

ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN RARITIES COMMITTEES (AERC)

Secretary office: D'Haus vun der Natur L-1899 Kockelscheuer, Luxembourg

Board members: Tom Conzemius, Luxembourg; Gábor Magyar, Hungary; Paul Mosimann, Switzerland

Tel. +352 29 04 04, Fax +352 29 05 04

MINUTES OF THE 3rd CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN RARITIES COMMITTEES IN KECSKEMET, HUNGARY (Aug 26-28 1995)

Sponsored by **CARL ZEISS**

Participants: Martin Riesing, Austria; Jan Pollet, Belgium; Josef Chytil, Czech Republic; Jari and Ulla Peltomaki, Finland; Christine and Peter Barthel, Germany; Walter W. Mergen, Carl Zeiss; Alan Knox, David Parkin, BOURC, Colin Bradshaw, BBRC, Great Britain; Gábor Magyar, Attila Bankovics, Tibor Hadarics, Zoltán Ecsedi, Hungary; Gunnlaugur Thrainsson, Iceland; Gintaras Matiukas, Lithuania; Tom Conzemius, Luxembourg; Tadeus Stawarczyk, Michal Skakuj, Jan Lontkowski, Poland; Helder Costa, Portugal; Alfred and Brona Trnka, Slovak Republic; Eduardo de Juana, Spain; Urban Olsson, Christian Cederroth, Sweden; Paul Mosimann, Switzerland.

AERC

The decision to create the AERC was taken in 1993 on Heligoland. The contact person for the last 2 years was Christine Barthel who organized the 1995 meeting in Kecskemét. Many thanks to her. The secretariat of AERC will now be run by 3 people, Tom Conzemius from Luxembourg, Gábor Magyar from Hungary and Paul Mosimann from Switzerland. Their task for the next 2 years will be to organize the 1997 meeting, to keep and update an address list of all RCs, to publish a newsletter at regular intervals improving contacts between the AERC and its members, to raise funds for RCs with financial problems, to keep a list of identification experts etc. The secretary's office will be in Luxembourg, in the 'Haus vun der Natur'. The official sponsor of the AERC is **CARL ZEISS**.

MEETING 1997 SLOVAK REPUBLIC

We have received an invitation from Brona and Alfred Trnka to organize our next meeting in 1997 in the Slovak Republik, probably in the second half of July. This invitation is welcome as this will keep the travel expenses from eastern countries at a reasonable level. Walter Mergen announced that **CARL ZEISS** Germany will again be able to sponsor this meeting.

EUROPEAN LIST

Christian Cederroth presented the first draft of the European list. The following decisions have been made: the list should include all European countries with an existing RC, and not consider countries with no existing RC (e.g. Russia); the atlantic islands and the Faroe Islands will have separate columns, species that should be reported to the national RC will be marked, species that have not been reported in the AERC countries but elsewhere in Europe will have a special column, Alan Knox and Urban Olsson will check any taxonomic problems. The list should be

published as a booklet. The target group is all European birdwatcher. An introduction will explain the work of national RCs and contain an address list of all European RCs. This list should improve the relationship between birdwatchers travelling all over Europe and the national RCs. (See also Task List)

THE ESCAPE PROBLEM

According to news from various countries, the escape bird situation is getting worse and worse. Not only is nearly every species imported to Europe, including eastern Palearctic gulls and South American waders, but it is extremely difficult if not impossible to get reliable numbers of imported birds. Traditional gates to the EU are disappearing, many airlines prohibit bird trade, new gates in other countries are opening which have less strict regulations on bird imports, like Spain and other southern European countries. It is not impossible that in the near future the importation of live birds into the EU will become much easier with the new European legislation. The following decisions have been made in order to tackle the problem:

The most important work of each RC is to check the correct identification of a record, to collect all relevant records and to publish them.

A new category E includes all records of known escapes or known active ship assisted birds.

A working group on the escape problem has been created. Colin Bradshaw, Jan Pollet, Urban Olsson and Tadeus Stawarczyk will collect information on bird trade hot spots all over Europe. Every RC should have one contact person for this working group.

This working group will also set up a Tracer Species Program. Known escapes should be followed up to find out what is happening with these birds (Survival rate, migration routes etc.).

FINANCIAL SITUATION OF RCs

Some RCs, mainly in eastern Europe, have financial problems in publishing their reports, in sending their mail and in attending the biannual AERC meetings. These RCs should check if it is less expensive to send a pile of annual reports to the AERC-secretariat in Luxembourg, which will send them to the national RCs all over Europe. Furthermore, the AERC will raise funds and we hope to be able to pay a part of the travel-costs for some eastern RC-members to the Slovak Republic in 1997 (see also task list).

EUROPEAN REPORT

Arnoud B. van den Berg and George Sangster from the Netherlands and Michal Skakuj and Jan Lontkowski from Poland volunteered to compile an annual European report, beginning with 1993. This report will not only consider major rarities in each country, but also records of major biological relevance (e.g. range expansion, invasion). The English version can be translated by each national RC into their language and published in their national journal.

PUBLICATION AND CITATIONS OF UNCHECKED RECORDS

Many editors of birding magazines are using unchecked reports for up-to-date publication. Often these observations are not even reported to the national RCs and they appear later on as citations in more "scientific" papers. As it is impossible to stop these up-to-date reports, the main problem is the citation of unreported or rejected observations. To improve the situation, the AERC will

contact the editors and will ask them to publish the following information in each introduction of such reports:

- Clearly state that these are unchecked reports that must not be cited.
- If anybody wants to use these data, directly contact the relevant national RC.

Furthermore the publisher should always ask the senders to report their observations to the national RCs. This will be much easier when the AERC European List will be published. National RCs should always inform the editor of any published reports rejected later on.

There is a need for a summary of National Rarities reports (see 'European Report') with only fully accepted national records and with a more analytical concept than any of the news sections of major magazines in this field. Even though the AERC considers the 'European News' of BB a rapid, interesting and fairly reliable source of rarities news, and welcomes any cooperation between AERC and BB, a future 'European Report' will be the official forum for the AERC.

COMPILATION OF NATIONAL RC PUBLICATIONS

Tadeusz Stawarczyk has compiled all the national RC publications. Only a few publications are still missing and a complete list will be sent to all the AERC members very soon. Some RC reports seem to be published in very local journals which are hardly available. All national RCs are encouraged therefore to publish their reports in major national journals.

REPORTS OF BIRDS CROSSING A NATIONAL BORDERLINE

In such cases the RCs concerned should exchange the documentations and decisions before publication. It is important to reach an unanimous decision. If this is not possible the record should be rejected by both RCs.

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES (See Task List)

Colin Bradshaw: 9 Tynemouth Place, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE 30 4BJ, UK. Tel.: +44 91 257 2389, Fax +44 191 427 1793

Arnoud van den Berg: Duinlustparkweg 98, NL - 2082 EG Santpoort-Suid, Nederland. Tel.: +31 23 378024, Fax: +31 23 376749

Christian Cederroth: Segerstad fyr, S - 38065 Degerhamn, Sweden. Tel.: +46 485 64062.

APPENDIX

Task List

Supplement to the collation of the European national rarities report (A full collation will be send to the countries which were not represented in Hungary)

Adress List of all RCs