





## Report of the 20th meeting of the EuroBirdPortal (EBP) project

Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Brno, Czech Republic, 20-21 November 2023

#### List of attendees:

Sylvain Antoniazza, Stephen Baillie, Gábor Bóné, Gaëtan Delaloye, Cristian Domşa, Ruud Foppen, Nicholas Galea, Juan Gallego-Zamorano, Anna Gamero, Gabriel Gargallo, Sergi Herrando, Wesley Hochachka, Marc Illa, Petr Janecek, Verena Keller, Marina Kipson, Alena Klvanová, Eliška Konopácová, Alexander Kürthy, David Martí Pino, Qenan Maxhuni, Scott Mayson, Tomaž Mihelic, Blas Molina, Anton Morkovin, Jolien Morren, Slave Nakev, Jean-Yves Paquet, Guillem Pocull, Danae Portolou, Stefan Prekajski, Ilze Priedniece, Anca Pui, Dimitrije Radišic, Jozef Ridzon, Xavier Riera, Nermina Sarajlic, Zoltán D. Szabó, Gerard Troost, Silvia Ursul, Danka Uzunova, Nikola Veljkovic, Dylan Verheul, Zdenek Vermouzek, Ajder Vitalie, Petr Voríšek, Zydjon Vorpsi, Erald Xeka and Bojan Zekovic.

**Note:** This regular EBP meeting had a different format than previous ones as it included a LIFE EBP Reinforcement workshop (LIFE Work Package 8) directed to the whole EBP partnership and aimed to support the completion of the EBP data flow by means of adding all the species recorded in Europe and by properly identifying and characterizing all data submitted using particular protocols (e.g. standard monitoring projects, nocmig, project specific field protocols, etc). This is why, this time, we provide a report rather than the usual minutes. The final programme of the meeting, with links to all presentations and the list of participants, as well as the meeting group photo can be found at the end of this document. Note that the programme also included a <u>second LIFE EBP Reinforcement workshop that took place on 22-25 November</u> and that was only open to the partners of the seven target countries of the LIFE project in SE Europe.

## Monday 20/11/2023, 14:00-18:00

The meeting started with the welcoming words of Jan Zukal, director of the Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, and Verena Keller, chair of the EBCC. Then all attendees made a very brief presentation of themselves. In total, the meeting counted with the participation of 49 persons from 21 different countries.

The session continued with short presentations by the representatives of Albania (two different organizations), Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Malta, as it was the first time that these countries were present in an EBP meeting. Each talk consisted in a brief presentation about each organization (type, objectives, main areas of work relevant to EBCC/EBP), a description of their needs regarding standard bird monitoring/online bird portals and how they would like to meet these needs thanks to the LIFE project.

After the coffee break, Gabriel Gargallo gave an overview of the LIFE EBP reinforcement project, highlighting its relevance for the EBCC due the important work that is going to be developed but also because it is the first EU funded project that will be combining the knowhow and the data of the three main EBCC projects (PECBMS, EBBA2 and EBP).







Then, Sergi Herrando gave an overview of the <u>EBBA2 Live Farmland project</u>. During 2022-2023, in a first phase of the project funded in the framework of the EUROPABON project, this initiative tested the capacities of the PECBMS project to be able to frequently update EBBA-like maps of distribution for a large part of Europe. Now, thanks to the LIFE EBP Reinforcement project, this initiative will start a second phase where the data from the EBP project will be added to that of PECBMS and the geographical coverage of the maps expanded to try to cover most or all of Europe.

Petr Voríšek gave an overview of the <u>International Census Plots (ICP) project</u>, which will be implement or further developed in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia during the LIFE EBP Reinforcement project.

The Monday session finished with a time slot entirely allocated to the EBP's protocols table. Here, Gabriel Gargallo gave a detailed overview of the EBP standard and stressed the relevance of using the protocols table to properly identify and characterize all data submitted using more elaborate data collection procedures (e.g. standard monitoring projects, nocmig, project specific field protocols, etc). To highlight current usage and provide some best-case examples, Gerard Troost, Gábor Bóné and Alexander Kürthy presented their experiences using the protocols table when dealing with the EBP data flow of, respectively, SOVON/Trektellen, OpenBirdMaps and Aves-Symfony. David Martí ended up the session giving an overview of the technical instructions (e.g. regarding how to add, edit and crate new protocols) and indicating that ICO will be happy to support the work of the different partners and solve any doubt on the subject. The final message of the session was clear: "protocols are easy"! In other words: dealing with the protocol requires just a little bit of extra work, but the value of the data stored in the EBP databank increases markedly.

All the presentations given on Monday can be found here.

## Tuesday 21/11/2023, 09:00-12:00

The morning session started with a time slot allocated to the EBP data flow implementation. Here, Gabriel Gargallo gave an overview of the EBP standard and explained how the EBP data flow system works and is managed. Gabriel explained that portals are connected to the EBP data flow in two different ways: most portals use the EBP API to submit the data to the central EBP databank, but in a few other cases it is the central EBP databank that extracts the data from the external portals. In these later cases, the data flow is entirely implemented and controlled by the ICO team. Afterwards, David Martí reviewed the current data connectivity instructions and the use of the EBP API and presented the overall approach that will be followed to add the data of the new species and the protocols information (timings, how to deal with new/old data, etc). David explained that he will start the process and fine-tune the data flow system and corresponding instructions by dealing first with the data from the portals whose data-flow is directly controlled by him. In a second phase, and in previously agreed portal-specific time-windows, the rest of the portals will be connected.

The morning meeting finished with a session allocated to taxonomy. Gabriel Gargallo introduced the topic and explained that given that the EBCC is following the HBW-BirdLife taxonomy, now that we were going to add all species occurring in Europe to the EBP data flow,







it made sense to do so using the last version available of this taxonomy: namely, version 8.0, which will be made available in December 2023. Gabriel stressed that, at least since version 7.0, the HBW-BirdLife taxonomy included some elements that were key in order for us to use it as the reference: 1) it is kept updated on a yearly basis, which is worth to know even if species lists used by EBCC projects do not need to be updated as frequently, 2) includes all subspecies (vital for mapping), and 3) has unique and stable species id's. There were some discussions about this topic, but the general consensus was that it was right to follow this specific version of the HBW-BirdLife list.

Afterwards, Marc Illa explained that he will be the main contact point at ICO regarding taxonomical issues and described the main problems that the local portals may encounter when mapping their own taxonomy against the EBP one (e.g. splits, lumps, dashes, etc). Gabriel commented that this mapping exercise should be done by each portal because they have the best knowledge to do so. However, he insisted that the ICO team will be there to help as much as necessary. Moreover, Marc explained that as most portals use either the HBW-BirdLife taxonomy or the IOC one, he will prepare a mapping template from the last version of the IOC list to HBW-BirdLife taxonomy v. 8.0 to support the work of the partners.

Marc also explained that the EBP will archive the mapping tables used by the different portals in order to have better information on this process and to be able to better deal with potential problems in the data at later stages of the project.

Gabriel, finally, explained that the aim was to keep storing only the EBP data at the species level and keeping things as simple as possible. It was clear, however, that in some cases it could be necessary to add some special taxonomical entities to the EBP species reference table due to taxonomical or/and identification problems (e.g. using "Sturnus vulgaris/unicolor" for Sturnus vulgaris or Sturnus unicolor that could not be identified at species level). The general agreement was that it was better not to try to identify all these potential situations beforehand and that it was better to start the process and deal with them as they eventually appear.

Regarding the frequency of update of the EBP taxonomy, given that the main existing taxonomies are in the process to develop a single global taxonomy, the consensus was to use the above selected one in the course of the LIFE project (2023-2026) and await a bit to see when to make the next update.

All the presentations given on Tuesday morning can be found <a href="here">here</a>.

## Tuesday 21/11/2023, 14:00-18:00

The first part of this afternoon session was devoted to cover some EBP topics that were less directly related to the LIFE project.

Gabriel Gargallo started by giving a brief overall update of the EBP project. Gabriel showed some stats highlighting the positive developments of the project in terms of data quantity and quality and pointed out that, with the addition of Malta, the EBP will already cover all EU member states. Gabriel also stressed that during the next three years most of the EBP work







will be developed in the framework of two main projects: the LIFE EBP Reinforcement project and the new EFSA-EBP-EURING contract.

Ruud Foppen gave an update on this new 3-years long EFSA contract, which started in late 2022 with the main aim of converting the pilot early warning system on Avian Influenza developed in the previous contract in a more fully fledged system with improved models of movement and distribution and better capabilities. Stephen Baillie then presented one of the first outputs of this new contract: the implementation of the <a href="Bird Flu Radar">Bird Flu Radar</a> in the <a href="new Migration Mapping Tool">new Migration Mapping Tool</a> and the creation of an automatic alert system.

Next, Stephen presented the results of a paper that analysed the geographical patterns of arrival of 30 common migrant bird species using EBP data. Specifically, this work, lead by the colleagues from the BTO, quantifies the inter-specific variation in these patterns and relate these to species characteristics and environmental conditions.

Then, Wesley Hochachka presented the GBIF Humboldt extension, an extension of the GBIF code that will allow GBIF to correctly store and handle the datasets collected using more structured protocols (e.g. complete lists).

Finally, Gabriel Gargallo commented that the next in-person EBP meeting will take place in autumn 2024, most probably October. As the one taking place in Brno, this meeting will be again a combination of a regular EBP meeting and various LIFE EBP Reinforcement workshops (two linked to the EBP viewer and, thus, of overall interest to the EBP community, and one focused on the partners of SE Europe and the regional dynamization campaign that will be organized in that area in 2025 and 2026). Given the geographical focus of the LIFE project in the SE Europe, Gabriel indicated that the objective is to organize the meeting in that area, particularly in one of the core target countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia). Gabriel also indicated that a second EBP meeting, much more concise and in online format, will take place in late winter-early spring 2024.

The second part of this afternoon session was devoted to the use of data collected outside primary areas by EBP and the local partners.

Gabriel Gargallo introduced the subject, described the current situation and detailed the EBP policy on the topic. Then, representatives from Observation.org, eBird, Ornitho and Trektellen explained which were the technical and legal possibilities of these portals in terms of sharing observations and personal information with the local partners. In general, all systems showed they had the capacity to do so but that, particularly in relation to the use of personal data, specific agreements/contracts may need to be signed. However, the capacity to share the data automatically and close to real-time depended on the very specific capacities of the API services provided by each system.

All the presentations given on Tuesday afternoon can be found <a href="here">here</a>.

Gabriel Gargallo 28/12/2023







# Annex 1. Programme of the 20th meeting of the EBP project & LIFE EBP Reinforcement workshops (with link to presentations & list of participants) — *Brno, Czech Republic, November 20-25 2023*

## **Programme**

EBP meeting and workshop on EBP data flow Workshop on online portals and ICP\* LIFE coordination meeting\*\* EBP Steering Committee meeting\*\*\*

Time slot	Monday 20th	Tuesday 21st	Wednesday 22nd	Thursday 23rd	Friday 24th	Saturday 25th
09:00-12:00 (with 30' break)	LIFE coordination meeting	EBP taxonomy Data flow	Introduction to standard bird meeting (SBM) Introduction to ICP	Introduction to online bird portals (OBP) Portal set-up Participation	Data handling and management  Best Practice Guide Update	Field session 1: using the ICP methodology field (picnic) Field session 2:
12:00-14:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	using OBP data
14:00-18:00 (with two 30' breaks)	Official opening of the workshops New LIFE overview Protocols	Regular EBP meeting	ICP methodology ICP case studies ICP data managemen	Data quality Data checking	Conservation/policy relevance of SBM & OBP	collection apps in the field (session ending a sunset)
		Conference			Dinner	

<sup>\*</sup>Only for partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia & Serbia

<sup>\*\*</sup>Only for the LIFE consortium members \*\*\*Only for EBP Steering Committee members







## **Detailed content of the LIFE workshops**

# 1) Preparatory workshop to complete EBP data flow (connectivity, taxonomy & protocols; LIFE Work Package 8)

This workshop is directed to the whole EBP partnership and aims to support the completion of the EBP data flow by means of adding all the species recorded in Europe and by properly identifying and characterizing all data submitted using particular protocols (e.g. standard monitoring projects, nocmig, project specific field protocols, etc). The workshop will be used to review the instructions and give practical examples regarding how to use the protocols table and to solve eventual issues related to the mapping of the species taxonomies.

## Monday 20/11/2023

## → Link to presentations Monday 14:00-18:00

#### 14:00-15:00

Official opening, welcoming words, briefing on organization/logistics (J.Zukal, P.Voříšek, G.Gargallo)

Short presentations by new partners (representatives from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Malta)

### 15:00-15:30 Coffee break

15:30-16:30

LIFE EBP reinforcement overview (G.Gargallo)

EBBA2 Live overview (S.Herrando)

ICP overview (P.Voříšek)

16:30-17:00 Coffee break

17:00-18:00

**Protocols** 

• The protocols table (overview of the EBP standard; incl. relevance of having a GBIF doi url to the metadata). (G.Gargallo)







- The relevance of using the protocols table (G.Gargallo)
- Current usage & best case examples (G.Gargallo and representatives from SOVON/Trektellen, Aves-Symfony and OpenBirdMaps)
- Technical instructions (e.g. adding the data, edits/new protocols) and ICO support. (D.Martí, G.Gargallo)

## Tuesday 21/11/2023

→ Link to presentations Tuesday 09:00-12:00

## 09:00-10:00

EBP taxonomy (G.Gargallo/M.Illa)

- Re-confirm taxonomy to be followed (EBP, as part of EBCC, is following the HBW-BirdLife Checklist, the same one used by the EU (e.g. for the Birds Directive))
  - Resolution used (species level)
  - Frequency of update.
- Mapping local portals specific taxonomies
  - Process instructions/ICO support
  - Case examples
  - Expected problems/solutions (e.g. splits, lumps, dashes, etc)
  - Checking
  - Creation of the EBP species mapping archive (to complete metadata)

#### 10:00-10:30 Coffee break

### 10:30-12:00

Data flow implementation

- Overview of the EBP standard and EBP data flow (external/internal data submissions, etc). (G.Gargallo)
- Overview of the current data connectivity instructions (EBP API, etc). (D.Martí)
- Adding the new species and the protocols details: presentation/discussion of the overall approach (timing, dealing with new/old data). (D.Martí)
- Reviewing the new instructions and next steps. (D.Martí)

## 12:00-14:00 Lunch







## → Link to presentations Tuesday 14:00-18:00

#### 14:00-15:30

## Regular EBP meeting

- EBP overall update (G.Gargallo)
- Update on the new EFSA contract (R.Foppen)
- Bird Flu Radar (S.Baillie)
- Update on the NERC project (S.Baillie)
- GBIF Humboldt extension (W.Hochachka)
- Next EBP meeting (G.Gargallo)
- Other issues (G.Gargallo)

#### 15:30-16:00 Coffee break

#### 16:00-17:30

- Using data collected outside primary areas (by EBP and local partners)
  - Current situation/needs & EBP policy (G.Gargallo)
  - Sharing observations and personal information with local partners (technical and legal possibilities) (case examples by representatives from Observation.org, eBird, Ornitho, Trektellen)

**19:00-21:00 Conference dinner** (covered by the organization)

## 2) Training workshop on online portals & ICP (LIFE Work Package 2)

The workshop will be directed to the local ornithological organizations from the target countries of the LIFE Work Package 2 (i.e. Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Moldova) .and will aim at training the participants in methods of collecting portal data, standard bird monitoring, recruitment/maintenance of fieldworkers/data contributors, data management and data quality control. Further, the workshop will provide an overview of policy relevance of portal and monitoring data in order to further convince the participants of their vital role. The workshop will also count with the participation of organizations from neighbouring countries with experience in successfully developing portal/monitoring in the region (e.g. the EBP/PECBMS partners from Romania (SOR)).

## Standard bird monitoring (including International Census Plots (ICP)







## Wednesday 22/11/2023

## → Link to presentations Wednesday 09:00-12:00

## 09:00-09:15

Welcoming words, briefing on organization/logistics and presentation of the tools that will be used for dynamization: Microsoft Forms (for initial "icebreaker"/knowledge check questionnaires) and Kahoot (quizzes to check messages/content has been understood) (P.Voříšek, G.Gargallo, X.Riera)

## 09:15-10:15

Introduction to standard bird monitoring (P.Voříšek)

- Overview of field methods
- Sampling
- Bird recording process (categories)
- Working with fieldworkers
- Aims of bird monitoring, what has to be considered.

## 10:15-10:45 Coffee break

### 10:45-12:00

Introduction to ICP (P.Voříšek)

- Aims
- Plans
- Current situation

Principles of data management in bird monitoring schemes (Z.Vermouzek)

ICP methodology (P.Voříšek)

- Logic behind the method selected
- Methodology

#### 12:00-14:00 Lunch

→ Link to presentations Wednesday 14:00-18:00

#### 14:00-15:00

ICP case studies: case examples (presentations by local organizers from Moldova, Serbia, Montenegro)







## 15:00-15:30 Coffee break

#### 15:30-16:30

ICP data management (links to portals): case studies on using portals to handle standard bird monitoring (J-Y.Paquet, C.Domsa)

#### 16:30-17:00 Coffee break

### 17:00-18:00

ICP data management (final remarks) (P.Voříšek)

- Management
- Data quality control
- Links to portals
- Data requirements by PECBMS

## Thursday 23.11.2023

## **Online portals**

## → Link to presentations Thursday 09:00-12:00

## 09:00-10:00

Introduction (G.Gargallo)

- Main characteristics/capabilities (web + app, data entry + data feedback, casual data vs monitoring)
- Main pros/cons of the different solutions (local to global, casual to monitoring, own solution to third party/shared, adaptable to fixed, free to costly, birds alone to multitaxon)
- Know your needs!

#### 10:00-10:30 Coffee break

#### 10:30-12:00

Portal set-up (M.Illa)

- Geographical shapes (country limits/departments, aerial photos/accessible/free)
- Taxonomy







- Translations
- Document functionalities and relevance (too!; why participating is important) in local language (pdf, videos)
- Sensible species and associated filters (hiding/not hiding, etc)
- Set-up internal organization (portal committee, data reviewers, rarities committee)
- Set-up automatic filters (e.g. geographical, phenological, quantitative)
- Training the organizers themselves

#### 12:00-14:00 Lunch

→ Link to presentations Thursday 14:00-18:00

#### 14:00-14:30

Participation (recruitment) (X.Riera)

- Define key message to potential participants (My own note-book/archive (in the cloud, always accessible and searchable) + part of a larger community + contributing key data to ornithological knowledge (citizen scientist)/conservation)
- Overall communication (social media, regular news channels, etc) (once all setup steps are done).
- Talks/workshops/training courses to local groups.
- Talks/workshops/training courses to key people.

## 14:30-15:00

Participation (Boosting/maintaining participation) (M.Illa)

- Feedback, feedback (regular news on portal, talks/courses, digital bulletin)
- Data collection challenges (incl. LIFE specific website) (big days, rankings, etc)
- Engage local administration, organizations/groups to contribute data and/or to boost data use.
- Set-up local projects (even light ones).
- Combining efforts/synergising with standard bird monitoring.

## 15:00-15:30 Coffee break

#### 15:30-16:30

Data quality (G.Gargallo)







- Why better data? Knew your needs (modelling, reporting, etc)!
- Understanding the basic concepts:

Structured vs unstructured data Location, which location? (Of the bird, of the observer, of both? At which detail?)

- Casual data (numbers, precise location).
- Complete lists (relevance, meaning of completeness, numbers, precise location, track...).
- Protocols/fixed lists.
- Breeding codes.
- Behaviour (main types, flying overs, direction, etc)
- Mortality.

### 16:30-17:00 Coffee break

#### 17:00-18:00

Data checking (M.Illa)

- Setting-up automatic filters (e.g. geographical, phenological, quantitative)
- Manual checks.
- Dealing with rarities & involving rarities committees/local panels.
- Communicating potential errors (best practices).
- Handling extreme cases (e.g. unreliable observers, systematic liars, overly inexperienced observers, etc).

## Friday 24.11.2023

## Online portals

→ Link to presentations Friday 09:00-12:00

#### 09:00-10:30

Data handling and management (G.Gargallo)

- Privacy Policy & Terms of use (data ownership (with respect to observer and system provider), data openness, personal data (names/scientific data), data sharing rules, etc)
- Security (copies, etc)
- One vs multiple own databases/solutions (pros/cons) Importing/exporting data (incl. best practices on handling data request and sharing data)
- Making the most of your data (API's, etc)







Making use of all available data (e.g. from other EBP portals)

#### 10:30-11:00 Coffee break

#### 11:00-12:00

Update of the LIFE EBP Best Practice Guide on online portals (M.Kipson)

- Presentation of the process and steps to be done (the current document will be circulated among the participants beforehand)
- Identify materials and topics produced/treated during the workshop that should be included in the update (deadline for update: March 2024; deadline for translation into Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Romanian and Serbian: December 2024).
- What is missing the most in BPG?

## 12:00-14:00 Lunch

# Conservation/policy relevance of online bird portals & standard bird monitoring

→ Link to presentations Friday 14:00-18:00

#### 14:00-15:00

EU level (case examples on trends, indicators, EU reporting, avian borne diseases, hunting, etc):

EU level (A.Staneva)
PECBMS, science (A.Klvaňová)
EBP/EBBA Live (G.Gargallo)

## 15:00-15:30 Coffee break

#### 15:30-16:30

Local level (case examples (including target area and nearby regions))

The case of Romania (C.Domsa)
The case of Czech Republic (P.Voříšek)
The case of Catalonia (M.Illa)

## 16:30-17:00 Coffee break







## 17:00-17:50

Local level (understand/define local needs) (P.Voříšek, M.Kipson)

## 17:50-18:00

Explanation & instructions on Saturday field session (incl. defining groups) (P.Voříšek, X.Riera)

## **Saturday 25.11.2023**

## **Field session**

## 08:00-11:00

Using the ICP methodology (P.Voříšek, C.Domsa)

- Reviewing the method
- Conducting a ICP
- Numbers (estimating numbers, double counting)
- Recording behaviour, breeding codes
- Evaluation & feedback

## 11:00-12:00 Picnic

#### 12:00-15:00

Using online bird portals data collection apps in the field (M.Illa, X.Riera, C.Domsa)

- Dealing with location (of the bird, of the observer, of both; at which detail?)
- Numbers (estimating numbers, double counting)
- Recording casual vs complete lists (meaning of completeness)
- Recording behaviour, breeding codes
- Evaluation & feedback







# List of participants

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Annex 2. Picture of the participants.

