *Irish Wildlife Manual*, *Botanica Serbica*, *Lindbergia* or something similar. **ACTION: Nick to approach Liz Kungu (J. Bryol. editor).**

6. Future actions

All contributed to a wide ranging discussion on possible future actions for ECCB.

Future use of Red List data.

Nick wished to establish if all data from the ERL project can be made available. Marta said the outputs from IUCN will be 1 fact sheet per species, a downloadable Access database, a simplified database will be sent to EEA and they will make this available on-line. Maps can be downloaded as Shapefiles in ArcGIS and CSV files with distribution data will be made available. The contact person is David Allen. All free to use. Irene would like to publish that the data is available, so Marta will include words to that effect in the IUCN final report. Beáta can bring attention to the data on the ECCB website.

Important Bryophyte Areas (IBrAs)/hotspots.

Marta said that IUCN will produce statistics, based on 4 spatial maps (distribution of threatened species, a threat map, data deficient areas and endemic species maps) as well as tables of threats, conservation actions and population trends. She mentioned Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) as a global system, connected to IUCN, that could be used for identifying IBrAs and will send details to Nick. She said that if ECCB were to use KBAs for bryophytes, then IUCN would very likely be interested in collaborating.

In relation to hotspots, Marko raised concerns about micro reserves, which can focus attention and cause damage. He preferred larger IBrAs. Oleg agreed and suggested that IBrAs can attract funding. Neil said that a globally recognised system is preferable.

Species action plans.

Nick thought that action plans in the UK do not appear to be much used these days. Tomas said Sweden has bryophyte action plans, initially just for monitoring, but real protection is a problem because it's hard to make conditions better for bryophytes, due to lack of understanding on causes/actions, other than just protecting sites. Beáta said in Hungary there are action plans for EU Annex II bryophytes in protected areas. Norbert mentioned that *Tayloria* trees are secure in Switzerland through contracts with farmers. Oleg gave an example of an action plan to transplant bryophyte species for a proposed hydro scheme. Beáta stated the importance of collating all such action plans. Antun and Irene noted that it is the task of counties to implement actions, but the ECCB website could host information.

Marta mentioned Conservation Evidence (www.conservazionevidence.com), who publish an open-access journal on conservation actions for various groups and consider how much evidence exists for what works, and what doesn't. She advised that ECCB should have a list of priorities and noted that all Red List taxa will be eligible for EU LIFE funding applications. Nick suggested that priority actions could go into the ERL publication.

Beáta and others highlighted the importance on monitoring, both nationally and at a European level. She suggested that ECCB members could collate information on monitoring methods, and which species are being monitored in which countries across Europe. Antun agreed that a monitoring network is important and that ECCB could host this and perhaps recommend methods, e.g. for *Hamatocaulis*.

Ariel emphasised the importance of prioritising actions and suggested that ECCB should develop a list of species for conservation priority in Europe – to identify which countries have more responsibilities for particular species, and which have less. Irene reminded the group that the IUNC SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group have a 'top 10' list of species at highest risk of extinction for each continent. They are in need of one for Europe. Nick said we could focus on Critically Endangered and endemic species to Europe. Ariel said that Switzerland used a scoring system, with a focus on practical issues on what could be achieved (i.e. not climate change).

Protected species.

Neil gave a presentation on Ireland's legally protected bryophytes, advocating the publication of a book to advertise bryophyte conservation, and demonstrating a map viewer to disseminate population data to planners, developers and conservation workers.

Nick wondered if, at the conclusion of the ERL project, there is scope for amending the EU Habitats Directive Annex II list? Marta said this would be problematic and it would potentially open up the Directive to be weakened. Marko indicated that candidate states to the EU, such as Serbia, already recognise Annex II species. Nadya stated that each Oblast in Russia has its own Red List and that Red Lists are often ignored by authorities, although compensation by law may be payable. Oleg said that Belarus has a database of protected plants, available on the internet, and that each protected species has its own 'passport' with recommendations on what to do, and what not to do. Christian said that each of the 9 states of Austria has its own nature laws with little harmony on naming reserves etc.

Website

Beáta and Erzsébet kindly agreed to continue to host the ECCB website and asked that suggestions for website material should be submitted as a block, rather than piecemeal. Rory demonstrated the usefulness of Twitter and social media and offered to manage a Twitter account for the ECCB. He

will liaise with Erzsébet to set this up. Nick thanked Erzsébet and Beáta for their work. **ACTION: Rory to develop Twitter account and liaise with Erzsébet and Beáta on ways forward.**

Publications

Nick and some others thought that an ECCB book, following the ERL, would be potentially useful. Ariel posed the question: who is the target group for such a book? The question was left open. Irene mentioned that a paper on the use of IUCN critical terms, as used for the bryophyte ERL, is ready for submission and that she has also used assessment data on phylogeny of *Anthoceros agrestis* in a new publication. Earlier in discussions, Ariel said that ERL data will be very useful for scientific publications and there is a need to co-ordinate such action to extract and analyse such data. Ariel urged co-operation between ECCB members for publishing scientific data from IUCN. Antun mentioned the European Vegetation Archive (EVA), which can give data for scientific use in publications, at the editors' discretion. This is a huge database resource.

How to take matters forward

Money/resources. Various funding mechanisms were mentioned: LIFE, Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, GBIF (Cecília to give GBIF name to Nick) and the Darwin fund. Nadya said that Russia can give funds for certain joint projects with other countries. Nick mentioned the Bryotan project (Bryophytes of Madagascar). Beáta said that CETAF (Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities), who are working on a COST Action proposal for a monitoring working group, are positive towards bryophytes. The next call is in May and Hungarian Natural History Museum is a partner – and seeks others. Perhaps ECCB or IUCN?

Leaders/personnel. All were agreed that ECCB working groups should be set up immediately with a view to holding workshops at the next ECCB conference in Zagreb in May 2020. The following working groups were agreed; Erzsébet can set up forms on the ECCB website for the working groups, one person as editor for each:

1. IBrAs/ KBAs, including a Map Browser – Nick, Neil (and Marta)
2. Conservation priorities/Top 10 – Norbert (+ others?: Ariel?)
3. Monitoring – Beáta and Oleg
4. Social media/website – Erzsébet, Rory and Neil
5. Publishing/scientific use of IUCN data – Ariel and Irene to discuss and move forward

ACTION: The above named individuals to develop each of these areas before next Board meeting.

Next ECCB conference – Zagreb, Croatia, May 2020.

Antun is kindly hosting the next ECCB conference in Zagreb, probably in the Botanical Gardens. The conference is likely to be held over 4 days, including one pre- and one post-conference excursion day.

Nick asked if there should be another Board meeting in advance of that, perhaps in Madrid to coincide with the IAB meeting? Lars said IAB dates were not yet finalised. As an alternative, a meeting could coincide with the launch of the Red List in September 2019. Marta will ask if we could use the IUCN office in Brussels. **ACTION: Lars to liaise with IAB Committee to finalise dates of next year's conference; Marta to enquire about use of IUCN Brussels office.**

To encourage collaboration between IUCN and ECCB, Nick is to invite IUCN SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group members to the next board meeting. **ACTION: Nick to invite when we have finalise date.**

AOB

Irene announced that there will be an IUCN Red List workshop on 7th and 8th July 2019, prior to the IAB meeting in Madrid, with support from IUCN Cambridge. She has successfully applied for funding of \$10,000 from the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. It is intended for

Bryophyte Specialist Group members, with space for up to 20 people, so once the SG spaces are filled, there may be open places available.

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

Neil Lockhart
ECCB Secretary