

# **Collaborative agreement between on-line bird recording schemes operating in Europe**

This agreement is between organisations operating national or regional on-line bird recording schemes within Europe, and also includes those that provide software for the operation of such schemes. The signatories agree to collaborate with each other as outlined below so as to promote effective ecological research and biological recording at a range of scales from local to continental. The collaboration will be undertaken under the auspices of the European Bird Census Council (EBCC).

## **1. Objectives**

- 1.1 The schemes will develop protocols and mechanisms for sharing data in ways that will allow analyses to be undertaken at a European scale.
- 1.2 A specific aim of such data sharing will be to support the development of a European Breeding Bird Atlas by EBCC by 2020
- 1.3 A further aim will be to support research on patterns of migratory movements, wintering areas etc. at a European scale, and to work towards the development of on-line material illustrating such migration patterns in close to real time.
- 1.4 Schemes will work together to promote a model where there is a single primary recording scheme operating in each country or region. It is recognized that having a single recording scheme is important for developing strong observer networks to support a range of structured national and regional surveys, as well as for efficient collation and standardised and objective validation of data from bird recording.

## **2. Sharing data and information**

- 2.1 Where on-line results are produced by combining data from different schemes, they may be displayed on the EBCC website, or other similar common websites, and will also be available for display within the websites of the individual bird recording schemes that supplied the data.
- 2.2 The schemes will work towards the standardisation of recording protocols between schemes, so as to maximize opportunities for research based on combining data between schemes.
- 2.3 The schemes will encourage effort-based recording through the collection of complete lists and the use of other standardised protocols designed to provide data from which robust conclusions can be drawn.
- 2.4 All data uses will require the permission of the scheme supplying the data (although for practical purposes it may be that such permission might be granted in advance in some circumstances).
- 2.5 Where data are shared, the ownership and Intellectual Property Rights of the datasets will remain with the schemes supplying the data and onward transmission of such data may not take place without the permission of the schemes concerned.
- 2.6 Arrangements for collaboration, authorship and funding will be agreed on a case by case basis.

## **3. Technical collaboration**

- 3.1 The schemes will do their best to share technical expertise and software, recognising that the opportunities to do this may be limited by the fact that different software systems are used in different countries.

#### **4. Primary recording areas and exchange of records**

- 4.1 Normally one on-line bird recording scheme will be designated to be the primary scheme covering a particular country (or occasionally regions within countries). EBCC will maintain an agreed list of such scheme coverage, drawing primarily on the advice of the bird survey organisations that are represented within EBCC.
- 4.2 Schemes will not attempt to recruit observers or promote themselves as a primary recording scheme to observers living in areas where the primary coverage is provided by a different scheme. Where observers submit data to a scheme from outside its primary recording area, a scheme will use its best endeavours to inform the observers about the main recording scheme for that area.
- 4.3 Schemes may allow observers based in their primary recording area to enter records from other parts of Europe (for example, when their observers are on holiday). If they collect such information, they will use their best endeavours to forward the records to the primary recording scheme concerned, including the identity and contact details of observers (subject to the observers' permission having been given, and subject to national laws). Checking and verification of records is best undertaken by suitably enabled in-country experts, but verification decisions should be fed back to the original system used for data entry for the sake of consistency.

#### **5. Collaborative mechanisms**

- 5.1 EBCC will provide information about the network of European bird recording schemes that are participants in this agreement on its website.
- 5.2 Discussion between those involved in the operation of on-line bird recording schemes will mostly take place by email.
- 5.3 Periodic meetings of those involved in operating on-line recording schemes are envisaged, with that aim of holding such meetings at least every two years, either linked to an EBCC conference or separately.
- 5.4 EBCC will use its best endeavours to ensure adequate representation of the work on on-line bird recording schemes within its Board.

#### **6. Membership of the agreement**

- 6.1 Schemes may join this agreement by agreement of EBCC, having signed a written undertaking to abide by the terms of this agreement.
- 6.2 Schemes may withdraw from this agreement by giving three months notice in writing to the Secretary of EBCC. Any scheme withdrawing from this agreement will cease to use any data or results that it has obtained through this agreement and that were collected by other parties outside its core area of operation. Data already contributed under the agreement will continue to be available for uses that have already been agreed as described under 'Sharing data and information'.
- 6.3 If a member scheme fails to abide by the terms of this agreement, they may be given three months written notice of the need to comply with the agreement. If they fail to comply with the agreement within this period, their membership of the agreement will be terminated.

4 October 2013

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operating in Europe**

*Written undertaking*

Name of the organization:

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Name and web address of the on-line bird recording portal:

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Primary recording country/region:

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Herein, we agree to abide by the terms of this agreement,

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*(Signature, name & institutional post)*

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_