

British Ornithologists' Union

advancing ornithology



Annual Report & Accounts

birds | people | science



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英国鸟类学会会刊

2023

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President's statement

Dr Graeme Buchanan



It is now a year since I became President of the British Ornithologists' Union. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the AGM and spring conference in 2023 but I am very much looking forward to being in Nottingham this year. In the past year, BOU has settled into new ways of working, after Covid, and Leila Walker is fully established as our excellent COO. This year has also been a period of learning for me! Having previously contributed to Meetings Committee and sat as an Ordinary member on Council I was aware of the activities that drive the BOU but the past year has given me the full picture of just how much time and effort the volunteers who sit on or chair committees, or contribute to Council, give to BOU. This includes the support officers who do so much for to conferences, social media and blogs. I welcome all those who have joined us in these roles this year and thank everyone who has come to the end of their term on a committee or as a support officer.

In 2023, we saw the delivery of the ambitious autumn conference on flyways. As those who attended know, this online event spanned the globe over the course of 24 hours. The organisation and logistics of the conference were impressive. Talks were themed and timed around flyways, and the event was enjoyed across the globe, as the talks were timed to match the working day in each of the focal flyways. By my reckoning, the speakers came from 19 countries, reflecting the global reach of BOU.

The autumn also saw a special evening of talks by those with PhD studentships funded by the John and Pat Warham legacy. BOU has administered this legacy by giving funding for PhD students based in Commonwealth countries to study Sphenisciform and Procellariiform seabirds (penguins and petrels). These groups formed the core research interest of John Warham. The evening featured a diverse range of talks from around the globe, covering Round Island petrels, crested penguins and King Penguins. We wish the most recent recipient, John Lamaris, well as he starts his PhD research on Beck's Petrels. One of the first tasks for him will be finding the breeding areas of this poorly known species.

We expanded the BOU's Management Group, from President, Secretary (Mark Eaton), Treasurer (Graham Appleton) and COO, welcoming both BOU Vice Presidents (Emma Cunningham and Richard Bradbury). This larger group broadens the expertise available and has enabled us to share tasks more widely across the group. This year the expanded Management Group has undertaken a review of BOU's membership, conferences, and direction and mission. BOU's mission statement was last reviewed in 2010 and making sure that BOU is going in the right direction and maintaining support is essential. Covid changed many things and, while some areas have returned to business as usual, our ways of working and physical attendance at events will likely have changed. I see it myself as I work more from home and have the option of attending workshops and conferences online rather than in person. The changes we



ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Founded 1858

Registered as a Charity:

England and Wales, no. 249877

Scotland, no. SC044850

Address

PO Box 79, Pembroke SA72 9AX, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 7485 385451

Email: bou@bou.org.uk

Web: bou.org.uk / ibis.ac.uk

As at 31 December 2023

BOU Staff

Chief Operations Officer

Dr Leila K. Walker

Journal & Office Manager

Mrs Angela F. Langford

Council Officers

President Dr Graeme Buchanan

Vice Presidents Prof Emma Cunningham
Dr Richard Bradbury

Honorary Secretary Dr Mark Eaton

Honorary Treasurer Mr Graham F. Appleton

Ordinary Members of Council

Dr Sonya Clegg (Chair, Grants Committee), Dr Mark Eddowes, Dr Tom Finch (Chair, Engagement Committee), Dr Cat Horswill, Dr Rosemarie Kentie (Chair, IBIS Management Committee), Dr Alex Lees (Chair, Records Committee), Dr Julie Miller, Dr Catriona Morrison (Chair, Meetings Committee), Dr Stuart Sharp and Dr Lucy Wright (Chair, Awards Nominations Committee).

have seen could have implications for BOU membership and conferences. Organising and running our conferences are major parts of what BOU does so we have taken this opportunity to look at both of these areas and to reflect upon the BOU's direction and mission.

The membership review, led by Emma Cunningham, concluded that membership has been stable post 2019. This was reassuring and indicated that the benefits associated with BOU membership remain relevant to ornithologists. During the review, we identified an opportunity to understand the composition of our membership in more detail, helping establish trends and patterns. Consequently, we are discussing collecting a small amount of extra information about members to inform future reviews. This will, obviously, all be GDPR compliant. The review of conferences, led by Cat Morrison and Mark Eaton, concluded that our conferences aim *"to support the ornithological community around ornithological science"*. Other organisations and conferences cover aspects of what BOU does but birds remain at the centre of BOU activities. Based on the assessment, conferences will remain themed, and give an opportunity for ornithological scientists to get together, to share their work and hear about the work of others. Conferences will be in person in spring and likely mixed (online and/or in person) in autumn. It was recognised in the review of membership, conferences, and BOU direction in general that birds lie at the heart of the Union.

These reviews fed into a broader review of BOU's direction by a subset of members of Council, led by Leila Walker, Richard Bradbury and myself. The mission statement up to 2023, has been *"The British Ornithologists' Union will promote understanding and conservation of the world's birds, advance ornithology within the scientific community and promote scientific ornithology to the wider birdwatching public."*

A working group considered this mission statement in the context of the conference and membership review outcomes. The group agreed that BOU was currently meeting its charitable objects which are 'the advancement of the science of ornithology' but, while the mission statement was broadly appropriate, it needed some revisions to reflect our current and desired investment in activities. The new version, as agreed by Council, now says:

"The British Ornithologists' Union will promote ornithological science across the international scientific community, support the individuals who contribute to that science, and grow understanding of that science among a wider community."

These edits intend to: (i) reduce the focus on conservation, which is just one aspect of BOU activity; (ii) retain the focus on scientific ornithology; (iii) highlight the important role of BOU in supporting the careers of ornithological researchers, and; (iv) clarify that BOU's audiences are wider than just the birdwatching public, for instance including industry and government.

ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

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Trustees

The following individuals served as Trustees of the charity at the time of Council approving this annual report and accounts:

Mr Graham F. Appleton, Dr Richard Bradbury, Dr Graeme Buchanan, Dr Sonya Clegg, Prof Emma Cunningham, Dr Mark Eaton, Dr Mark Eddowes, Dr Tom Finch, Prof Tony Fox, Dr Cat Horswill, Dr Rosemarie Kentie, Dr Alex Lees (Chair, Records Committee), Dr Julie Miller, Dr Catriona Morrison (Chair, Meetings Committee), Dr Stuart Sharp and Dr Lucy Wright.

The following individuals also served as Trustees of the charity for part of the year covered by this annual report and accounts: Dr Francis Daunt, Prof Tony Fox, Dr James Gilroy, Dr Rosemary Trevelyan and Prof Juliet Vickery.

Editorial positions

At 31 December 2023 the following editorial positions were held:

IBIS Editor in Chief	Prof Jennifer Gill
IBIS Editors	Dr Rauri Bowie
	Dr Richard Fuller
	Prof Rebecca Kimball
	Dr Ruedi Nager
	Prof Jeremy Wilson
Blog Editor	Mr Charlie Russell

Investment Trustees

The following individuals served as Investment Trustees for the Union during the period of this report and accounts: Mr Nigel J. Crocker, Mr Richard Price and Mr Stephen J. Rumsey.

This new mission statement very much promotes the charitable objectives of BOU. The advancement of the science of ornithology lies right at the core of what BOU does, through IBIS, conferences, and social media. This advancement covers all aspects of ornithological science, and that taxa-specific focus is a strength of BOU. The review has been a valuable exercise for BOU Management Group – one that we aim to repeat every few years – to ensure BOU continues to advance ornithological science as effectively as possible.

I look forward to working with all in BOU for the next three years to deliver this mission.

Structure, Governance & Management

The British Ornithologists' Union is an unincorporated charity, no. 249877 (England & Wales) and SC044850 (Scotland).

The object of the BOU is the promotion of the science of ornithology. Its governing document is the Rules adopted at the Annual General Meeting in 2010, and last updated by Council in July 2020. Under the rules, the governing body, the Council of the Union, is responsible for the running of the Union's business, supported by its staff. Council may delegate functions to standing or ad hoc committees that report to Council. The Union's Council retains overall responsibility for matters so delegated.

The BOU has six standing committees: the Awards Nominations Committee, the Engagement Committee, the Grants Committee, the IBIS Management Committee, the Meetings Committee and the Records Committee.

Elected members of Council are Trustees of the charity. Members of Council are recruited from within the ornithological community. Where possible, Council members will have served on one or more of the BOU's standing committees prior to nomination for election to Council. Those standing for election to BOU Council as an incoming chair of a standing committee will have served for at least two years on the respective committee. On election, new Council members are provided with relevant Union documents to help familiarise them with current Union activities and to provide information on the duties and responsibilities of being a Trustee of the Union.

Council continually reviews the risks to which the Union is exposed and is satisfied that, as far as is practicable, it has taken appropriate steps to mitigate any risk.

The Union employs two full-time staff who work from their respective home offices. Staff salaries are reviewed annually, as part of our staff appraisal process, conducted by the President and Honorary Secretary. Pay is normally adjusted in line with



ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

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Bankers

The Union holds accounts with the following banks:

CAF Bank Ltd

25 Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Natwest Bank plc

PO Box 6037, Brompton Road, London SW13 1XJ

Solicitor

The Union's solicitors are:

Laytons

Ranger House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4UL

Accountant & Auditor

The Union's accountant and auditor are:

Azets Audit Services

Westpoint, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 6FZ

inflation (CPIH) and there is an option to award an unconsolidated performance-based bonus, in exceptional circumstances.

Objectives & Activities

Mission statement

The British Ornithologists' Union will promote ornithological science across the international scientific community, support the individuals who contribute to that science, and grow understanding of that science among a wider community. The BOU mission will be achieved by the following means:

- Publishing IBIS as a leading international journal of ornithological science.
- Organising a programme of meetings and conferences.
- Awarding grants and bursaries for ornithological research.
- Encouraging liaison between those actively engaged in ornithological research.
- Providing a representative body of the scientific community, able to provide ornithological information and advice to government and other policy makers.
- Maintaining and publishing the official list of birds recorded in Britain–The British List.

Council activities

At our AGM in April, held during BOU2023 at the University of Nottingham, Dr Graeme Buchanan was elected as President to replace Prof Juliet Vickery, Prof Emma Cunningham was elected as a Vice President to replace Prof Tony Fox, Dr Catriona Morrison was elected as Chair of Meetings Committee to replace Dr Francis Daunt, Dr Alex Lees was elected as Chair of Records Committee to replace Dr James Gilroy and Dr Stuart Sharp was elected as an Ordinary member of Council to replace Dr Rosemary Trevelyan.

We were delighted that Prof Jane Reid (University of Aberdeen, UK & Norwegian University of Science and Technology) accepted our invitation to deliver the 10th Alfred Newton Lecture at BOU2023 (page 6). We were equally delighted to award the 2023 Godman-Salvin Prize to Prof Cao Lei (Chinese Academy of Sciences), who accepted the Prize at the 20th Goose Specialist Group Meeting in Mongolia (page 6), and to award the 2023 Janet Kear Union Medal to Steve Dudley, who accepted the medal at BOU2023 (page 7).

Elected members of Council, as Trustees of the charity, confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing objectives and activities.

Activities in Scotland

The BOU is an unincorporated charity registered in Scotland (SC044850). As well as having members in Scotland, at the time of this report, five of our Trustees, Dr Graeme Buchanan, Prof Emma Cunningham, Dr Tom Finch, Dr Julie Miller and Dr

ALFRED NEWTON LECTURE



Prof Jane Reid delivered the 10th Alfred Newton Lecture at BOU2023.

Jane's Alfred Newton Lecture, entitled *Integrating seasonal movements into evolutionary ecology*, considered the various factors influencing spatio-seasonal population dynamics in the context of dramatic environmental variation.

GODMAN-SALVIN PRIZE



Prof Cao Lei received the Godman-Salvin Prize at the 20th International Goose Specialist Group Meeting, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in August 2023.

The award recognises Lei's extraordinary coordination of waterbird researchers around the world, her role in pioneering research and monitoring programmes that have broken new ground in ornithology and movement ecology, and her creation of functional research and conservation networks across cultural divides.

For the full citation see IBIS 166: 345-347 doi: 10.1111/ibi.13255

Catriona Morrison, and two of our journal editors, Dr Rudolf Nager and Prof Jeremy Wilson, also resided there.

Achievements & Performance

Reports on our activities from the BOU Office and Standing Committees

The BOU Office

Staff

During the year, the BOU employed two home-based staff members within the BOU Office: Angela Langford (Journal & Office Manager) and Leila Walker (Chief Operations Officer).

Office duties

The BOU Office is responsible for the effective running of the BOU, managed by the Chief Operations Officer and overseen by Council and the Union's standing committees.

The BOU Office's key responsibilities are:

- to undertake the day to day running of the BOU;
- to support BOU Council and its committees, implementing much of the work arising from them, specifically:
 - working with the IBIS Management Committee, manage non-editorial, business and marketing of the Union's journal, IBIS;
 - working with the Meetings Committee, organise BOU conferences and meetings;
 - working with the Engagement Committee, develop and deliver engagement initiatives including equality and diversity items;
 - working with the Grants Committee, manage the Union's Small Grants and Career Development Bursary schemes, the John & Pat Warham Studentships and the Brenda & Tony Gibbs Awards;
 - working with the Records Committee, manage the British List and associated areas;
 - working with the Awards Nominations Committee to develop and deliver changes to our nominations processes and awards criteria;
- working with the Honorary Treasurer, to maintain accounts and budgets and the preparation of annual accounts and annual forecasts;
- working with the IBIS Editorial Team, to oversee and manage the manuscript process and flow for IBIS, and to oversee marketing of the journal;
- to oversee the business and contractual sides of IBIS;
- to service the BOU membership;
- to develop and manage the BOU's web content;
- to develop and manage the BOU's social media activity;
- to undertake routine administration;
- to manage BOU sales, stock and storage facility;

JANET KEAR UNION MEDAL



Steve Dudley received the Janet Kear Union Medal at BOU2023.

The award recognises Steve's outstanding service to the BOU, and his remarkable contribution to the community that BOU serves, from his appointment as BOU Administrator in 1997 to his retirement as BOU Chief Operations Officer in 2022.

For the full citation see IBIS 165: 1088-1089 doi: 10.1111/ibi.13203

- to handle general enquiries, press and publicity.

In addition to working with the Union's various committees (see individual committee reports below) the BOU Office undertook the activities outlined below.

Website

BOU.ORG.UK

In 2023, the BOU website received 220,287 page views (232,544 in 2022, -5%), representing 95,584 users (100,007 in 2022; -4%).

Table 1: Top-10 most viewed areas of the BOU website by number of page views (2023). Percentage change with 2022 indicated in brackets.

1. The British List [*] /the-british-list/	26,817 (+3%)	6. Small Research Grants /funding/small-research-grants/	3,780 (+12%)
2. Home page /bou.org.uk/	12,942 (-18%)	7. Member login /login/	3,744 (+23%)
3. IBIS [†] /ibis/	10,003 (-16%)	8. BOU2024 <i>Urban birds</i> /event/urban-birds-bou2024/	3,142 (NA)
4. Conferences & meetings [‡] /conferences-and-meetings/	5,983 (-9%)	9. #theBOUblog [§] /blog/	2,801 (-23%)
5. BOUSci23 <i>Global flyways</i> /event/bousci23-global-flyways/	5,555 (NA)	10. BOU2023 <i>Evo. responses</i> /bou2023-evolutionary-responses/	2,569 (+2%)

^{*} Includes landing page, The British List page (<https://bou.org.uk/british-list/>) and recent announcements page (<https://bou.org.uk/british-list/recent-announcements/>); [†] Includes landing page, author guidelines (<https://bou.org.uk/ibis/author-guidelines/>) and submission guidelines (<https://bou.org.uk/ibis/author-guidelines/submission/>); [‡] Includes landing page and international calendar page (<https://bou.org.uk/conferences-and-meetings/international-calendar/>) [§] Landing page, not including visits to individual blogs; Data from Google Analytics

Table 1 illustrates those areas of the website that received the most page views during the year, mapping closely onto core BOU activities. The majority of users arrived to the website via organic search (47%), followed by direct-to-site (34%), via Social Media (11%) and by referrals from other websites (7%). The top-10 countries from where users arrive to the website are listed in Table 2, with 62% of website users based outside the UK (64% in 2022).

Table 2: Top-10 countries from where users arrive to the BOU website (2023)

1. United Kingdom	38%	6. Canada	2%
2. United States	18%	7. Spain	2%
3. Germany	5%	8. Australia	2%
4. China	4%	9. Netherlands	2%
5. India	3%	10. France	1%



OUR SOCIAL YEAR

X @IBIS_JOURNAL

Audience at 31 Dec 23	22,234	+5%
Posts	3,431	-34%
Impressions	3.7m	-19%
Engagements	69,330	-21%
Engagement rate	1.9%	-3.4%



IBISJOURNAL

Audience at 31 Dec 23	13,764	+10%
Posts	2,876	-27%
Impressions	1.9m	-41%
Engagements	88,947	-30%
Engagement rate	4.7%	+18%



IBIS_JOURNAL

Audience at 31 Dec 23	1,769	+6%
Posts	144	-20%
Impressions	29,528	+13%
Engagements	629	-35%
Engagement rate	2.1%	-42%



@ibisjournal.bsky.social

Audience at 31 Dec 23	366
Posts	175

Social media

BOU.ORG.UK/SOCIAL-MEDIA/

We continue to use various social media channels to inform people about BOU activities, drive traffic towards our website and keep people abreast of the latest ornithology research via the #ornithology hashtag.

X (formerly Twitter) has continued to undergo changes in the last year, and this is reflected in the reduced engagement and impressions our content has generated in 2023 (see side panel). While follower numbers continue to increase, the rate of increase is not as great as in previous years, and our follower numbers have grown more – in percentage terms – on both Facebook and Instagram.

Given disillusionment within the academic community on X, we have explored alternative platforms, including Threads (operated by Meta Platforms) and Bluesky (from Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey). Despite initial interest in Threads, our content received limited attention, and since joining Bluesky in late October we focused efforts on growing followers there. In recent years Twitter has very successfully delivered as our parallel conference platform, alongside both in-person and online conferences. The ability of alternative platforms to deliver parallel conferences will be an important consideration when evaluating their adoption.

Across our Social Media platforms, our performance measures favourably compared to the industry standard (Civic, Non-Profit and Membership Groups), with 5.3 million total impressions (vs. 1.8 million standard), 4,200 posts published (vs. 1,100) and 156,000 total engagement (vs. 86,000).

Social Media is a significant contributor to the online attention that IBIS articles receive, as measured by Altmetric Attention Score, and IBIS continues to score well when compared to other ornithology journals (Table 3).

Table 3: Online mentions for IBIS and competitor ornithology journals (in 2023)

	# outputs	Mentions							
		Total	News	Blog	Twitter	Facebook	Wiki	Policy	
IBIS	739	36,702	698	443	32,083	1,830	1,484	145	
change 2022 v 2023	+4%	+1%	-8%	-9%	+0.5%	+11%	-6%	+190%	
Ornithology	577	7,287	367	195	3,989	171	2,510	26	
change 2022 v 2023	+8%	+9%	+14%	+7%	+6%	+4%	+12%	+8%	
J Avian Biology	194	6,031	316	70	4,564	346	480	31	
change 2022 v 2023	-18%	-15%	+14%	-23%	-19%	-22%	+0.6%	+84%	
J Ornithology	311	4,729	304	103	3,417	209	658	30	
change 2022 v 2023	-4%	+16%	+41%	+22%	+15%	+13%	+5%	+77	
Bird Study	167	4,100	34	42	3,722	116	152	31	
change 2022 v 2023	+9%	+20%	-3%	+14%	+19%	+30%	+19%	+84%	

Data from Altmetric Explorer (altmetric.com/explorer) downloaded 19 January 2024.



#THEBOUBLOG

Our most-read blog posts published in 2023:

Parrot poaching in Peru and Ecuador

Preferred species poached far beyond their abundances in the wild

Pedro Romero-Vidal

Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Seville, Spain

How to use BirdNET

Reviewing the applications, performance and opportunities of BirdNET for bird monitoring

Cristian Pérez-Granados

University of Alicante, Spain

Why do gulls steal from humans?

What affects Herring Gull food stealing behaviour in towns?

Shubhi Raghav

University of Exeter, UK

Moult terminology

Let's make it simpler!

Yosef Kiat

Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, USA

The rise of passive acoustic monitoring

Using passive acoustic monitoring for surveying birds in the UK

Oliver Metcalf

Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

#theBOUblog

[BOU.ORG.UK/BLOG/](https://bou.org.uk/blog/)

Our blog continues to be the most-read section of our website, accounting for 28% of all page views in 2023 (60,928 views, including views of individual blog posts). During the year we published 111 blog posts (99 in 2022) – see the side panel for the most read blog posts published in 2023.

E-newsletters

[BOU.ORG.UK/E-NEWSLETTERS /](https://bou.org.uk/e-newsletters/)

We published a total of 32 e-newsletters during the year, covering IBIS new articles and new issue highlights, and various BOU news items (e.g. conferences, grants, nomination rounds).

Sponsorship

We are very grateful to Leica Camera (UK) who continued their support by providing a pair of binoculars as the prize for the best paper in IBIS by an Early Career Researcher (ECR) as lead author. See page 15 for the recipient of the Best IBIS ECR Paper 2022 (voted for and awarded in 2023).

General administrative items

We continue to maintain a storage facility in Peterborough.

Awards Nominations Committee

[BOU.ORG.UK/MEDALS-AND-AWARDS/](https://bou.org.uk/medals-and-awards/)

AWARDS NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair

Dr Lucy Wright (RSPB)

Members

Dr Marta Acácio (Tel Aviv University)

Dr Adham Ashton-Butt (BTO)

Dr Niall Burton (BTO) (to July 2023)

Dr Annette Fayet (from July 2023)

Prof Keith Hamer (University of Leeds) (to July 2023)

Dr Robert Hawkes (from July 2023)

Dr Grant Humphries (HiDef Aerial Surveying)

Dr Rebecca Laidlaw (Natural Resources Wales)

Dr Elizabeth Masden (University of Highlands & Islands) (to July 2023)

Dr Kate Rogerson (from July 2023)

Dr Alice Trevail (University of Exeter)

Dr Leila Walker, BOU COO

The Awards Nominations Committee was set up in 2020 to oversee the criteria and nominations process for each of the BOU's awards: the Godman Salvin Prize, Janet Kear Union Medal and Alfred Newton Lecture, and, as of 2023, the Early Professional Award. Two meetings were held during 2023 with further business conducted by email.

In 2023, we ran an art competition for an early-career ornithological artist to design the artwork prize for the new Early Professional Award. We received nine qualifying submissions from six countries and at a selection meeting in April, the panel of judges (Tom Cadwallender, Steve Dudley, Rebecca Laidlaw, Darren Rees, Rachel Taylor and Lucy Wright) selected Zosia Frankowska's silkscreen Giant Ibis (pictured as this report's cover image) as the winning entry. Zosia received a £1,000 commission to produce 10 pieces of the artwork, to be used as the prize for the Early Professional Award. The first recipient of the Early Professional Award, to be announced during the course of 2024, will receive a framed silkscreen print of Zosia's artwork.

The Committee's membership changed during the year, with the terms of three members, Niall Burton, Keith Hamer and Elizabeth Masden, coming to an end. Three new members, Annette Fayet, Robert Hawkes and Kate Rogerson, were appointed to the Committee at the July Council meeting.

The open call for nominations was run for all four BOU awards from July to September 2023. Four people (three women and one man) were nominated for the 2024 Godman Salvin Prize, seven people (two women and five men) were nominated for the 2025 Alfred Newton Lecture, and seven people (two women and five men) were nominated for the 2024 Early Professional Award. For the Janet Kear Union Medal, no new nominations were received, but last year the JKUM subcommittee recommended rolling forward the 2nd and 3rd ranked nominations for consideration in 2024. For each award, nominations were independently ranked following previously agreed procedures. The top three ranked nominees for each award were presented to, and approved by, Council at their November meeting, and the top-ranked nominee for each award has accepted their invitation. Professor Judy Shamoun-Baranes will give the 2025 Alfred Newton Lecture and the recipients of the 2024 Godman Salvin Prize, the 2024 Janet Kear Union Medal and the 2024 Early Professional Award will be announced during the course of the year.

Engagement Committee

ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair

Dr Tom Finch (RSPB)

Members

Dr Ailidh Barnes (BTO)

Dr Ondřej Belfín (Czechia)

Dr Aonghais Cook (BTO)

Dr Daniel Hayhow (Earthwatch Europe)

Dr Katharine Keogan (HiDef Ariel Surveys)

Dr Nicola Largey (University of Highlands and Islands)

Dr Veronica Mendez (University of Iceland)

Dr Julie Miller (University of Glasgow)

Mr Connor Panter, Blog Editor (University of Nottingham) (to August 2023)

Mr Charlie Russell (University of East Anglia) (from August 2023)

Dr Ashley Sendell-Price (Uppsala University, Sweden)

Dr Elwyn Sharps (Natural Resources Wales)

Dr Leila Walker, BOU COO

Dr Saskia Wischniewski (RSPB)

Dr Natalia Zielonka, Social Media Support Officer (University of East Anglia)

The Engagement Committee oversees engagement between different parts of the BOU, our members and the wider ornithological community, primarily through conferences and social media activities. The Committee's role is to increase awareness of the BOU's activities, facilitate communication and collaboration within the community, and champion equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Committee met only once during 2023, due to the Committee Chair being on parental leave for part of the year. Committee membership remained unchanged through the year, though the terms of four of our members are due to come to an end in July 2024, with the public round of nominations to seek their replacements recently having closed.

Social media

We are continuing to explore alternatives to X (Twitter), which remains our primary social media platform both day-to-day and for the delivery of 'open' conferences (in parallel with Zoom or in-person events). The BOU is currently active on Bluesky (<https://bsky.app/profile/ibisjournal.bsky.social>) which, as of late 2023, is now open to view without an account. At the time of writing, users still require an 'invite code' to create an account of their own, but there seem to be plenty of these codes going around.

Membership

This year saw the launch of our revamped Member Conference Attendance Grants, with a focus on funding low-carbon travel and remote attendance. The grant supported 11 BOU members to attend the European Ornithologists' Union (EOU) Conference in Lund, Sweden, and the Australasian Ornithological Conference in Brisbane, Australia. Several of our grantees have written about their experience over on #theBOUblog: see <https://bou.org.uk/?s=%23eou2023>. Applications for the 2024 round of Member Conference Attendance Grants closed on 18 Feb 2024, with funding available for the EOU Fledglings Meeting (Prague, Czechia) and the American Ornithological Society Annual Meeting (Colorado, USA).

We have also changed the way in which low- and middle-income countries are defined, in order to ensure consistency and fairness across BOU activities. So, if you are from and/or living in a country that appears on the DAC List of ODA Recipients (<https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>) then you will be eligible for reduced membership subscription rates, and can also apply for some of our grants, bursaries and awards as a non-member.

Support Officers

The Committee's Support Officers drive a large part of our work around conference delivery, journal publicity, social media activities and the BOU blog.

SUPPORT OFFICERS



Our new Conference Support Officer from 2023, **Ondřej Belfín**.

2023 saw the retirement of three of our four Support Officers, leaving us with several vacancies to fill. In all cases we were really encouraged by both the quality and quantity of applications.

In August we interviewed candidates for the role of Blog Editor, previously held by Connor Panter. The Blog Editor is responsible for sourcing, editing and publishing content for our twice-weekly blog ([#theBOUblog](#)). This year saw 111 new posts on [#theBOUblog](#), including articles written by our Journal Support Officer, authors of IBIS papers, authors of papers published in other journals, community articles (including our [#DiversityBlog](#) series) and other member articles (including, for example, reports from events attended by members supported through our Conference Attendance Grants). We are delighted to have Charlie Russell, a PhD student at UEA, on board as our new Blog Editor. Since starting in September, Charlie has been working on some exciting developments for [#theBOUblog](#), so watch this space!



Our new Blog Editor from 2023, **Charlie Russell**.

In September we conducted interviews for the role of Conference Support Officer. This role supports the delivery of our online and in-person conferences, and has been expertly sculpted by Ryan Burrell since 2020. We're pleased to now have Ondřej Belfín in place as our new Conference Support Officer. Ondřej has lots of experience organising Zoom events for the Czech Society for Ornithology and has hit the ground running, helping to deliver our online member Warham evening and our autumn *Global Flyways* conference in early and late November, respectively.

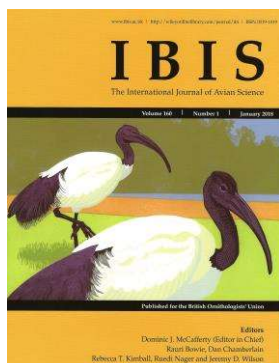
Finally, in December we interviewed for a replacement for our long-serving and highly-productive Journal Support Officer, Jente Ottenburghs. Jente wrote 25 articles (<https://bou.org.uk/author/jente/>) for the BOU blog in 2023 (and an impressive total of 123 blogs during his time with us), summarising a variety of papers published in our journal IBIS. We are really pleased to have recently appointed Ashleigh Marshall as our new Journal Support Officer – she will be responsible for writing fortnightly blog posts covering published IBIS articles. An unexpected outcome of a highly competitive recruitment process is the appointment of Bob Montgomerie, an Emeritus Professor from Queen's University, Canada, as a regular contributor to [#theBOUblog](#), covering the history of ornithology – watch this space!



Our new Journal Support Officer, **Ashleigh Marshall**.

We're very pleased that Natalia Zielonka has agreed to stay on as Social Media Support Officer for another two years. Despite the turmoil following the change of ownership (and name!) at Twitter/X, our follower count continues to grow (22,000, compared to 21,000 this time last year), and our Twitter/X conferences continue to be successful. In April 2023, Natalia devised and delivered our very first Twitter/X conference to be run in parallel with an in-person conference (BOU2023 Evolutionary Responses) – no mean feat when Twitter presentations are delivered alongside live in-person talks – and was successful in reaching over 62,000 accounts via the conference hashtag ([#BOU2023](#)

https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BOU2023&src=typed_query&f=live). Our follower



IBIS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair

Dr Rosemarie Kentie (IBED, University of Amsterdam)

Members

Mr Graham Appleton, BOU Hon. Treasurer

Dr Beatriz Arroyo Lopez (Instituto de Investigacion en Recursos Cinegeticos (IREC) (CSIC-UCLM-JCCM)

Dr Rauri Bowie, Editor (University of California – Berkeley)

Dr Richard Broughton (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology)

Dr Simon Butler (University of East Anglia)

Dr Richard Fuller, Editor (University of Queensland)

Prof Jenny Gill, Editor in Chief (University of East Anglia)

Dr Rebecca Kimball, Editor (University of Florida)

Mrs Angela Langford, Journal Manager

Dr Ruedi Nager, Editor (University of Glasgow)

Dr Leila Walker, BOU COO

Prof Jeremy Wilson, Editor (RSPB)

count has also increased on Facebook (from 12,000 to 13,000) and on Instagram (from 1,650 to 1,875).

Many thanks to our outgoing officers Connor, Ryan and Jente for their huge contributions over the last few years, and a big BOU welcome to Charlie, Ondřej and Ashleigh.

IBIS Management Committee

BOU.ORG.UK/IBIS/

Committee membership and business

The IBIS Management Committee provides strategic direction, support and advice to editors and staff on the management of the journal including with our publisher, Wiley. The IBIS Management Committee consists of the Editor in Chief, all editors, the Chief Operations Officer, the Honorary Treasurer, the Journal Manager and up to four regular members operating at Associate Editor level for IBIS or similar journals.

IBIS is published on behalf of the BOU by Wiley Publishing, from whom we continue to receive excellent service, support and advice. Towards the end of 2023, Wiley underwent some reorganization of their teams, and we now work closely with both Andreas Petersen, previously our Journal Publishing Manager and now our society contact in the Partner Publishing team, and with Genevieve Richards, our editorial contact in the Publishing Development team. The efforts of Wiley staff during 2023 are greatly appreciated, and we are enjoying working closely with both Andreas and Genevieve. Within Wiley, several specialized teams (such as Journal Marketing) are now available to provide guidance in the fast-changing publishing landscape. We have an excellent relationship with Wiley and maintain constant communication throughout the year, with both parties striving to improve IBIS, to ensure the journal remains at the forefront of ornithology.

Our annual meeting with Wiley was held on Zoom in March. At the meeting, annual reports covering editorial, production, marketing and finance were presented and discussed. Our close working relationship comes to the fore during these meetings with both sides able to talk openly about our joint management of the journal.



TOP CITED PAPERS

From most recent Impact Factor period (2021-2022)

Estimating bird density using passive acoustic monitoring: a review of methods and suggestions for further research / Cristian Pérez-Granados, Juan Traba / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12944

Intra-specific variation in migration phenology of American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) in response to spring temperatures / Breanna F. Powers, Jason M. Winiarski, Juan M. Requena-Mullor, Julie A. Heath / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12953

Null effects of the Garcelon harnessing method and transmitter type on soaring raptors / Víctor García, Juan José Iglesias-Lebrija, Rubén Moreno-Opo / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12942



MOST DOWNLOADED IBIS PAPERS

Papers published in 2023

BirdNET: applications, performance, pitfalls and future opportunities / Cristian Pérez-Granados / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13193

Nest survival of threatened Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) breeding at low densities across a human-modified landscape / Harry Ewing, Samantha Franks, Jennifer Smart, Niall Burton, Jennifer A. Gill / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13180

Human activities at night negatively impact Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) numbers and behaviours / Emily C. Costello, Diane Colombelli-Négrel / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13217

Journal metrics

With Wiley becoming a signatory of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), the Wiley IBIS website now displays a range of journal and article metrics. The overarching goal of DORA is to shift emphasis away from journal-based metrics, towards article-level metrics and individual author contribution for a broader, more equitable view and assessment of research impact. Alongside Journal Impact Factor (2.1 in 2022), authors can now view CiteScore (4.5 in 2022), Journal Citation Indicator (1.56 in 2022), full text views (323,608 in 2022), acceptance rate (46% in 2022), submission to first decision (71 days in 2022) and submission to acceptance (263 days in 2022). Difficulties in finding reviewers has been identified as one cause of delays in the submission to acceptance process, and something that IBIS Management Committee is looking to address.

Editorial team

Our Associate Editor Board plays a vital role in the management of the journal and we thank each and every one of them for their time and dedication to the journal. We welcomed two new Associate Editors: Andrea Soriano Redondo and Juan Navedo. Four Associate Editors retired from the board after many years and handling many manuscripts, and we want to thank them for their excellent work: Staffan Roos, Eivin Røskoft, Jose Antonio Sanchez Zapata and Arjun Amar. We currently have 51 Associate Editors.

Reviews and mini reviews

IBIS has a proud history of publishing critical reviews of current topics in ornithology, and we continue to encourage review submissions today, especially from Early Career Researchers. Thanks to this active promotion, we have increased the number of review submissions and subsequent publications. From 2020 until now, 66 review submissions have been handled by our Review Editor Jeremy Wilson, of which 26 were published (with a couple still in the pipeline). In comparison, between 2013 and 2019 66 review manuscripts were submitted of which 16 published.

Some of these highly cited reviews feature in a 2023 'Best of Reviews' virtual issue ([https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1474-919X.best-of-reviews](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1111/(ISSN)1474-919X.best-of-reviews)), covering topics as diverse as the global expansion of avian influenza, declines of Afro-palearctic migrant birds, effects of climate change on mountain birds, shorebird survival, seabird foraging, and a range of technological developments in ornithological monitoring.

In 2023, we launched a new category of mini reviews; these are reviews with a 6000-word limit and are well suited for emerging areas of research interest which currently have limited primary literature, or for critical reviews of more specific sub-topics within broader research areas.

Themed issues

Two IBIS themed issues, inspired by recent BOU conferences, *Avian Reproduction* and *Citizen Science and Birds*, are in progress and due to appear in upcoming issues of IBIS.



TOP ALTMETRIC PAPERS

Papers published in 2023

High pathogenicity avian influenza (H5N1) in Northern Gannets (*Morus bassanus*): Global spread, clinical signs and demographic consequences Jude V. Lane, Jana W.E.

Jeglinski, Stephanie Avery-Gomm, Elmar Ballstaedt, Ashley C. Banyard et al. DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13275

Reduced breeding success in Great Black-backed Gulls (*Larus marinus*) due to harness-mounted GPS device Samuel Langlois Lopez,

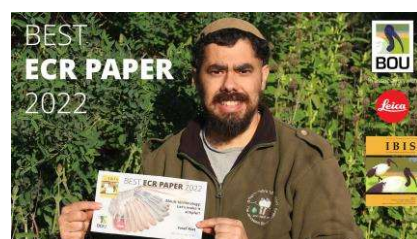
Gary D. Clewley, Daniel T. Johnston, Francis Daunt, Jared M. Wilson, Nina J. O'Hanlon, Elizabeth Masden DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13247

Nest survival of threatened Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) breeding at low densities across a human-modified landscape Harry

Ewing, Samantha Franks, Jennifer Smart, Niall Burton, Jennifer A. Gill DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13180

Dietary niche overlap and resource partitioning among six steppe passerines of Central Spain using DNA metabarcoding Julia

Zurdo, Adrián Barrero, Luís P. da Silva, Daniel Bustillo-de la Rosa, Julia Gómez-Catasús et al. DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13188



Yosef Kiat's paper was voted the best ECR paper published in IBIS in 2022.

Moult terminology: Let's make it simpler!

Yosef Kiat / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13164

ReX submission portal

2023 was the first complete year with Wiley's new Research Exchange (ReX) submission portal fully operational for IBIS, having gone live in November 2022. The ReX portal aims to improve the submission experience for authors, reducing the work and time that goes into manuscript submissions, via a streamlined process and intuitive platform. The roll-out has gone smoothly and with some minor tweaks (for example making the Dual Language Abstracts optional file designation more prominent) we are happy that ReX is performing well.

Marketing

IBIS papers continue to achieve high Altimetric scores, with IBIS attracting the most online mentions (across X, Facebook, blogs and more) in 2023 among all ornithology journals (see Table 3 on page 8). See the side panel for the highest Altimetric scoring IBIS papers published in 2023.

Best ECR paper

We annually award a best IBIS Early Career Researcher (ECR) paper, where the first or corresponding author was an ECR. In 2022, 59 papers qualified, of which 11 were nominated for the award by our Associate Editors. These 11 nominated papers went to a public vote in 2023, with Yosef Kiat's paper on making moult terminology simpler being voted the winner (see side panel and <https://bou.org.uk/ibis/ibis-best-ecr-paper-of-2022/>).

MEETINGS COMMITTEE

Chair

Dr Francis Daunt (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology) (to April 2023)

Dr Cat Morrison (University of East Anglia) (from April 2023)

Members

Dr José Alves (University of Aveiro, Portugal and University of Iceland) (to July 2023)

Dr Maria Bogdanova (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology) (to July 2023)

Dr Katherine Booth Jones (BTO Northern Ireland)

Dr Christine Howard (Durham University)

Dr Joeline Hughes (RSPB)

Mrs Angela Langford, Journal & Office Manager

Dr Barry McMahon (University College Dublin) (from July 2023)

Dr Ana Payo-Payo (University of Aberdeen)

Dr Alice Risely (Salford University) (from July 2023)

Dr Emily Simmonds (Norwegian University of Science and Technology & University of Edinburgh) (from July 2023)

Dr Amanda Trask (Institute of Zoology) (to July 2023)

Dr Leila Walker, BOU COO

Dr Kevin Wood (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust)

Meetings Committee

[BOU.ORG.UK/CONFERENCES-AND-MEETINGS/](https://bou.org.uk/conferences-and-meetings/)

The Meetings Committee is responsible for maintaining the ongoing programme of BOU conferences and providing advice and support to the BOU Office and others responsible for organising and running BOU events. The Committee met remotely via Zoom three times during the year and also conducted business by email. Jose Alves, Maria Bogdanova and Amanda Trask left the Committee this year and we would like to thank them for their great work. Huge thanks are also due to Francis Daunt, who left the Committee as Chair in April 2023, having steered the Committee and BOU conferences through some challenging times. Catriona Morrison has stepped into the Chair role and Barry McMahon, Emily Simmonds and Alice Risely all joined as new members and we welcome and look forward to working with them.

The Committee would like to thank our expanded 2023 conference delivery team of Bryam Aguilar, Sarah Binnie, Ryan Burrell, Camilo Carneiro, Ana Luiza Catalano, Hannah Hereward, Triin Kassiku, Angela Langford, Claire Nemes, Charlie Russell, Nicola Sockhill, Samantha Wong Topp, Qiqi Yang and Natalia Zielonka for all their hard work. Our Conference Support Officer Ryan Burrell stepped down this year and we thank him for his fantastic work, being instrumental in the development and delivery of our online conferences over the last few years. Ryan is succeeded by Ondřej Belfín who got off to a strong start with the successful delivery of our online member Warham evening in early November 2023 and our autumn conference, BOUsci23 *Global Flyways*, later in the same month.

2023 annual conference

Evolutionary responses (#BOU2023) 4–6 April 2023

This was our first in-person meeting since the global pandemic and it was great to be back together. The conference was held in Nottingham and focused on evolutionary and plastic responses of birds to environmental change. We had 84 people in attendance of whom 34 were Early Career Researchers (ECRs), which made for a friendly environment with great networking opportunities. The conference sessions spanned phenological changes, movement and space use, responses to environmental pollution, genetic and epigenetic responses, rapid responses to urbanisation, behavioural and morphological changes in novel environments and species interactions and community-level responses. Jane Reid (University of Aberdeen, UK & Norwegian University of Science and Technology) delivered the Alfred Newton Lecture titled 'Integrating seasonal movements into evolutionary ecology'. The keynote presenters were Ben Sheldon (University of Oxford, UK), Joe Wynn (Institute of Avian Research, Germany & University of Oxford, UK), Caroline Isaksson (Lund University, Sweden), Ariid Husby (Uppsala University, Sweden), Anne Charmantier (Centre for Functional and Evolutionary Ecology, CEFÉ, France), Daniel Sol (Centre of Ecological Research and Applied Forestry's, CREAM, Spain) and Rose Thorogood (University of Helsinki, Finland). We thank the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) for putting together an excellent programme. The Committee was chaired by Amanda Trask (Zoological Society of London, UK) and María Moirón (Institute of Avian Research, Germany), supported by

2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



EVOLUTIONARY RESPONSES

4–6 April 2023 | Nottingham & X
#BOU2023

Image: Siberian Stonechat | Mprasannak CC BY SA 4.0
Wikimedia Commons

2023 AUTUMN CONFERENCE



GLOBAL FLYWAYS

21–22 November 2023 | Zoom & X
#BOUsci23

Image: Black-tailed Godwit | Frank Vassen CC BY 2.0
Wikimedia Commons

Michela Corsini (University of Warsaw, Poland), Ferran Sayol (University College London, UK), Jelmer Samplonius (University of Edinburgh, UK) and Emily Simmonds (Norwegian University of Science and Technology).

Two ECR events also took place at the conference. The first included two workshops on ‘elevator pitches’ and ‘careers outside academia’, led by Cat Morrison (University of East Anglia, UK), Natalia Zielonka (University of East Anglia, UK), Ailidh Barnes (British Trust for Ornithology, UK) and Charlotte Regan (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology); thanks to all. The second was a roundtable event where students got to grill the keynote speakers on subjects ranging from careers tips to their favourite fieldwork experiences, over a drink or two served by our outgoing President Juliet Vickery.

2023 autumn conference

Global flyways (#BOUsci23) 21–22 November 2023

This novel conference spanned a 24-hour period during which presenters covered three global flyways – Africa–Eurasia, Americas and Asia–Pacific – and was attended by 176 online participants. The Africa–Eurasia sessions covered drivers of population change and conservation, determinants of migration routes and schedules, and tracking applications, concluding with a panel discussion on making flyway ecology global. The panel was chaired by Juliet Vickery with contributions from panel members Mohamed Henriques (University of Groningen, the Netherlands), Yahkat Barshep (A.P. Leventis Ornithological Institute, Nigeria) and Leon Bennun (The Biodiversity Consultancy & Conservation Science, University of Cambridge, UK). This great event opened up discussion on how to tackle barriers constraining more regionally balanced research and conservation. Following a Trans–Atlantic keynote bridging flyways, the Americas flyway sessions covered global perspectives and big data in the study of migration, full annual cycle ecology of Nearctic–neotropical migrants, monitoring migration in the Americas, and genomics and evolution of migration. Next up was the Trans–Pacific keynote, leading us seamlessly into the Asia–Pacific sessions, which spanned flyway threats and conservation, from migration patterns to habitat conservation, and novel tracking discoveries.

This conference was a truly international collaboration bringing together researchers from across the globe. It was a tribute to the hard work of the SPC members and we thank them enthusiastically! The SPC was co-chaired by Wouter Vansteelant (University of Groningen, the Netherlands) and José Alves (University of Iceland & University of Aveiro, Portugal) and included Vojtech Brlik (Charles University, Czechia), Maria Dias (University of Lisbon, Portugal), Steve Dudley (Consultant, Scotland), Cat Morrison (University of East Anglia, UK) and Elham Nourani (Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour, Germany) (Africa–Eurasia flyway); Elly Knight (University of Alberta, Canada), Camila Gómez (SELVA, Colombia), Fengyi Guo (Princeton University, USA), Bryant Dossman (Georgetown University, USA) (Americas flyway); and Yachang Cheng (Sun Yat–sen University, People’s Republic of China), Sayam Chowdhury (University of Cambridge, UK), (Yong Ding Li, BirdLife International, Singapore), Judit Szabo (Charles Darwin University, Australia), R.

Suresh Kumar (Wildlife Institute of India, India) and Batmunkh Davaasuren (Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia, Mongolia) (Asia-Pacific flyway).

2024 CONFERENCES



URBAN BIRDS

9-11 April 2024 | Nottingham & X
#BOU2023

Image: House Sparrow | Zeynel Cebeci CC BY-SA 4.0
Wikimedia Commons



BIRDS AND NET ZERO

24 October 2024 | York & Zoom & X
#BOUasm24

Image: Misty morning | Susanne Nilsson CC BY-SA 2.0
Wikimedia Commons



AVIAN CONSERVATION TRANSLOCATIONS

12-13 November 2024 | Zoom & X
#BOUsci24

Image: Common Crane | Zeynel Cebeci CC BY-SA 4.0
Wikimedia Commons

Future conferences

We have a diverse selection of topics covered by our upcoming conference program:

2024 annual conference – *Urban birds* (#BOU2024) 9–11 April 2024 – University of Nottingham, UK

A conference aimed at discussing the unique issues faced by urban dwelling bird populations in our changing world. The Alfred Newton Lecture will be delivered by Amanda D. Rodewald, Garvin Professor of Ornithology and Senior Director of the Center for Avian Population Studies, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

2024 autumn conference – *Birds and net zero* (#BOUasm24) 24 October 2024 – York, UK

This conference aims to showcase the latest research into the ecological impacts of our transition to net zero on birds.

2024 autumn conference – *Avian conservation translocations* (#BOUsci24) 12–13 November 2024 – Zoom

This conference aims to share knowledge and experiences from past, ongoing and planned translocation programmes to inform future translocation efforts.

2025 annual conference – *Frontiers in ornithology* (#BOU 2025) 1–3 April 2025 – University of Nottingham, UK

This is an exciting conference, bringing together researchers, conservationists, and policy makers working at the cutting edge of ornithological research and conservation, to share their knowledge on how innovative technologies and novel approaches can help us find solutions to conserve birds in a changing world. The Alfred Newton Lecture will be delivered by Judy Shamoun-Baranes, Professor of Animal Movement Ecology and the head of the Department of Theoretical and Computational Ecology, Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics (IBED) at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Conference review

This year a conference review panel, chaired by Mark Eaton, met in June 2023 to discuss the future of BOU conferences. We discussed the aims of our conferences, metrics of success and possible future developments. The panel concluded that our conferences should aim “to support the ornithological community around ornithological science” with our main metrics measuring the success of this being attendance numbers, scientific quality/attendee satisfaction, financial income and membership recruitment. We already have several active new ideas to make our conferences more accessible, for example our first hybrid conference *Birds and net zero*, one of our 2024 autumn conferences, will take place in the well-connected location of York. In planning future conferences, the Meetings Committee will aim to



fulfil the criteria set by the review, acknowledging that not all criteria have to be met by each conference.

GRANTS COMMITTEE

Chair

Dr Sonya Clegg (University of Oxford)

Members

Dr Tom Bradfer-Lawrence (RSPB)

Dr Davide Dominoni (University of Glasgow)

Ros Green (University of Liverpool & BTO)

(from March 2023, role-sharing)

Dr Sam Patrick (University of Liverpool) (role-sharing)

Dr Martin Sullivan (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Dr Leila Walker, BOU COO

Grants Committee

[BOU.ORG.UK/FUNDING/](https://bou.org.uk/funding/)

This Committee advises Council on the selection of research grant and bursary applications that the BOU should support.

The Committee considers applications for:

- Small Research Grants;
- Career Development Bursaries;
 - open to BOU members and non-members in low- and middle-income countries.
- John & Pat Warham Studentships;
 - funded by a bequest left to the BOU by the late John and Pat Warham for the study of Sphenisciform (penguins) and Procellariiform (tubenoses) seabirds.
- Brenda and Tony Gibbs Awards;
 - funded by a bequest left to the BOU by the late Brenda and Tony Gibbs, for research on tracking and migration studies including the use of new technologies.

The Committee met twice via Zoom in 2023. The meeting to consider research grant and career development bursary applications was held in February, and the meeting to consider applications for the Brenda and Tony Gibbs Award was held in June. The remainder of the Committee's business was conducted by email.

Ros Green joined the Committee in a role-sharing capacity with existing member Sam Patrick, from March 2023.

Small Ornithological Research Grant scheme

The Committee received 31 grant applications (45 in 2022, 54 in 2021, 51 in 2020). One application was rejected due to breaches in submission criteria, leaving 30 to be assessed ahead of the annual meeting held on 1 February 2023. Two qualified for funding consideration under the Brenda and Tony Gibbs bequest. Each application was scored by two committee members and based on these scores, the associated comments and on-the-day discussions, the committee determined which projects to support.

Council approved seven awards, totalling £12,837, to be made in 2023:

FUNDING ORNITHOLOGY



Two of the species being researched by projects funded by the BOU in 2023.

From the top:

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Charles J. Sharp CC BY-SA 4.0 Wikimedia Commons

Crested Guan *Penelope purpurascens*

Randall Ortega Chaves CC BY-SA 4.0 Wikimedia Commons

Laura Céspedes Arias (Colombian) | £2,000 (amount requested)

PhD student, University of Chicago, USA

The evolution of reproductive isolation within a broken ring species: genetic and phenotypic variation across a west Himalaya hybrid zone in the Greenish Warbler complex.

Claire Branston (British) | £1,498 (amount requested)*

PDRA, University of Glasgow, UK

Effects of ectoparasite prevalence on the fitness and development of the Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) nesting in artificial nesting banks.

Andrea Estandía (Spanish) | £1,950 (amount requested)

PhD student, University of Oxford, UK

Ghost introgression in Norfolk Island Zosterops: searching for genomic remnants of the extinct White-chested white-eye.

Katarzyna Janas (Polish) | £1,500 (amount requested)*

Assistant Professor (adjunct), Museum and Institute of Zoology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

A riddle of multiple ornaments: the Great Tit case.

Rosanne José Michielsens (Dutch) | £2,000 (amount requested)

PhD student, Mammal Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

Long-term legacy of forest disturbance and breeding birds in Białowieża Primeval Forest.

Gabriel López Segoviano (Mexican) | £1,915 (amount requested)

Postdoctoral researcher, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico

Identifying key plant species in the plant-frugivore network as the first step to conserving frugivorous bird in the face of the expansion of the avocado crop.

Enriqueta Velarde (Mexican) | £1,974 (amount requested)

Senior researcher, Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico

Food partitioning between four seabird species in their main nesting site in the Mexican portion of the Gulf of Mexico, and indication of fisheries resources availability.

*Awards funded from £10,000 donation received in 2022 (small grants fund)

Laura Céspedes Arias declined the award, so the £2,000 allocated here was not paid out.

Brenda and Tony Gibbs small research award

Separate to the main Gibbs Award (awards up to £20,000 – see page 27) we are using the remainder of the bequest left to us by Brenda and Tony Gibbs to fund

smaller awards for applications within the parameters of the Gibbs bequest coming in through our small grant scheme.

One award was made in 2023:

Federico De Pascalis (Italian) | £1,675 (amount requested)

Postdoctoral Associate, Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), Italy

Saving ghosts: shedding light on the at-sea behaviour, risk exposure and microplastic ingestion in the endangered Polynesian Storm Petrel (*Nesofregata fuliginosa*).

In March 2023, Council approved the Committee's proposal that the funding amount available via the Small Ornithological Research Grant scheme be raised to a maximum of £2,000 (rather than £1,500, or £2,000 in exceptional circumstances). This change will be implemented in the next round of applications and seeks to account for rising research costs. The total pot of money available via this scheme remains the same.

Career Development Bursary scheme

The committee received two applications (6 in 2022, scheme not offered in 2020, 7 in 2019, 5 in 2018, 10 in 2017) and both were assessed by the Committee. Council approved one award totalling £2,500:

Akshay Bharadwaj (India) | £2,500 (amount requested)

Masters student, Indian Institute of Science, India

More the merrier?: Examining the relationship between structural diversity of vegetation cover and biodiversity in the Swiss Jura mountains.

Project location: University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Supervisor: Prof. Clara Zemp

WARHAM STUDENT



Our 2018 Warham Student, **Kirsty Franklin**, University of East Anglia, UK.

John and Pat Warham Studentships

The fourth and final John and Pat Warham Studentship was awarded in 2022. Updates on all four fully funded studentships are provided below.

Kirsty Franklin, University of East Anglia, UK (commenced 2018)

The 'Round Island petrel' conundrum

Principal supervisor: Prof Jennifer Gill

Kirsty provided us with her final report via #theBOUblog, reproduced here:

PhDone! After four and a half years, field work in some exciting places, a global pandemic, and a 3-month interlude on a placement with the RSPB, I graduated with my PhD.

As I've shared on this blog before, my BOU-funded PhD focused on the enigmatic population of tropical *Pterodroma* petrels on Round Island, Mauritius. The primary



aim of my thesis was to explore how individual Round Island petrels do, and don't, vary in their migratory journeys, and the consequences for the conditions experienced by individuals. I was fortunate to use a long-term geolocator tracking dataset collected by the Institute of Zoology (IOZ; Zoological Society of London), in collaboration with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) and National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS; Government of Mauritius), as well as getting to visit Round Island myself, in order to answer my PhD questions.

These data revealed extraordinary levels of variation in Round Island petrel migratory strategies, with migrations covering much of the Indian Ocean. However, we found no strong evidence for their unusual hybrid status or monsoon-driven seasonal environment to drive this variation. Repeat tracking of individuals across multiple years showed petrels to consistently migrate to the same place at roughly the same time in consecutive years and, despite the characteristically very different ocean conditions over which non-breeding petrels occur, petrel night-time activity patterns were remarkably similar and closely tracked the lunar cycle in all cases. My main field season on Round Island, where I installed a system of time lapse cameras, also proved a valuable tool for monitoring breeding phenology and nest success of tropical ground-nesting seabirds. Overall, the work in my thesis has contributed to the understanding of migratory systems and how they form and change, as well as expanding our knowledge of poorly studied tropical systems.

WARHAM PUBLICATIONS

Franklin, K.A., Nicoll, M.A.C., Butler, S.J., Norris, K., Nakagawa, S., & Gill, J.A. 2022. Individual repeatability of avian migratory phenology: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Animal Ecology* 91 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2656.13697>

Franklin, K.A., Norris, K., Gill, J.A., Ratcliffe, N., Bonnet-Lebrun, A.S., Butler, S.J., Cole, N.C., Jones, C.G., Lisovski, S., Ruhomaun, K., Tatayah, V., & Nicoll, M.A.C. 2022. Individual consistency in migration strategies of a tropical seabird, the Round Island petrel. *Movement Ecology* 10:13 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40462-022-00311-y>

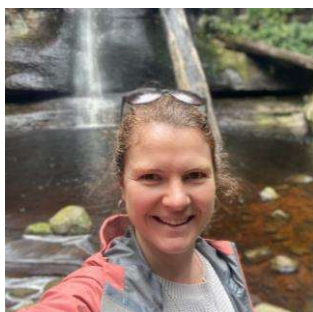
Despite the majority of my PhD taking place during the pandemic, I feel I accomplished and gained so much. I've presented at multiple in-person and online conferences, been able to share and promote my research (with lots of help from the BOU), made many collaborations, published papers (see side panel), supervised three undergraduate and four postgraduate students, and had two field trips to Mauritius (with a third planned for 2024), to name a few. With support from the BOU and my supervisors, I was also able to join a BAS project in Iceland tracking Guillemots as well as taking a 3-month interlude on a seabird tracking placement with the RSPB; the latter likely the main reason I managed to get my current job as a Conservation Scientist, with the same lovely team, straight out of my PhD.

I'm incredibly grateful to my supervisors (Jenny Gill, Malcolm Nicoll, Norman Ratcliffe, Ken Norris and Simon Butler) and the BOU for providing me with such a positive and supportive PhD experience. And of course, a big thank you to John and Pat Warham – I am so proud to be a part of the BOU family and funded through the Warham Studentship. It's exciting to see the data generated from my PhD already being used in new collaborative studies, such as BirdLife's recent identification of Marine Flyways. I've really enjoyed the challenging (tropical) nature of this project and hope to continue my involvement with the research on Round Island and these fascinating petrels.

Paige Greene, University of Tasmania, Australia (commenced 2019)
Quantifying the ecological factors under-pinning population trends in crested penguins

Principal supervisor: Prof Mark Hindell

WARHAM STUDENT



Our 2019 Warham Student, **Paige Green**,
University of Tasmania, Australia.

Paige provided us with her final report via #theBOUblog, reproduced here:

My thesis explored the at-sea behaviours and foraging ecology of *Eudyptes* penguin species, a group of penguins that are both highly threatened and understudied. Through a collection of multi-taxa studies, my work provides valuable insights into factors influencing the distribution and foraging ecology of *Eudyptes* penguins during their nonbreeding migrations; a critical period of their annual cycle which has so far remained poorly studied. Additionally, my research contributes new knowledge on the nonbreeding migrations of five *Eudyptes* penguin populations from the Australasian Subantarctic islands, including erect-crested penguins, which had previously never been tracked. Finally, my thesis investigated the vulnerability of some populations of *Eudyptes* penguins to anticipated changes in the marine environment.

I have published two papers from my thesis, which I passed with minor corrections, including: “The role of allochrony in influencing interspecific differences in foraging distribution during the nonbreeding season between two congeneric crested penguin taxa” (Green et al. 2022) and “Potential for redistribution of post-moult habitat for *Eudyptes* penguins in the Southern Ocean under future climate conditions” (Green et al. 2023) (see side panel).

My thesis, for the first time since Warham’s studies in the 1970s, has filled a complementary knowledge gap of where some of these same populations go during their nonbreeding migrations when they are at sea – and by and large unobservable to researchers (without tracking devices). To achieve this, I used a comprehensive tracking dataset obtained from geolocators – small logging devices, which estimate location based on recorded light levels. My hope is that I have demonstrated the powerful potential of small data loggers, attached to birds’ legs, in advancing our understanding of migratory behaviour and its implications for conservation and climate change research. Further, despite the work being presented in two dimensions, I aimed to tell the story of the four-dimensional exploration of the space, time, depth and oceanographic systems exploited by these penguins. Thus, together my and Warham’s studies, though 50 years apart, have made a significant contribution to rectifying the lack of ecological information of *Eudyptes* penguins which Stonehouse stressed in 1967. So, following in the footsteps of John Warham, I like to think we’ve come full circle and hope that he would have been delighted to see where the *Eudyptes* penguins, that he studied so intricately for over ten years, migrate to when at sea.

The relevance of these findings extends beyond ecological theory and climate change science. *Eudyptes* penguins are charismatic and iconic creatures, and my research provides critical insights into their behaviour and survival. It can also help inform conservation and management efforts to protect these species, especially those listed as Vulnerable and Endangered. By understanding their movements, we can develop strategies to safeguard their habitats and ensure their long-term survival in a rapidly changing marine environment.

WARHAM PUBLICATIONS

Green C-P., Ratcliffe N., Mattern T., Thompson D., Lea M-A., Wotherspoon S., et al. 2022. The role of allochrony in influencing interspecific differences in foraging distribution during the nonbreeding season between two congeneric crested penguin taxa. PLoS ONE 17(2): e0262901

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0262901>

Green C-P., Green D.B., Ratcliffe N., Thompson D., Lea M-A., Baylis A.M.M., et al. 2023. Potential for redistribution of post-moult habitat for *Eudyptes* penguins in the Southern Ocean under future climate conditions. Global Change Biology 29(3): 648-667

<https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.16500>

WARHAM EVENING



On 2 November 2023, we held an online Warham evening for BOU members. During the Zoom event, chaired by BOU President Graeme Buchanen, members enjoyed presentations from Warham students Kirsty Franklin, Paige Green and Émile Brisson-Curadeau, and an introduction to the fourth Warham project by Rohan Clarke.

Members had the opportunity to put questions to the presenters and learn more about John and Pat Warham, thanks to some reflections provided by Paul Sagar, a former student of John's, delivered by Graeme. The evening was a wonderful way to celebrate the legacy of the Warhams and learn more about the fascinating studentships they have generously funded.

Image: © Tom Johnson (Macaulay Library), © Liam Quinn (Wikipedia)

Reflecting on my experience as a PhD student, I must say it was a challenging yet immensely rewarding journey. Conducting research on such a unique and enigmatic group of animals was a privilege. It required countless hours of tracking data processing, analysis, and fieldwork in some of the most remote and beautiful places on Earth. It was a constant learning process, and I am grateful for the support and guidance of my advisors and colleagues throughout this endeavor.

One aspect that significantly facilitated my research was the BOU Warham scholarship I received. Research scholarships play a pivotal role in enabling students to pursue their academic and research goals. Unfortunately, the majority of my PhD was during covid and due to Covid related restrictions I could not attend as many conferences as I would've liked, and we were restricted from doing the full set of fieldwork that had originally been planned for. Nonetheless, the BOU Warham scholarship provided the financial support needed to attend one in-person conference (the International Penguin Conference held in New Zealand in 2019), purchase tags for fieldwork, go on a fieldtrip to the Bounty Islands, New Zealand, as well as finance essential running costs. Without this support, my research would have been considerably more challenging to carry out effectively. Moreover, the scholarship was not just about financial assistance. It represented recognition and belief in the value of my research and its potential impact. It motivated me to strive for excellence and pushed me to contribute meaningfully to the field of penguin ecology. Being part of the IMAS Marine Predator research lab with the backing of this BOU Warham scholarship allowed me to focus on my research, working together with world renowned scientists, without the burden of financial concerns, which was instrumental in achieving the depth and breadth of findings presented in my thesis.

In conclusion, my PhD journey through the world of *Eudyptes* penguins has been both enlightening and fulfilling. The major findings from my research have practical implications for the conservation of these remarkable birds, shedding light on their migration patterns, niche partitioning behaviors, and responses to climate change. As a recent PhD graduate, I am grateful and privileged for the scholarship that supported my research and for the opportunity to contribute to our understanding of these charismatic marine predators.

Émile Brisson-Curadeau, McGill University, Canada (commenced 2020)

Foraging behaviour of King Penguins under extreme climatic events

Principal supervisor: Dr Kyle Elliott

In Émile's end of year communication, he wrote:

The end is near for me! At least when it comes to my life as a student...

WARHAM STUDENT



Our 2020 Warham Student, **Émile Brisson-Curadeau**, McGill University, Canada.

In April, I will be submitting my thesis. What a journey! In the last year, I've had the time to concentrate on my writing, and three of my papers got published. My proudest: a publication in *Global Change Biology* which discussed the differences in sensitivity to climate change that different populations from the same species (here King Penguins) can display. This paper is important, in my opinion, because it challenges the habit that some scientists have to generalize the response of a whole species to climate change using few limited studies conducted on one population. My dataset was composed of >20 years of foraging and breeding data from two large colonies of King Penguin, and I showed that, despite being neighbouring colonies, the two colonies reacted very differently to climate change. Indeed, due to differences in biogeographic features surrounding the two colonies, one population would suffer from climate change, while the other one would benefit from it. Surprising, isn't it?

As my PhD is coming to an end, I really want to thank the BOU, which made this whole project possible. The support that the organization has given me has been huge and I think it is fair to say that the outcome of that project was truly beneficial for King Penguin research. Throughout my PhD, I have published four peer-reviewed papers, participated in three international congresses, and made several contributions to popular science. Soon, I will have to think about what the next steps for me will be. A career as a seabird biologist? Who knows!

John Lamaris, Monash University, Australia (commenced 2023)

Recovering the critically endangered Beck's Petrel

Principal supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Rohan Clarke

Firstly, a special thank you goes to John and Pat Warham, and the BOU, for funding this PhD research project. Also, thank you to my supervisory team – Rohan Clarke, Richard Fuller and Jeremy Bird – for getting me on board the Beck's Petrel team, providing me with this research opportunity.

After a long wait for the processing of my student visa, I was able to arrive in Melbourne on the 13th of December. Whilst this did align with the university shutdown for the Christmas break, it was convenient for me as it is summer in Melbourne which helps me to acclimatize and settle in. I am also grateful for Clarke's Lab team for making me feel welcome and helping me settle in.

This study is aimed at recovering the Critically Engendered Beck's Petrel and will focus on locating a breeding colony and studying the species ecology. It is important that we locate the Beck's Petrel nesting grounds, and assess threats to the population, so that better conservation strategies can be developed to protect the species. The approach to achieving that will be through the following proposed key chapters:

- 1) *Tracking the seasonal distribution and terrestrial visits of Beck's Petrel.* Employing methods developed in 2017, we currently have seven PTT satellite tags available for deployment. These will increase the existing sample size for

WARHAM PUBLICATIONS

Brisson-Curadeau, É., Handrich, Y., Elliott, K. H., & Bost, C. A. 2021. Accelerometry predicts prey-capture rates in the deep-diving king penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus*. *Marine Biology* 168: 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00227-021-03968-y>

Brisson-Curadeau, É., Elliott, K., & Bost, C. A. 2023. Contrasting bottom-up effects of warming ocean on two king penguin populations. *Global Change Biology* 29(4): 998-1008. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.16519>

Brisson-Curadeau, É., Bost, C. A., Cherel, Y., & Elliott, K. 2023. King Penguins adjust foraging effort rather than diet when faced with poor foraging conditions. *Ibis*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.13287>

Brisson-Curadeau, É., Scheffer, A., Trathan, P., Roquet, F., Cotté, C., Delord, K., ... & Bost, C. A. 2023. Investigating two consecutive catastrophic breeding seasons in a large king penguin colony. *Scientific Reports* 13(1): 12967. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-40123-7>

WARHAM STUDENT



Our 2023 Warham Student, **John Lamaris**,
Monash University, Australia.

analysing seasonal movements, assessing overlap with threatening at-sea processes and elucidating additional breeding locations.

- 2) *Breeding habitat suitability modelling*. Using satellite tracking data combined with environmental variables, we will build a model predicting suitable breeding habitat for Beck's Petrels in New Ireland and potentially elsewhere. This output would guide further on-ground searches for breeding birds.
- 3) *Phenology and breeding biology of Beck's Petrels*. Using tracking data, shore-based observations and research at breeding colonies, this chapter will provide new and comprehensive data on colony attendance, timing and shift duration of incubation, chick rearing and fledging.
- 4) *Beck's Petrel status and threats*. Coastal boat-based observations will be done to complete a mark-recapture population estimate using data from satellite-tagged individuals and simultaneous raft counts in Silur Bay, New Ireland. In addition, use of remote monitoring technologies at a colony in southern New Ireland will collect data on breeding success and invasive species impacts.

Given the very recent start, my focus to date has been on the following:

- 1) *Literature review*: This review will summarize all that is known about the Beck's Petrel to date and will ensure I am well placed for the first HDR Initial Project Review milestone scheduled for the mid-June 2024.
- 2) *Research program and plan*: Notwithstanding the proposed outline of my four data chapters, as outlined above, I have begun working on a more comprehensive research plan that will provide the framework for all of my research activities focused on Beck's Petrel. I have met one-on-one with my supervisors a number of times since commencing in mid-December 2023 and have a meeting scheduled with the entire supervisory team in late January to discuss and progress this further.
- 3) *Papua New Guinea research permits*: I will need research permits to conduct the fieldwork in New Ireland, PNG. I am liaising with the Conservation Environment Protection Authority (CEPA) in Papua New Guinea for Research Permits. Progress to acquire the Research Permits has been positive and I'm hoping to get feedback from CEPA by the end of January. I have also been working with my supervisory team on this, as collectively we will draft the required permit applications.
- 4) *Animal ethics*: While liaising with CEPA for permits to conduct research in PNG, the team is also working on the Animal Ethics submission to the Monash University Animal Ethics Committee.
- 5) *Completion of HDR Program Compulsory Courses*: As a part of my Higher Degrees program there are several compulsory courses required to be completed within a month from the date of enrolment. I have completed three of these courses. The last of these courses is scheduled for the end of February 2024.

It is only the beginning of my research journey, and I know that searches for the Beck's Petrel have been challenging, and those challenges remain. Despite that, I am excited and looking forward to the adventures ahead.

RECORDS COMMITTEE

Chair

Dr Alexander Lees (Manchester Metropolitan University (from July 2023)

Dr James Gilroy (until June 2023)

Secretary

Dr Chris McInerney (University of Glasgow)

Members

Mr Ross Ahmed (Northumberland) (from July 2023)

Mr Chris Batty (Lancashire)

Dr Pierre-Andre Crochet (French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS))

Mr Paul French (BBRC Chair)

Mr Mark Golley (Norfolk, UK)

Mr Mark Thomas (RSPB)

Dr Leila Walker, BOU COO

BOURC CATEGORY F SUB-COMMITTEE (BOURC CFSC)

Dr Joanne Cooper

Prof John R. Stewart

Dr Dale Serjeantson

BOURC consultants

Mr Steve Dudley (Category C)

Dr Bob McGowen, National Museums of Scotland (museums)

Keith Naylor (historical records)

Andrew Owen, Chester Zoo (captive bird trade)

Brenda and Tony Gibbs bequest

We received and assessed 33 applications. The combined scores and comments from Committee members were used for the basis of the on-the-day discussions at a meeting on 21 June 2023.

Council approved a single award of £20,000:

Arjun Amar (South Africa)

Associate Professor, FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, South Africa

Impacts of Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) on two nocturnal birds – a natural experiment triggered by the collapse of power supply in South Africa.

Records Committee

BOU.ORG.UK/BRITISH-LIST/

The Records Committee is responsible for maintaining the British List, the official list of birds recorded in Britain.

The Committee met twice (remotely) during the year with other business conducted by email.

James Gilroy retired as a member of the Committee in July 2023. James served on the Committee since 2010 and as Chair from March 2019, and we extend our gratitude to him for all his hard work spanning 13 years. Alex Lees stepped into the Chair role from July 2023 and we welcomed Ross Ahmed as a new member – Ross is an experienced birder with a particular passion for analysing bird migration data, and he is already contributing his extensive knowledge to the Committee.

Changes to the British List

The BOURC's 56th Report was published in January 2024 and covers the period October 2022 to September 2023 (*IBIS* 166: 348–352). This announced a number of changes to Category A of the British List, including:

- Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* – species added to the List.
- Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis* – species added to the List.
- Sulphur-bellied Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus* – species added to the List.
- The addition of the Common Eider subspecies *Somateria mollissima faeroeensis* and the British and Irish endemic Greenfinch subspecies *Chloris chloris harrisoni* in accordance with an earlier iterations of the IOC World Bird List (<https://www.worldbirdnames.org>).

In addition, the release of versions 13.1 and 13.2 of the IOC World Bird List resulted in a number of changes to the British List, as detailed in the 56th Report.

Subsequent to the publication of the 56th Report, the Committee announced the removal of Lesser Short-toed Lark *Alaudala rufescens* from Category A of the

ADDITIONS TO THE BRITISH LIST



Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*, admitted to the British List in 2023.

Image © Richard Patient, from record file



Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*, admitted to the British List in 2023.

Image © Steve Keightley, from record file



Sulphur-bellied Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus*, admitted to the British List in 2023.

Image © Dean Jones

British List (to be included in the 57th Report).

Also, it was noted that through oversight the IOC split of Tibetan Sand Plover *Charadrius atrifrons* from Lesser Sand Plover *C. mongolus* (re-named Siberian Sand Plover) was not included in the Category species totals in the 56th Report.

In total, these changes to the British List, together with taxonomic changes in line with IOC taxonomy (detailed in *IBIS* 164: 929–931) bring the total to 633 species as at 31 December 2023.

Also in the 56th Report, the Committee outlined its approach to cryptic bird species, indicating that it would take a pragmatic case-by-case approach to assessment of species where it is overwhelmingly likely that a record pertains to one cryptic species and not others in a complex (e.g. due to vagrancy likelihood linked to life history traits). In the same report the Committee also indicated that it would consider submissions of records without a human observer (e.g. records from passive acoustic recorders, camera traps or tracking data) and that this will occur on a case-by-case basis, with submissions requiring as much observation metadata as possible.

Committee recruitment

New Committee members continue to be recruited via public calls for nominations. For the 2024 round of Committee nominations, Alex, in his role as BOURC Chair, together with Dawn Balmer, penned a contribution on #theBOUblog acknowledging BOURC's failure to recruit female members and asking what can be done about it. The blog hopes to highlight the issue to the community and encourage people to nominate women for the Committee.

Links with other groups

The Committee maintains close links with the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). The BOURC Secretary continues to work closely with BBRC's Secretariat and other European committees, and close links are maintained with Association of European Records Committees (AERC).

BOURC online intranet

The Committee operates an online intranet site that is used for the storage of images and documents to assist with its work.

Acknowledgements

The Union would like to extend its thanks and gratitude to the following who have assisted with the many BOU activities throughout the year:

All those members of Council and our committees as listed throughout the report who give up their time willingly to develop, oversee and deliver our wide range of activities;

Raurie Bowie, Richard Fuller, Jenny Gill, Rebecca Kimball, Ruedi Nager, Jeremy Wilson, Patrick Smith, all Associate Editors (listed in each issue of IBIS) and the hundreds of reviewers (listed annually in IBIS) for their invaluable work for IBIS;

Richard Sale (on behalf of the Alexander Library, Oxford University) for his editing of the IBIS book reviews;

Prof Christopher Perrins and Neil Bucknell for arranging the obituaries published in IBIS;

Graham Allen, Farhath Jabeen, Andreas Petersen, Genevieve Richards, Janany Sudarshan, Jo Wood and colleagues at Wiley, for their help in delivering our high quality journal;

Andrew Hopwood, Adrian Morris and colleagues at Henry Ling Ltd for providing member print copies of IBIS;

Leica (UK) for their support of our IBIS early career researcher award;

Nigel Crocker, Richard Price and Stephen Rumsey for their excellent management of the Union's investment portfolio;

Amanda Trask (Zoological Society of London, UK), María Moirón (Institute of Avian Research, Germany), Michela Corsini (University of Warsaw, Poland), Ferran Sayol (University College London, UK), Jelmer Samplonius (University of Edinburgh, UK) and Emily Simmonds (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) for their work preparing the programme for the annual conference (*Evolutionary responses*);

Bryam Aguilar, Ondřej Belfín, Sarah Binnie, Ryan Burrell, Camilo Carneiro, Ana Luiza Catalano, Hannah Hereward, Triin Kassiku, Angela Langford, Claire Nemes, Charlie Russell, Nicola Sockhill, Samantha Wong Topp, Qiqi Yang and Natalia Zielonka for supporting the delivery of our conferences;

Cont/.

Membership

At the end of the year our total membership stood at 1,089 (1,017 at 31 Dec 2022) comprising 781 full members (721 at 31 Dec 2022) and 308 reduced rate subscribers (296 at 31 Dec 2022), made up of 277 early career researchers (ECRs) and 31 from/living in low-and-middle-income countries.

44 members sent their formal resignation during the year (26 in 2022), and Council noted, with sadness, the following deaths: Mr Norman Arlott, Mr Manuel Orobittg Duarte, Mr Donald Greenhalgh, Prof Mike Harris, Dr Susan Haysom, Dr Neville Skinner.

As ever, we remain extremely grateful for the continued support of our members.

Financial review

Graham Appleton, Honorary Treasurer

The BOU made a loss of £3,140 in 2023, which is less than predicted. The most significant variances will be discussed below. As indicated last year, Council has been setting budgets that are designed to be negative, by investing money in the future of ornithology, especially through support for early-career ornithologists.

The BOU has done well to weather the long-standing Covid crisis but there is still some uncertainty about income generation due to changes in ways of working post-Covid. Many now think more carefully about the carbon cost of travel and the health consequences of conference attendance, especially for those who are more vulnerable. As you will have read in the President's report, much thought has been given to new models for BOU meetings. We are fortunate to have annual income from Ibis and money in the bank to trial new initiatives.

Changes of personnel

Having helped us to negotiate a new publishing contract with Wiley and provided support for Leila through her first annual report and accounts, Steve Dudley's call-off contract ceased at the end of March 2023. As a consequence, staff costs were lower in 2023 than in 2022.

During the year, our three Investment Trustees indicated that they felt that it was time to make changes, after decades of service. We are very grateful to Richard Price, Nigel Crocker and Stephen Rumsey for stewarding our investments so wisely. Three new Investment Trustees have been recruited to take over, once the accounts for 2023 have been finalised.



Acknowledgements

CONT/.

Wouter Vansteelant (University of Groningen, the Netherlands), José Alves (University of Iceland & University of Aveiro, Portugal), Vojtech Brlik (Charles University, Czechia), Maria Dias (University of Lisbon, Portugal), Steve Dudley (Consultant, Scotland), Cat Morrison (University of East Anglia, UK), Elham Nourani (Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour, Germany), Elly Knight (University of Alberta, Canada), Camila Gómez (SELVA, Colombia), Fengyi Guo (Princeton University, USA), Bryant Dossman (Georgetown University, USA), Yachang Cheng (Sun Yat-sen University, People's Republic of China), Sayam Chowdhury (University of Cambridge, UK), (Yong Ding Li, BirdLife International, Singapore), Judit Szabo (Charles Darwin University, Australia), R. Suresh Kumar (Wildlife Institute of India, India) and Batmunkh Davaasuren (Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia, Mongolia) for the planning and delivery of our *Global flyways* autumn conference;

Daniel Blanco and Charlie Douglass at Douglass Digital for maintenance and development of the BOU website;

Maria Rogers and the conference staff at the University of Nottingham Conferences for helping to deliver our first in-person annual conference since 2019;

Andy Musgrove for continued help with maintaining the electronic versions of the British List;

British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and bird records committees across Europe under the auspices of the Association of European Records Committees (AERC) who have assisted BOURC during the year;

Karen Kragesand Thomsen at Kovsted & Skovgård;

and Caroline Gillis, Tracey Richardson and colleagues at Azets (accountants and auditors).

We apologise to anyone we have inadvertently omitted.

I am due to finish my second term as Hon Treasurer in spring 2025 and it would have been good to have started the handover by recruiting a Treasurer Elect to Council in spring 2024. We are still trying to find someone but, should we fail, I am prepared to serve for a ninth year, through to the 2026 AGM, subject to the approval of members at the 2025 AGM.

Gibbs Investments

I reported last year that payments from the Gibbs Fund were being made from core funds, in the hope that the value of the investments in the Amity Balanced Fund for Charities could be recovered. An initial investment of £130,000 was made in early 2020, just before Covid hit and before the uncertainties associated with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The value had dropped to £117,977.22 by 31 December 2022 and then dropped to £112,326.25 by the time that the Fund was closed by Eden Tree, the fund managers, in September 2023. The Investment Trustees were reluctant to reinvest the money, given uncertain medium term prospects. and £112,326.25 was credited to the BOU's CAF account, as a cheque.

Given that the Gibbs Fund is a legacy, Council has felt morally obliged to make up the loss on investments (£17,673.75) and this is reflected in the accounts for 2023. The new Investment Trustees will be asked to think about whether there is a sensible medium term investment route that will help recover some of this loss.

The period of the investment of the Gibbs money was unfortunate. For comparison, we realised assets in the Warham Fund at the same time as we bought investments for the Gibbs Fund. This timing was excellent, allowing us to support a fourth PhD studentship, when the original budget had been for three.

Reviews in 2023

I highlighted the continuing drop in membership numbers in my report on the 2021 accounts and the 2022 Annual Report included mention of two new reviews, looking at membership retention/growth and how BOU should develop its conference programme (and income stream) in a post-Covid world. Membership numbers increased marginally in 2023 but, because of changes we made in 2022 to the way that renewals are allocated, income dropped slightly. During the year under review a third strand to the review emerged, as Council considered a refresh of the BOU's strategy. With strong leadership from the expanded Management Group, there has been good progress in all three areas, as you will see in the report of Council from Graeme Buchanan.

Variations between 2022 and 2023

Higher interest rates contributed to an increase of 38% in income from investments but inflation had a negative effect on most of the BOU's outgoings. Conference costs in 2022 were inflated by the loss of a deposit on a cancelled conference which explains why 2023 costs were significantly lower. Expenditure on charitable activities was relatively low in 2023, as less money was spent on Warham Studentships, in line with the schedules of payments. Publication income remains



strong at £118,906, compared to £108,752 in 2022. There was further reduction in the value of BOU's long-term investments during 2023, in line with market trends.

Looking forwards to 2024

The budget prepared for 2024 includes extra resources for conferences, as we trial new engagement methods, and we will need to invest more in marketing and promotion, after a period of restraint. We expect to make a loss of about £24,000 during the year, which is in line with a strategy that sees us reducing reserves to £350,000. Unrestricted reserves stood at £642,362 at the year end.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Members of Council are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales and in Scotland requires the Members of Council to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Members of Council are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Members of Council are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Staff remuneration is reviewed annually in January by the principal officers (President, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary). The decision on whether to make a pay award is contingent on affordability and the 12-month average CPIH for the previous calendar year. Benchmarking of pay and pension against comparators within the same sector, including the main avian research charities, is undertaken periodically according to availability and affordability of information.

Approved by the Council on 6 March 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Graeme Buchanan'.

Dr Graeme Buchanan President

Independent auditor's report

to the members of the British Ornithologists' Union

for the year ended 31 December 2023

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of British Ornithologists' Union (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Members of Council with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Members of Council are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our

knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Members of Council

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the Members of Council are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Members of Council determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the Members of Council are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Members of Council either intend to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the entity through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Other matters

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with current Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Use of this report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to



the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Tracey Richardson BSc (Hons) FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

11 March 2023

Chartered Accountants

Statutory Auditor

Westpoint

Lynch Wood

Peterborough

Cambridgeshire

United Kingdom

PE2 6FZ

Azets Audit Services is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION **STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES** **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

Current financial year		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£
Income from:						
Donations and legacies	3	38,052	–	–	38,052	47,967
Charitable activities	4	149,262	–	–	149,262	129,240
Investments	5	28,492	4,453	1,656	34,601	25,116
Total income and endowments		215,806	4,453	1,656	221,915	202,323
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	6	51,869	–	–	51,869	57,738
Charitable activities	7	125,561	43,647	–	169,208	196,029
Total expenditure		177,430	43,647	–	221,077	253,767
Net gains/(losses) on investments	12	(5,903)	–	1,925)	(3,978)	(49,901)
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		32,473	(39,194)	3,581	(3,140)	(101,345)
Gross transfers between funds		4,064	(4,064)	–	–	–
Net movement in funds		36,537	(43,258)	3,581	(3,140)	(101,345)
Fund balances at 1 January 2023		605,825	314,449	153,658	1,073,932	1,175,277
Fund balances at 31 December 2023		642,362	271,191	157,239	1,070,792	1,073,932

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing activities.

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Prior financial year (2022)		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2022 £
	Notes				
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	3	37,967	10,000	–	47,967
Charitable activities	4	129,240	–	–	129,240
Investments	5	19,321	4,323	1,472	25,116
Total income and endowments		186,528	14,323	1,472	202,323
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	57,738	–	–	57,738
Charitable activities	7	139,690	56,339	–	196,029
Total expenditure		197,428	56,339	–	253,767
Net gains/(losses) on investments	12	(39,644)	–	(10,257)	(49,901)
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		(50,544)	(42,016)	(8,785)	(101,345)
Gross transfers between funds		5,633	(5,633)	–	–
Net movement in funds		(44,911)	(47,649)	(8,785)	(101,345)
Fund balances at 1 January 2022		650,736	362,098	162,443	1,175,277
Fund balances at 31 December 2022		605,825	314,449	153,658	1,073,932



BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

		2023	2022
	Notes	£	£
Fixed assets			
Investments	14	407,682	519,707
Current assets			
Debtors	16	55,724	47,702
Cash at bank and in hand		648,913	545,662
		704,637	593,364
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(41,527)	(39,139)
Net current assets		663,110	554,225
Total assets less current liabilities		1,070,792	1,073,932
Capital funds			
<u>Endowment funds - general</u>			
General endowment funds	21	157,239	153,658
Income funds			
Restricted funds	20	271,191	314,449
Unrestricted funds		642,362	605,825
		1,070,792	1,073,932

The accounts were approved by the Members of Council on 6 March 2024.

Graeme Buchanan

Dr Graeme Buchanan President

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The British Ornithologists' Union is a registered charity in England and Wales (249877) and Scotland (SC044850) and is unincorporated.

The charity is a public benefit company.

The charity's place of business is:

PO Box 79, Pembroke, SA72 9AX, United Kingdom.

1.1 Accounting convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102 rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice which is referred to in the Regulations but which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Members of Council have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Members of Council continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Members of Council in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal, and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies (continued)

1.4 Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity; it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- Income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.
- Legacy income is recognised when receipt is probable and entitlement is established.
- Income from donated goods is measured at the fair value of the goods unless this is impractical to measure reliably, in which case the value is derived from the cost to the donor or the estimated resale value. Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts when received if the value can be reliably measured. No amounts are included for the contribution of general volunteers.
- Income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it may be regarded as restricted.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- Expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, non-charitable trading activities, and the sale of donated goods.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.
- Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis.

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies (continued)

Overheads

Overhead costs are allocated to the relevant cost centres in the following proportions:

	Office costs	A F Langford remuneration	L Walker remuneration	S P Dudley remuneration
Conference costs	15%	7.5%	22.5%	22.5%
Management and administration	45%	47.5%	60%	60%
IBIS publishing costs	37.5%	45%	15%	15%
Research costs	2.5%	–	2.5%	2.5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

These proportions were decided upon by the trustees, who believe that they represent a fair reflection of the resources expended by the charity on each activity.

1.6 Fixed asset investments

Unlisted equity investments are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently measured at fair value. If fair value cannot be reliably measured, assets are measured at cost less impairment.

Listed investments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value being recognised in income or expenditure.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.8 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.



BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies (continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.9 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Members of Council are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Donations and legacies	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	1,395	-	1,395	10,738
Subscriptions	36,657	-	36,657	37,229

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

4	Charitable activities				2023	2022
					£	£
	Publication income – IBIS				118,906	108,752
	Other publication income				–	71
	Conference income				30,356	20,417
					149,262	129,240
5	Investments	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds general	Total 2023	Total 2022
		£	£	£	£	£
	Income from listed investments	17,749	4,453	1,656	23,858	22,894
	Interest receivable	10,743	–	–	10,743	2,222
		28,492	4,453	1,656	34,601	25,116
	For the year ended 31 December 2022	19,321	4,323	1,472		25,116
6	Raising funds				2023	2022
	<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>				£	£
	Management costs – purchases				4,637	5,774
	Management costs – wages and salaries				42,911	47,070
	Management costs – employer's NIC				–	1,244
	Management costs – pension costs				4,321	3,650
	Fundraising and publicity				51,869	57,738
7	Charitable activities				2023	2022
					£	£
	Research – administration costs				1,574	1,861
	Publication costs – IBIS				60,097	59,281
	Conference costs				32,166	46,723
					93,837	107,865
	Grant and bursary funding of activities (see note 8)				58,686	71,356
	Share of governance costs (see note 9)				16,685	16,808
					169,208	196,029

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

8 Grants and bursaries payable

	2023 £	2022 £
<u>Awards payable (nine in 2022):</u>		
Claire Branston (Post-doctoral Research Assistant, University of Glasgow, UK)	1,498	-
Andrea Estandia (PhD student, Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, UK)	1,950	-
Katarzyna Janas (Assistant Professor (adjunct), Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland)	1,500	-
Rosanne José Michielsén (PhD student, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland)	2,000	-
Gabriel López Segoviano (Postdoc, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico)	1,915	-
Enriqueta Velarde (Senior Researcher, Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico)	1,974	-
Akshay Bharadwaj (Masters student, Indian Institute of Science, India)	2,500	-
Federico De Pascalis (Postdoctoral Associate, ISPR, Italy)	1,675	-
Michał Jezierski (PhD student, University of Oxford, UK)	-	1,500
Verónica Méndez Aragón (Academic Director, University Centre of the Westfjords, Iceland)	-	1,500
Kristen Wacker (PhD candidate, University of Michigan, US)	-	2,000
Klara K. Nordén (PhD student, Princeton University, US)	-	1,885
Teresa Pegan (PhD student, University of Michigan, US)	-	1,683
Anap Isphaku Afan (Research Associate, A P Leventis, Nigeria)	-	2,449
Roman Alberto Ruggera (Profesor Adjunto, Instituto de Ecorregiones Andinas, Argentina)	-	1,500
Chima Josiah Nwaoga (Junior Research Fellow, University of Groningen, Netherlands)	-	2,500
Olufemi Olubodun (PhD student, FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, South Africa)	-	1,955
Conference attendance awards	4,700	-
<u>Grants to institutions (three in 2022):</u>		
University of Tasmania (John & Pat Warham Studentship - Paige Green)	-	9,289
McGill University (John & Pat Warham Studentship - Émile Brisson-Curadeau)	8,669	25,095
Monash University (John & Pat Warham Studentship - Dr Rohan Clarke)	30,747	-
University of East Anglia, UK (John & Pat Warham Studentship - Kirsty Franklin)	(442)	-
Lancaster University (Brenda and Tony Gibbs Award - Stuart Sharp)	-	20,000
	58,686	71,356

9 Support and governance costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2023 £	2022 £
Audit fees	-	5,580	5,580	5,220
Legal and professional	-	1,024	1,024	2,585
Accountancy	-	3,418	3,418	3,036
Costs of trustees' and committee meetings	-	3,112	3,112	1,217
Support Officers honoraria	-	3,551	3,551	4,750
	-	16,685	16,685	16,808
Analysed between				
Charitable activities	-	16,685	16,685	16,808

Governance costs includes payments to the auditors of £5,580 (2022 - £5,220) for audit fees and £3,418 (2022 - £3,036) for other services.



BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

10 Members of Council

None of the Members of Council (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

During the year two of the Members of Council were reimbursed expenses totalling £417 (2022 - no members were reimbursed expenses). These expenses represent travelling costs incurred by the Members of Council in the performance of their duties.

11 Employees

Number of employees	2023	2022
The average monthly number employees during the year was:	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Employment costs	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	78,231	84,488
Social security costs	-	2,222
Other pension costs	7,983	6,809
	<u>86,214</u>	<u>93,519</u>

No employee received employee benefits of more than £60,000 during the year (2022 – nil).

12 Net gains/(losses) on investments			2023			2022
	Unrestricted funds	Endowment funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Endowment funds general	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Revaluation of investments	11,771	1,925	13,696	(39,644)	(10,257)	(49,901)
Gain/(loss) on sale of investments	(17,674)	-	(17,674)	-	-	-
	<u>(5,903)</u>	<u>1,925</u>	<u>(3,978)</u>	<u>(39,644)</u>	<u>(10,257)</u>	<u>(49,901)</u>

13 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

14 Fixed asset investments

Cost or valuation	Listed investments
	£
At 1 January 2023	519,707
Additions	4,278
Valuation changes	13,697
Disposals	(130,000)
	<u>407,682</u>
At 31 December 2023	407,682
Carrying amount	
At 31 December 2023	<u>407,682</u>
At 31 December 2022	<u>519,707</u>



BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

15	Financial instruments		2023	2022
	Carrying amount of financial assets		£	£
	Trade debtors		47,353	45,676
	Other debtors		1,118	766
	Bank and cash		648,913	545,662
			<hr/>	<hr/>
	Measured at cost		697,384	592,104
			<hr/>	<hr/>
	Listed investments		407,682	519,707
			<hr/>	<hr/>
	Measured at market value		407,682	519,707
			<hr/>	<hr/>
	Carrying amount of financial liabilities			
	Other taxation and social security		683	604
	Accruals		17,982	14,141
			<hr/>	<hr/>
	Measured at cost		18,665	14,745
			<hr/>	<hr/>
16	Debtors		2023	2022
			£	£
	Amounts falling due within one year:			
	Trade debtors		47,353	45,676
	Other debtors		1,118	766
	Prepayments and accrued income		7,253	1,260
			<hr/>	<hr/>
			55,724	47,702
			<hr/>	<hr/>
17	Creditors	Notes	2023	2022
			£	£
	Amounts falling due within one year:			
	Other taxation and social security		683	604
	Deferred income	18	22,862	24,394
	Accruals		17,982	14,141
			<hr/>	<hr/>
			41,527	39,139
			<hr/>	<hr/>

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

18	Deferred income	2023	2022
		£	£
	Other deferred income	22,862	24,394

Deferred income relates to subscriptions received in advance of £20,649 (2022 - £19,698) and income received in advance for conferences in future years of £2,213 (2022 - £4,696).

19 Pensions and other post-retirement benefits

Defined contribution pension plans

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense in the period in which the related service is provided.

The charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution plans was £7,983 (2022 - £6,809).

20 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds (2022)			
	Balance at 1 Jan 2022	Income	Expenditure	Transfers
	£	£	£	£
Research Fund	79,633	4,323	–	–
John & Pat Warham Scholarship Fund	172,421	–	(34,384)	(3,438)
Brenda & Tony Gibbs Bequest	110,044	–	(21,955)	(2,195)
Small grants	–	10,000	–	–
	<u>362,098</u>	<u>14,323</u>	<u>(56,339)</u>	<u>(5,633)</u>
				<u>314,449</u>

	Movement in funds (2023)			
	Balance at 1 Jan 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers
	£	£	£	£
Research Fund	83,956	4,453	–	–
John & Pat Warham Scholarship Fund	134,599	–	(38,974)	(3,897)
Brenda & Tony Gibbs Bequest	85,894	–	(1,675)	(167)
Small grants	10,000	–	(2,998)	–
	<u>314,449</u>	<u>4,453</u>	<u>(43,647)</u>	<u>(4,064)</u>
				<u>271,191</u>



Restricted funds include the Research Fund. This includes the income arising from investments held in the Endowment Fund.

The John & Pat Warham Scholarship Fund is to be used for research on Sphenisciform and Procellariiform seabirds and the income arising from investments.

The Brenda and Tony Gibbs Bequest is to be used for research on tracking and migration studies including the use of new technologies.

The transfer to the unrestricted fund represents an administration fee of 10% of the grants awarded from the John and Pat Warham Scholarship Fund and the Brenda and Tony Gibbs Bequest.

The small grants fund represents a donation that was received in 2022 that is to be used to award small grants in future years.

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

21 Endowment funds

Endowment funds represent assets which must be held permanently by the charity. Income arising on the endowment funds can be used in accordance with the objects of the charity and is included as restricted income. Any capital gains or losses arising on the assets form part of the fund.

	Movement in funds (2022)					Balance at 31 Dec 2022
	Balance at 1 Jan 2022	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Revaluations gains and losses	
	£	£	£	£	£	£
L & MT Fund	128,596	1,472	-	-	(8,372)	121,696
Research Fund	11,236	-	-	-	(626)	10,610
Hutt Legacy	22,611	-	-	-	(1,259)	21,352
	<u>162,443</u>	<u>1,426</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(10,257)</u>	<u>153,658</u>

	Movement in funds (2023)					Balance at 31 Dec 2023
	Balance at 1 Jan 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Revaluations gains and losses	
	£	£	£	£	£	£
L & MT Fund	121,696	1,656	-	-	2,676	126,028
Research Fund	10,610	-	-	-	(249)	10,361
Hutt Legacy	21,352	-	-	-	(502)	20,850
	<u>153,658</u>	<u>1,656</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,925)</u>	<u>157,239</u>

The Landsborough and Mary Thomson Research Fund (L & MT Fund) and the Hutt Legacy represent funds set up by individual donors. The purpose of the L&MT Fund was to fund research. Income arising from the capital held in investments within Endowment Funds is credited to the restricted Research Fund. The Research Fund represents permanent capital, the income from which is transferred to the fund of the same name in Restricted Funds to be spent solely on research activities (e.g. grants and bursaries). The Hutt Legacy is intended for the general purposes of the Union and interest arising from this item is credited to General Unrestricted Funds which itself represents investments and net assets which are held for the daily running and maintenance of the charity.

22 Analysis of net assets between funds

	2023			Total 2023
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 December 2023 are represented by:				
Investments	250,443	-	157,239	407,682
Current assets/(liabilities)	391,919	271,191	-	663,110
	<u>642,362</u>	<u>271,191</u>	<u>157,239</u>	<u>1,070,792</u>

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

22 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

	2022			
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total
	funds	funds	funds	2022
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 December 2022 are represented by:				
Investments	248,052	117,997	153,658	519,707
Current assets/(liabilities)	357,773	196,452	–	554,225
	<u>605,825</u>	<u>314,449</u>	<u>153,658</u>	<u>1,073,932</u>

23 Financial commitments, guarantees and contingent liabilities

During the year the charity awarded a grant of £20,000 from the Brenda & Tony Gibbs Bequest of which no payments had been made by the year end. The project is due to run from January 2024 to July 2025.

During 2022 the charity awarded the final John and Pat Warham Studentship grant of £85,000 of which £54,253 is still to be paid to the recipient. This Studentship is due to run from 2023 to 2027.

24 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2022 - none).

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel including employer pension contributions is as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Aggregate compensation	<u>48,570</u>	<u>56,154</u>

Transactions with related parties

During the year payments of £4,796 (2022 - £1,842) were made to Professor J Gill, wife of G Appleton, a Trustee. This was for IBIS editorial services and the transactions were on an arms length basis.