

British Ornithologists' Union

advancing ornithology



# Annual Report & Accounts

birds | people | science



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英国鸟类学会会刊

# 2020

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# President's statement

Prof Juliet Vickery



This time last year, reflecting on my first year as BOU President, I wrote that 2019 “was a tumultuous year for the UK and brought challenges for the BOU”. Given that that was my view, looking back on a pre-Covid 2019, how on earth do I sum up 2020!? I suppose ‘tumultuous and challenging for absolutely everyone, absolutely everywhere’ might do it? In that context I want to start by saying how much I hope that the majority of you reading this have escaped illness, anxiety and, above all, loss. To any of you who have, I can do very little but offer my deepest sympathy and the sincere wish that 2021 will bring you hope and healing.

I want to start by recognising that, despite being 162 years old, the BOU has absolutely proved it is still spritely, can react to change, make rapid and timely decisions, and adopt new ways of working and to support our community. This has been most evident around conferences, which have either been postponed, in the case of the 2020 annual conference, or switched to virtual, as in the case of our autumn 2020 meeting. I want to record a huge thanks to the BOU Office, Steve Dudley and Angela Langford, our innovative Meetings Committee, chaired by Dr Francis Daunt (UKCEH), and the two brilliant Scientific Organising Committees, chaired by Dr David Douglas (RSPB) and Prof James Pearce-Higgins (BTO) respectively, for all their hard work in so successfully implementing these changes. I'd also like to thank my fellow Trustees on Council for their timely and effective decision-making which enabled these changes to be made swiftly and efficiently.

Whilst our 2020 annual conference was switched in its entirety to 2021, the 2020 autumn scientific meeting ‘Climate change and birds: solutions to the crisis’ was a real success story for us and certainly one of my personal highlights. Thanks to a brilliant team, a standout international line-up of speakers and great ‘technical multitasking’ on the day, our first virtual conference was exceptional in so many ways. It brought together scientists, conservationists and policy experts from around the globe, extending late into the UK evening to attract an audience across the Americas. Delegates could attend via Zoom, ask questions and discuss with speakers and one another via Slack and enjoy a parallel Twitter event during the break. The entire 14 hours (!) from 9am to 11pm UK time ran with barely a technical glitch, thanks to careful advance preparation and frenetic behind the scenes activity during the event by Steve Dudley and our expert and knowledgeable Support Officer, Ryan Burrell (Bournemouth University). The format, scheduling and affordable registration rate of the autumn meeting also led to a much bigger and more diverse audience for a BOU conference. The numbers speak for themselves; 375 people registered for the event, of which nearly

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## GODMAN SALVIN PRIZE



**Prof Theunis Piersma** was presented with the BOU's most prestigious scientific award at the International Wader Study Group's (IWSG) 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference in October.

The award recognises Theunis' outstanding contribution to ornithology, in particular to our understanding and conservation of migratory shorebirds around the world, as well as the immense role he has played within our community, and the IWSG in particular, over several decades.

On accepting the award, Theunis said "Thanks for this incredible honour, and thanks for the super nice words [citation in IBIS], which I hope will encourage us all to do a better job. We are scratching the surface of our understanding of the living world, with this enormous sense of urgency that we are losing just that. If the medal helps in raising intention, attention and creative voices, that would be fantastic."

The Godman Salvin Prize is the Union's highest scientific award and recognises an individual's outstanding contribution to ornithology.

For the full citation see IBIS 163: 309-311.

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60% were from outside the UK compared with the norm of only 15%, and over 1,500 people followed the event on Twitter, with over 500 active participants. The lessons learned will be put to good use for an even bigger and better virtual annual conference 'Restoring Bird Populations' in 2021 which will again run on Zoom and Twitter simultaneously.

This year also saw the BOU join forces with the International Wader Study Group (IWSG) to co-host the first ever International Shorebird Twitter Conference as part of the IWSG's 50th anniversary celebrations. A two-day Twitter conference preceded the IWSG's virtual conference, providing the perfect occasion for the BOU to present Prof Theunis Piersma with the Union's Godman-Salvin Prize in front of his 'home crowd'. Quite simply, Theunis is an utterly brilliant and passionate scientist, with a relentless drive to understand and conserve waders all across the globe.

In a year when equality and diversity issues really came to the fore, the BOUs' Engagement Committee and our Equality and Diversity Working Group's (EDWG) stepped up to the challenge. I am extremely grateful to all of those who give their time to help the BOU in its aim to be more inclusive and accessible in all we do. Particular thanks to the Chair of our Engagement Committee, Dr Hugh Wright, who steers us determinedly but carefully and thoughtfully in important but often sensitive areas. A key direction this year has been to move 'beyond gender' to better engage with other underrepresented groups within our community. Our series of Rainbow blogs have captured the honest and often moving personal perspectives and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community in science. I am personally deeply grateful to those who felt able to share in a way that has deepened my own understanding of the challenges faced and provided encouragement to so many, in many different ways. Gender has not been forgotten though and, for the first time in the Union's 162-year history, women now outnumber men (albeit by just one person) on BOU Council. We also took a significant step towards achieving our target of a 50:50 male-to-female ratios in short lists for awards: a newly established Awards Nominations Committee, chaired by Dr Lucy Wright (RSPB), has been tasked with implementing a more open and accountable nominations procedure from 2021 onwards.

In terms of communicating science, our journal IBIS remains the BOU's flagship and it too stepped up to help our community. Over 20% more manuscripts were submitted between April and September compared to the same period in 2019. Despite the pressures of working from home, which may have affected individuals' 'turn around times', the IBIS team worked hard to meet this extra demand. This year, their continued hard work saw IBIS's 2019 2-year Impact Factor increase from 1.944 to 2.076 and the journal moving from fifth to fourth out of the 28 Ornithology journals listed by Thompson Reuters ISI. I would like to record my thanks to our outstanding team of IBIS editors, headed by Editor in Chief Dr Dominic McCafferty, our wider Associate Editor board and the many reviewers, who give so much time to IBIS. A personal highlight was the 'Avian Migration and Movement' special issue published in

April - an inspirational collection of 25 articles and a bright light at the start of the first lockdown for many of us!

Many IBIS authors also contribute to #theBOUblog, working with our blog editor Dr Christina Ieronymidou to produce insightful articles alongside those produced by our Journal publicity Support Officer, Dr Jente Ottenburghs. A testament to the skillful writing of our authors is that the blog remains the most visited section of the BOU website, accounting for 30% of all page views for the site. Huge thanks go to Jente and Christina for all their hard work in helping the science we publish reach a much wider audience.

As was the case for almost all field projects in 2020, the majority of those awarded BOU research grants or bursaries were not taken up during 2020 but will hopefully run 2021. In relation to grants, I would like to thank Prof Phil Atkinson (BTO) who retired as Chair of the Grants Committee for his valued input and leadership as Chair and ordinary member for eight years.

So, looking forward to 2021, I hope many of you will join us for our 'Restoring Bird Populations' virtual annual conference. It promises to be unmissable and highly relevant to later discussions at the Convention on Biological Diversity UN Climate Change Conference. I hope others of you will attend one of our two autumn meetings on 'Birds and People' and 'New Monitoring Techniques', whilst others continue to publish in IBIS and follow us on social media. If you are interested in helping the BOU's work, please do seriously think about getting involved as a committee or Council member, for which we welcome nominations (see member newsletters, social media and our website for calls for nominations).

Here is to all of us being able to enjoy more freedom and a sense of getting back to normal in a 'less tumultuous and less challenging' 2021.





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# Structure, Governance & Management

## ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

### BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Founded 1858

Registered as a Charity:

England and Wales, no. 249877

Scotland, no. SC044850

### Address

PO Box 417, Peterborough PE7 3FX, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 1 733 844 820

Email: [bou@bou.org.uk](mailto:bou@bou.org.uk)

Web: [www.bou.org.uk](http://www.bou.org.uk)

### As at 31 December 2020

#### BOU Staff

##### Chief Operations Officer

Mr Steve P. Dudley

##### Journal & Office Manager

Mrs Angela F. Langford

#### Council Officers

**President** Prof Juliet Vickery

**Vice Presidents** Mr Neil J. Bucknell  
Prof Tony Fox

**Honorary Secretary** Dr Helen Baker

**Honorary Treasurer** Mr Graham F. Appleton

#### Ordinary Members of Council

Dr Sonya Clegg (Chair, Grants Committee),  
Prof Will Cresswell, Dr Emma Cunningham,  
Dr Francis Daunt (Chair, Meetings  
Committee), Dr James Gilroy (Chair, Records  
Committee), Dr Julie Miller, Dr Jennifer Smart  
(Chair, IBIS Management Committee), Dr  
Rosemary Trevelyan, Dr Hugh Wright (Chair,  
Engagement Committee) and Dr Lucy Wright  
(Chair, Awards Nominations Committee).

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.

Staff salaries are discussed annually, as part of the staff review process, conducted by the President and Honorary Secretary. Pay is normally adjusted in line with inflation (CPIH) and there is an option to award an unconsolidated performance-based bonus, in exceptional circumstances. The role of Chief Operating Officer was redefined in 2018 and the salary was adjusted, taking into account remuneration for similar positions in other learned societies and charities.

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## Objectives & Activities

### ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

(continued)

#### 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 Helen Baker, Mr Neil J. Bucknell, Dr Sonya Clegg, Dr Will Cresswell, Dr Emma Cunningham, Dr Francis Daunt, Prof Tony Fox, Dr James Gilroy, Dr Julie Miller, Dr Jennifer Smart, Prof Juliet Vickery, Dr Rosemary Trevelyan and Dr Hugh Wright.

The following individuals also served as Trustees of the charity for part of the year covered by these annual report and accounts: Prof Phil Atkinson, Dr Tom Finch and Dr Rowena Langston.

#### Editorial positions

At 31 December 2020 the following editorial positions were held:

**IBIS Editor in Chief** Dr Dominic McCafferty

**IBIS Editors** Dr Rauri Bowie  
Dr Dan Chamberlain  
Prof Rebecca Kimball  
Dr Ruedi Nager  
Prof Jeremy Wilson

**Blog Editor** Dr Christina Ieronymidou

#### 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.

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#### Mission statement

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. 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 re-scheduled AGM in June, Dr Sonya Clegg was elected as an Ordinary Member of Council, to replace Prof Phil Atkinson as Chair of the Grants Committee and Dr Julie Miller was elected as an Ordinary Member of Council to replace Dr Tom Finch.

During the year, Dr Lucy Wright was co-opted on to Council to help establish and to Chair the new Awards Nominations Committee. Dr Rowena Langston reluctantly informed us that she would not be completing her term on Council and resigned as a Trustee.

We were delighted that Prof Theunis Piersma (University of Groningen and the NIOZ, Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research) accepted our award of the Godman Salvin Prize for his outstanding contributions to the study of shorebirds and to the wider shorebird and ornithological communities.

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 Helen Baker, Dr Will Cresswell, Dr Emma Cunningham, Dr Francis Daunt and Dr Julie Miller, and three of our journal editors, Dr Dominic McCafferty, Dr Rudolf Nager and Prof Jeremy Wilson, also reside there.



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## ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

(continued)

### 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

**Scottish Widows**

67 Morrison Street, Edinburgh EH3 8YJ

### 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**

(formerly Baldwins Audit Services)  
Ruthlyn House, 90 Lincoln Road,  
Peterborough PE1 2SP

# Achievements & Performance

## The BOU Office

### Staff

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

### Office duties

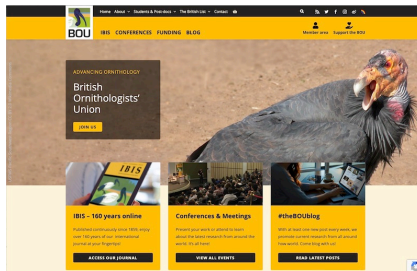
The BOU Office is responsible for the effective running of the BOU, managed by the Chief Operations Officer and overseen by Council and the Union's standing committees.

The BOU Office's key responsibilities are:

- 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 and John & Pat Warham Studentships;
    - working with the Records Committee, manage the British List and associated areas;
    - working with the new Awards Nominations Committee to develop and deliver changes to our nominations processes and awards criteria;
  - working with the Honorary Treasurer, maintain accounts and budgets and the preparation of annual accounts and prepare annual forecasts;
  - working with the IBIS Editorial Team
    - oversee and manage the manuscript process and flow for IBIS;
    - oversee marketing of the journal;
  - 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;
  - to handle general enquiries, press and publicity.
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## BOU.ORG.UK

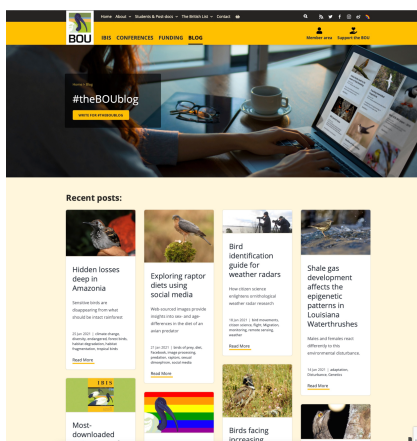
At the end of the year we delivered a completely new website, with an integrated member area.



Our new homepage.



IBIS landing page.



Our new blog page.

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

## Website

BOU.ORG.UK

Investment in digital infrastructure is critical in our digital age and increasingly online lifestyles. The BOU website remains a key component of our communications strategy providing opportunities to promote IBIS, membership, conferences and grants. With a dynamic social media presence delivering thousands of visitors to our website annually, Council agreed to embark upon a complete redesign of the website during the year for what is our largest ever capital expenditure project to date. The project included the integration of MemberPress membership management software, to provide a much-needed member portal for members to manage their own subscriptions and purchase member-discounted items, such as preferential conference rates.

As with most things in 2020, the project was initially held up due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on our developers, Douglass Digital, and then slowed down because the rescheduled development period then overlapped with busier than usual periods (due to the pandemic) within the BOU Office. We eventually finished the redesign in the autumn, at which point we set about the complicated task of a bespoke integration of MemberPress with our complex membership data. The website eventually went live in mid-December, with the member area rolled out in early January 2021. Despite all pandemic-enforced delays, the project ended up being only three months late.

The end result is a hugely more dynamic site that visitors are already reporting that they are enjoying using.

## Conferences

BOU.ORG.UK/BOU-CONFERENCES/

See also Meetings Committee (page 21).

Like all societies, our conferences were massively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The postponement of the annual conference (Restoring Bird Populations) to 2021 necessitated the Office having to cancel the 2020 conference at just three weeks' notice – which is no small feat! With the kind cooperation of the University of Nottingham, we were able to postpone the conference without incurring a penalty, we worked with presenters to move as many as possible of the talks to the rescheduled 2021 event, and refunded registration fees to delegates.

By late spring it was apparent that our autumn one-day meeting (climate change and birds) was unlikely to go ahead as an in-person event so an early decision was made to switch this to a virtual conference (on Zoom) with a parallel Twitter conference. The





## OUR SOCIAL YEAR



@IBIS\_JOURNAL

Tweets	6,186	-15%
Engagements	179,450	+47%
Organic impressions	11.8m	+30%
Followers at 31 Dec 20	17,533	+12%

early switch ensured that we not only maintained an excellent (extended) programme but also attracted the largest ever audience for a BOU event (see page 23).

Before the Covid-19 pandemic was even heard of we had already committed to three Twitter conferences for 2020 – supporting the 6th World Seabird Twitter Conference (#WSTC6), leading on the first ever International Shorebird Twitter Conference (#ISTC20) to be delivered jointly with the International Wader Study Group, and running our own Twitter event, #BOUsci20, alongside the Climate Change and Birds virtual Zoom conference. With the onset of the pandemic, all three events took on a much more meaningful and societal role than expected, as our community sought ways to stay connected and continue to present their work.



IBISJOURNAL

Posts	4,142	-5%
Engagements	150,242	-34%
Impressions/reach	2.75m	-44%
Fans at 31 Dec 20	9,836	+13%

During the year, our Chief Operations Officer, Steve Dudley, Chaired the Marketing Committee for the 2020 North American Ornithological Conference (NAOC). Although increased commitments within the BOU due to the ongoing pandemic prevented Steve from seeing NAOC2020 switch to a virtual event, under his Chairmanship the event attracted the highest ever number of submissions and largest ever attendance for an NAOC.

### Sponsorship

Leica (UK) continued their support providing prizes for the best paper in IBIS with an early career researcher as lead author and for our science communication awards.



IBIS\_JOURNAL

Posts	138	+16%
Engagements	4,411	+25%
Followers at 31 Dec 2020	1,311	+17%

### Social media

[BOU.ORG.UK/SOCIAL-MEDIA/](https://BOU.ORG.UK/SOCIAL-MEDIA/)

See also Engagement Committee (page 14).

Social media continue to play an increasing and significant role in everything we do as a society and remain our primary marketing tool. We continue to refine the use of all our social platforms, to enable us to inform the wider ornithological community about our activities, including IBIS, conferences, grants and awards, and of course membership. Social media is key in our strategy to direct people to the BOU and IBIS websites and, after search engine searches and direct-to-site visits, social media remains the third most important source of visitors to both of these websites.



WEIBO

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Posts	20	-50%
Reads	2,076,600	-18%
Followers at 31 Dec 2020	9,648	+18%



Twitter (@IBIS\_JOURNAL) remains our key platform and at the end of the year we had over 17,500 followers, maintaining @IBIS\_JOURNAL as by far the largest ornithology society/journal on the platform. Our account continues to provide an active news service for ornithologists around the world, on which we promote newly published papers from a wide selection of journals, conferences, meetings, news items, job opportunities and more. Our online community is highly engaged, is the envy of many other taxa-based groups within ecology, and helps us to spread BOU, IBIS and other ornithological news far wider than previously.



## ALTMETRICS

ALTMETRIC.COM

Altmetrics are metrics and qualitative data that are complementary to traditional, citation-based metrics. They can include (but are not limited to) peer reviews on Faculty of 1000, citations on Wikipedia and in public policy documents, discussions on research blogs, mainstream media coverage, bookmarks on reference managers like Mendeley, and mentions on social networks such as Twitter and Facebook (not all social media contribute to altmetrics).

Sourced from the Web, altmetrics can reveal how often a journal is discussed and used around the world. For that reason, altmetrics have been incorporated into researchers' websites, institutional repositories, journal websites, and more.

### ALTMETRICS IN ORNITHOLOGY

Altmetrics became mainstream in 2014. The BOU were quick to see the important role this new metric could play in measuring the outreach of not just our own social media activity, but online mentions of ornithological research as a whole. We have been tracking altmetrics for IBIS, as well as other ornithology journals and ecology journals which carry a significant number of ornithology articles. It was this dataset that was used to look at the impact of social mentions of ornithology articles, especially linking mentions to citations of those papers (Finch, O'Hanlon & Dudley, 2017).

For more information on the use of social media in ornithology and altmetrics see [BOU.ORG.UK/SOCIAL-MEDIA/](http://BOU.ORG.UK/SOCIAL-MEDIA/).

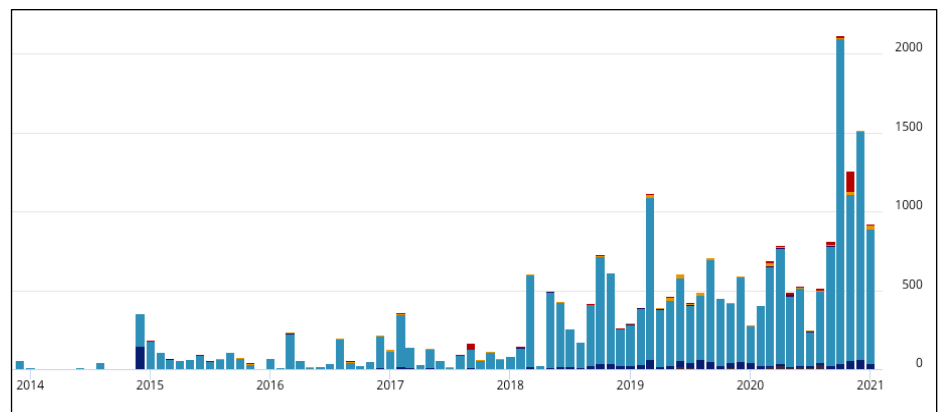
Finch, T., O'Hanlon, N., & Dudley, S. P. 2017. Tweeting birds: online mentions predict future citations in ornithology. *Royal Society Open Science*, 4. DOI: 10.1098/rsos.171371

Our growth on Twitter continues to be notable with our follower growth increasing by 11% (on 2019). A slight refinement in what we share on Twitter saw our posted content drop by 15% but overall engagements and reach increased, back in line with 2018 metrics. Since much of our content is informing the community about new papers in ornithology, it means we have little control over the substance of the content shared, which is highly variable, covering topics right across avian science. Our increase in engagement and reach is considered to be due to the three Twitter conferences we supported/ran during the year and also due to more people spending more time on social media during the pandemic. The former is perhaps obvious, and it's no coincidence we see better performance on the platform in years in which we run Twitter conferences, but the latter should not be underestimated. The pandemic meant many more people were not just working from home but were also working remotely, meaning that social media took on a more important role in keeping people connected both personally and professionally.



Ornithology articles continue to see growth in the number of overall online mentions (measured with altmetrics). The figure below illustrates this growth for IBIS articles which is in line with our own follower base on twitter, and the continued growth of the online ornithological community. It also partly demonstrates the immediacy of online attention, with more recently published articles receiving more attention than older articles. 92% of online mentions of articles published in ornithology journals are derived from social media, 75% from Twitter alone (the pale blue bar in figure below) which also plays a part in the immediacy of attention (Finch et al, 2017).

### Online mentions of IBIS articles, 2014 - 2020



Source: Altmetric Explorer ([altmetric.com/explorer](http://altmetric.com/explorer)) 22 January 2021.

In 2020, from 17 selected ornithology titles tracked since 2015, 2,098 articles received 54,264 online mentions. Mentions for IBIS articles accounted for 47% of these (25,358 mentions of 532 articles) and IBIS again received the most mentions of any ornithological journal from five of the six most important contributing streams to ornithology's overall altmetrics. The online mentions of ornithology articles are truly



## BOU.ORG.UK

The Union's primary website promotes the BOU to a wide audience and is important for recruiting new members, disseminating information about the work of the BOU, taking online bookings for conferences and for selling BOU publications.

## IBIS.AC.UK

The primary gateway to IBIS – the BOU's international journal of avian science.

global, with 58% of online mentions being recognised from 165 countries (remaining 42% are of unknown origin).

### Online mentions of the top 5 altmetric-scoring ornithology journals (in 2020)

	# Articles	Total AAS*	Mentions					
			News	Blog	Twitter	Facebook	Wiki	Policy
IBIS	532	14,756	352	421	22,793	1,272	369	133
IBIS change 2019 v 2020	+5%	-25%	+47%	+4%	+33%	+1%	-9%	+137%
The Auk	367	5,796	341	171	2,958	156	452	7
J Avian Biology	203	5,038	199	62	5,943	380	56	10
J Ornithology	242	3,142	112	61	3,228	159	95	13
Bird Study	175	3,081	38	34	4,659	109	29	30

\* AAS = Altmetric Attention Score (here combined for # Articles)

Data from Altmetric Explorer (altmetric.com/explorer) downloaded 22 January 2021.

The two top scoring individual articles in ornithology during 2020 were both papers published in IBIS:

#### Four-legged foes: dogs disturb nesting plovers more than people do on tourist beaches

Miguel Ángel Gómez-Serrano

doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12879 | Published 2 September 2020

#### Urban gulls adapt foraging schedule to human-activity patterns

Anouk Spelt, Oliver Soutar, Cara Williamson, Jane Memmott, Judy Shamoun-Baranes, Peter Rock, Shane Windsor

doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12892 | Published 2 November 2020

These two papers reflect the different ways a paper can attract online attention. Neither was selected by our publisher, Wiley, for media attention, so any promotion will have been down to the authors and ourselves.

### Altmetrics for the two top altmetric-scoring articles in ornithology

	AAS	Mentions				
		News	Blog	Twitter	Facebook	Wiki
Dogs disturbing nesting plovers	1,433	17	2	2,858	3	1
Urban gulls foraging	1,085	124	8	214	7	0

AAS = Altmetric Attention Score

Data from Altmetric Explorer (altmetric.com/explorer) downloaded 22 January 2021.



## WEIBO

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2020 was our third full year on Weibo, China's largest social media platform, and we continue to enjoy modest growth, thanks to our two volunteers Yachang Cheng and Lei (Robbi) Zhu.

Our warm congratulations to Yachang who graduated with a PhD from the International Max Planck Research School for Organismal Biology in Germany in 2020.

Looking at the above data, the disturbance of nesting plovers paper became the highest altmetric-scoring ornithological article of all time, through a driven Twitter campaign by the author aided by ourselves. The 2,858 Twitter mentions is the highest of any ornithological paper. In contrast, the paper on the diet of urban gulls, the second highest ever altmetric-scoring ornithology article, achieved an unprecedented uptake (for an ornithological article) from news media. The news media attention was solely attributed to the author's own institute, the University of Bath, putting out their own press release. Both of these paper's Altmetric Attention Score was more than double the previous highest-scoring ornithological article up to the end of 2019.



Our presence on Facebook (FACEBOOK.COM/IBISJOURNAL) continues to grow, with an established and expanding community on this platform with our follower number increasing by 13%.

We made some changes to our output content for 2020, with a greater focus BOU and IBIS activities and a reduction of third-party content. Whilst on the face of it these changes had a negative impact on some of our metrics, as can be seen on page 9, and to continue the decline first noted in 2018 and explained in the 2019 annual report. The intention of the changes were to drive more of our Facebook followers to the BOU and IBIS websites. In this respect the changes have been very successful; for the first year ever, Facebook delivered more visitors to the BOU website than Twitter.



We continue to see modest but steady growth on Instagram (IBIS\_JOURNAL). Our follow-base increased by 17% by the year-end, even though our output on this non-altmetric scoring platform remains significantly lower than that for Twitter or Facebook. Posting 138 BOU and IBIS related posts attracted nearly 4,500 engagements – a 25% increase on 2019.



Our third full year on Weibo, China's largest social media platform, saw a modest increase in followers (18%) but with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and increased work commitments on our two volunteers, fewer articles were posted, with 20 articles (-50% on 2019) receiving over 2 million reads (-18% on 2019).



## E-NEWSLETTERS

Our regular e-newsletters are sent to over 8,500 researchers, and others interested in ornithology, all around the world.

## E-newsletters

BOU.ORG.UK/E-NEWSLETTERS /

We saw a continued steady growth in readers, as people signed up via our website. E-newsletters continue to be a key medium for us to promote BOU activities to both members and the wider ornithological community.

We published a total of 39 e-newsletters during the year, with a focus on IBIS, conferences and BOU news. This represents an increase on recent years, due to a need to communicate the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on our activities.





## #THEBOUBLOG

Our most-read blog posts in 2020:

### **A twist in the tale: Red Kites are back in town**

Why are so many Red Kites visiting our towns?

**Melanie Orros**

*Hawk Conservancy Trust*

### **The secret lives of Nightjars**

Where do European Nightjars go?

**Katrina Sharps**

*University of East Anglia*

### **Got an old smartphone? Turn it in to a bird-monitoring app**

The use of a smartphone app for motion detection to monitor birds remotely

**Ronny Steen**

*Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway*

## #theBOUblog

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

Our blog is now the main arrival point for visitors (30%) to the BOU website and the most read section of the website, accounting for 30% of overall page views. During the year we published 79 blog posts (64 in 2019) of which 41 were on IBIS papers (47 in 2019) (see Engagement Committee on page 14 for more detail).

As discussed in previous years, blogs are increasingly popular in our sector and continue to contribute more year on year to our sector's altmetrics. For the 17 selected ornithology journals we've monitored since 2015, blogs accounted for 853 online mentions in 2020 (756 in 2019 and from a starting point of 61 in 2013) (source: Altmetric Explorer accessed 22 January 2021).

After a marked decline last year, the number of authors from third-party journals writing for #theBOUblog picked up again in 2020, with a total of 21 articles received (4 in 2019, 24 in 2018). This was a result of a concerted campaign to attract third-party authors, educating them about the benefits of blogging with the most-read general ornithology blog on the web, and the clear benefits of publishing on more than one blog; multiple blogs increase the altmetric attention score and engage with a wider audience, especially through associated social media posts, thereby increasing the probability of work being cited.

## Press and media

We continue to work closely with our journal partner, Wiley. As a result, 2020 saw another increase in the coverage of IBIS articles in the wider media and press, as reflected in the number of altmetric mentions (see table on page 11), although the majority of the 47% increase on 2019 can be attributed to one paper promoted by the author's own institute (see page 11).

We continue to receive coverage of BOU Records Committee announcements in the UK birding press and online birding services, as well as in regional bird reports and e-groups.

## General administrative items

General correspondence (largely emails and contact forms received via the website) continues to increase and take up significant Office time. We continue to maintain a storage facility in Peterborough.



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## AWARDS NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

### Chair

Dr Lucy Wright (RSPB)

### Members

Dr Niall Burton (BTO)

Ms Aurora Gonzalo-Tarodo (University of West England)

Prof Rhys Green (retired, formerly RSPB & University of Cambridge)

Dr Grant Humphries (HiDef Aerial Surveying)

Dr Rebecca Laidlaw (Natural Resources Wales)

Dr Elizabeth Masden (University of Highlands & Islands)

Mr David Stroud (retired, formerly JNCC)

Dr Alice Trevail (University of Exeter)

## Awards Nominations Committee

The Awards Nominations Committee was set up during 2020 to oversee the criteria and nominations process for each of the BOU's awards, currently the Godman-Salvin Prize, Janet Kear Union Medal and the Alfred Newton Lecture. The Committee also intends to develop a new award for early to mid-career researchers.

Committee members were nominated using two open calls for nominations from within the BOU membership and wider ornithological community. A start-up group comprising Dr Niall Burton, Prof John Croxall, Prof Rhys Green and Dr Lucy Wright met once in July and had useful discussions regarding the remit and priorities for the Committee. John Croxall decided not to continue as a member of the Committee, but we thank him for his insightful contributions at this early stage. From the priorities set by the start-up group, additional members were appointed in the autumn (from the second call for nominations), after which the following joined the Committee: Ms Aurora Gonzalo-Tarodo, Prof Keith Hamer, Dr Grant Humphries, Dr Rebecca Laidlaw, Dr Elizabeth Madsen, Mr David Stroud and Dr Alice Trevail.

The first meeting of the full Committee will take place in early 2021. The Committee's initial work will focus on (i) developing an early to mid-career award, and (ii) writing more detailed criteria for the existing awards, with the aim of increasing the diversity of nominations. The first awards for which the Committee will oversee the nominations process will be awarded in 2022.

---

## ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### Chair

Dr Hugh Wright (JNCC)

### Members

Miss Ailidh Barnes (BTO)

Dr Lynda Donaldson (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust)

Mr Steve Dudley, BOU COO

Dr Jenny Dunn (University of Lincoln)

Dr Tom Finch (RSPB)

Dr Daniel Hayhow (Earthwatch Europe)

Dr Julie Miller (University of Glasgow)

Dr Nina O'Hanlon, Social Media Support Officer (Environment Research Institute)

Dr Ashley Sendell-Price (Uppsala University, Sweden)

Dr Saskia Wischniewski (RSPB)

## Engagement Committee

The Committee oversees engagement between the Union, its members and the wider ornithological community. It aims to advance avian science by facilitating communication and collaboration within the ornithological community. It also increases awareness of the BOU's activities, champions equality and diversity in the BOU's work, and strives towards a stable membership base. The Committee delivers this by developing and improving opportunities to engage with more people (and enabling ornithologists to communicate with each other), primarily through our conference and social media activities. The Committee also reviews the benefits that the Union provides to its members.

The Committee met twice during the year, with other business conducted regularly by email.

The Committee welcomed five new members in 2020, bringing with them ideas and enthusiasm which are already leading to new initiatives. New Committee members are: Miss Ailidh Barnes (BTO), Dr Daniel Hayhow (Earthwatch Europe), Dr Julie Miller (University of Glasgow/early-career researcher rep on BOU Council), Dr Ashley Sendell-



## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP (EDWG)

### Chair

Prof Juliet Vickery, BOU President (BTO)

### Members

Miss Ailidh Barnes (BTO) \*

Dr Emma Cunningham (University of  
Edinburgh)

Mr Steve Dudley, BOU COO

Dr Jenny Dunn (University of Lincoln)

Dr Daniel Hayhow (Earthwatch Europe)

Dr Rosie Trevelyan (Cambridge University)

Dr Ashley Sendell-Price (Uppsala University,  
Sweden) \*

Dr Leila Walker (freelance editor) \*

Dr Hugh Wright (Chair of BOU's Engagement  
Committee, JNCC)

\* EDWG Secretariat

The BOU is committed to diversity in ornithology. We aim to help overcome barriers preventing equality for ornithologists. All our activities are open to anyone interested in ornithology regardless of, but not limited to, nationality, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and socio-economic status.

### Gender ratio of different BOU groups and social media accounts (2020)

	male	female	not known
Council	47%	53%	
BOU committees	59%	41%	
BOU membership	63%	26%	11%
Twitter	64%	36%	
Instagram	59%	41%	
Facebook	61%	37%	2%

Price (Uppsala University) and Dr Saskia Wischniewski (RSPB). Dr Sarah Burthe retired from the Committee and we thank her for her valuable, well-considered contributions, particularly to improve engagement with early-to-mid career ornithologists. Dr Tom Finch's term was extended by a year as he will be the Council nomination for Chair of the Committee at the 2021 AGM.

### Early-career support

The BOU has had great success in engaging with early-career researchers (ECR) over the last seven years, providing benefits such as reduced membership subscriptions, concessionary conference rates and specially tailored workshops. Students have benefitted the most from the ECR initiative, so this year the Committee identified ways to better support ornithologists who have recently finished their education, as they look to establish their careers.

After completing postgraduate education, upcoming ornithologists face important decisions about the direction of their careers. However, leaving education often means losing access to funding sources and other forms of support that they received as students. From 2021 the BOU is extending its ECR initiative to include ornithologists up to 5 years since their last degree (increasing the eligibility window by two years), giving early-career ornithologists access to our member benefits, including cheaper rates for BOU conferences.

### Equality and diversity

[BOU.ORG.UK/ABOUT-THE-BOU/EQUALITY-DIVERSITY/](http://BOU.ORG.UK/ABOUT-THE-BOU/EQUALITY-DIVERSITY/)

Equality and diversity (E&D) issues came to the fore in 2020, creating international headlines and provoking discussion within the scientific community and across society, as a whole. Motivated by these developments and building on the Equality and Diversity Working Group's (EDWG) efforts over the last three years, the BOU sought new ways to improve inclusivity in 2020, particularly in moving 'beyond gender' to better engage with other underrepresented groups within ornithology.

In July 2020 the BOU launched a series of Rainbow Blogs on the #theBOUblog, bringing the LGBTQIA+ initialism to life through the personal perspectives of LGBT ornithologists and those who support or ally themselves with this community. The series informed readers about the breadth of identities within our discipline and the challenges that LGBT scientists face while working in ornithology. The seven blogs posted to date have explained the LGBTQIA+ initialism, provided insight to people's real-life experiences and emotions, described the challenges of fieldwork in gay-illegal countries and explored what it really means to be an ally. The series has raised awareness amongst ornithologists who may not have direct experience of these issues but, importantly, it's also received a very positive response from LGBT ornithologists who recognise the welcoming environment, openness and support that the BOU offers.

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## BOU, DISCRIMINATION AND THE LAW

In response to Black Lives Matter, and the subsequent initiatives that have sprung up throughout society, we are looking at ways to better identify and overcome barriers for all groups within our community.

We are delighted that the recent legacy left by former member John Warham and his wife Pat is already funding PhD students from Commonwealth nations, as they both wanted. This year, Black Lives Matter highlighted the fact that the first three of these studentships were awarded to universities in the UK, Australia and Canada (with New Zealand the fourth and only other country from which we received applications). Students from these same three countries became the recipients. Although this may simply reflect where qualifying projects and candidates are most likely to come from, it is sad that we have not received an application from any institute in the other 50 'new' Commonwealth jurisdictions, whose citizens comprise the majority.

UK discrimination legislation prevents us from discriminating against any group on grounds of race, ethnicity or religion. We still have at least one Warham studentship to award and we strongly wish better to reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth, by making an award to an institute and student from a Commonwealth country, other than the four we have received applications from to date. However, we cannot do so unless suitable projects are put forward and candidates apply.

When we next make a call for applications (likely to be in 2022), we ask that you firstly encourage qualifying institutes that you know to apply to host a studentship, and secondly, encourage seabird researchers who are citizens of these Commonwealth nations to apply for the position when advertised.

Events in the USA led to much needed attention to racial equality and diversity issues in 2020 and prompted the BOU to issue a Black Lives Matter statement. We support the Black community and stand against all forms of racism and prejudice, both in ornithology and in wider society. It is very apparent that ecological sciences have a lower representation of ethnic minority groups and nationalities than other scientific disciplines, and therefore the BOU is committed to ensuring that all underrepresented ethnic or cultural groups feel welcome and are supported in ornithology. The EDWG continues to look for ways to identify and overcome the barriers faced by underrepresented groups in our community, and the BOU will continue to strongly encourage applicants from the new Commonwealth nations for the next John & Pat Warham PhD Studentship.

Meanwhile, ensuring that BOU activities are open and supportive to everyone, regardless of their gender identity, also remains a priority. In 2020, we continued to progress towards the BOU's target of a 50:50 gender balance on BOU Council and committees, improving on the 64:36 split recorded in 2019 to 59:41 in 2020. Women now outnumber men (by one person) on the BOU Council for the first time in the Union's 162-year history.

We also took a significant step towards achieving our target of a 50:50 male-to-female ratio in short lists for awards by establishing an Awards Nominations Committee this year. This new committee is tasked with implementing a more open and accountable nomination procedure and will establish a shortlisting process to enable us to progress towards and meet this target from 2022 onwards (see page 14).

The BOU community is open and welcoming to neurodiverse and disabled members of the ornithological community and we strive to make our activities as accessible as possible. The recent move to online conferences provides an opportunity to engage with ornithologists that might not routinely attend in-person events and so we will maximise the accessibility and inclusiveness of online events, such as our virtual conferences in 2021. However, regardless of how conferences are hosted, it is essential that presentation materials are accessible to as many people as possible and so in 2020 we issued guidance for presenters on the use of colour palettes to ensure that presentations are colour-blind aware.

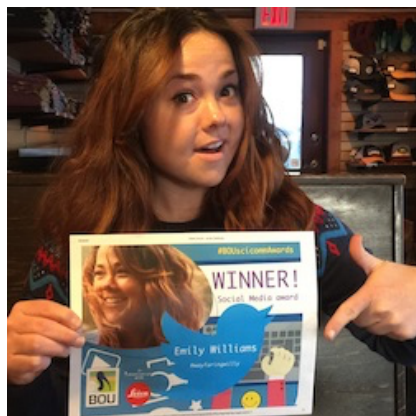
Unconscious bias training was completed by 100% of our BOU Council members, committee members, staff, IBIS editors and conference organisers to ensure that we all remain aware of the impacts of implicit bias and subconscious stereotyping on our decision-making.

Towards the end of the year, with an ever-increasing workload on E&D initiatives, we appointed Ailidh Barnes, Ashley Sendell-Price and Leila Walker as the EDWG Secretariat to oversee the development and delivery of future E&D items.



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## SCIENCE COMMUNICATION AWARDS



Emily Williams voted the best social media scicommer of 2019.



Kiran Dhanjal-Adams and Tamara Emmenegger voted the best article on #theBOUblog in 2019.

We are grateful to Leica Camera (UK) Ltd for supporting our Science Communication Awards.



### Recognising excellence in science communication

In recent years the BOU has been at the forefront of promoting science communication within ornithology. We champion the use of social media for promoting and discussing research, and #theBOUblog is one of the most-read avian science blogs.

Supported by Leica Camera UK, 2020 saw the BOU present our first Science Communication Awards, with separate prizes for the social media science communicator of the year and best article published on #theBOUblog during 2019. We had a good response to the open call for nominations and an assessment panel comprising Chiara Ceci (Chair), Jody Allair (Birds Canada), Anthony Caravaggi (University of Swansea), Steve Dudley (BOU), Christina Ieronymidou (BirdLife Cyprus & BOU Blog Editor), Nina O'Hanlon (University of Highlands and Islands & BOU Social Media Support Officer) and Jordan Rutter (American Bird Conservancy) selected five nominees for each award which were then put to a public vote.

#### **Best Social Media Science Communicator (2019)**

Awarded to Emily Williams for her use of Twitter to communicate her research to the ornithological community and wider public.

#### **Best of #theBOUblog (2019)**

Awarded to Kiran Dhanjal-Adams and Tamara Emmenegger for their blog post on 'following the movements of a new population'.

You can read about both award winners in their Q&A with the award panel Chair, Chiara Ceci, on the BOU website ([BOU.ORG.UK/BLOG-CECI-SCICOMM-AWARD-WINNERS/](https://bou.org.uk/blog-ceci-scicomm-award-winners/)).

### Honorary positions

The Committee's Support Officers assist the BOU office with journal publicity, social media activities and the BOU blog. Their achievements in 2020 include:

Blog (#theBOUblog) – edited by Dr Christina Ieronymidou  
79 new posts in 2020.

- The BOU blog continues to reach a global audience and remains the most visited section of the BOU website, accounting for 30% of all page views for the site.
- The 79 new posts published on the #theBOUblog in 2020 continued to deliver a high diversity of content and highlight the popularity of our blog.
- The 25 blogs authored by the Journal Publicity Support Officer were complemented by a further 16 written by the authors of IBIS papers.
- 10 blogs covered equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, including the seven blogs in our Rainbow Blog series which gave personal perspectives on LGBTQIA+ issues in ornithology.

- Blogs with a BOU focus included two posts written by BOU Warham student Kirsty Franklin, on the Round Island Petrel, and a further two from BOU Small Research Grant recipients.
- There was also a review of BOU's first virtual conference: Climate Change and Birds: Solutions to the Crisis (BOUSci20).

#### Journal publicity – supported by Dr Jente Ottenburghs

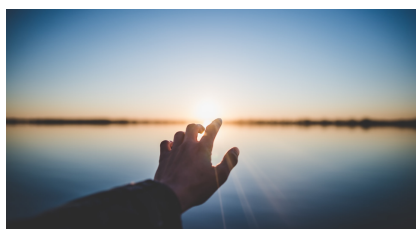
- Produced 25 blog posts for the BOU blog, summarising a variety of IBIS papers published in 2020.
- These posts contributed 11% of overall #theBOUblog post 'reads' (across all posts 2012 - 20).
- Promoted all IBIS paper blog posts across our social media platforms.
- Referenced IBIS papers on Wikipedia with help from the Social Media Support Officer; these references contribute to each paper's Altmetric Attention Score as well as helping to improve the overall coverage of ornithology on Wikipedia.
- Promoted IBIS papers on other websites internationally.

#### Social media – supported by Dr Nina O'Hanlon

- Working jointly with the International Wader Study Group, hosted the first International Shorebird Twitter Conference (#ISTC20) - see below.
- Delivered our first dual-platform conference (#BOUSci20) simultaneously on Zoom and Twitter - see below.
- The BOU's Twitter account (@IBIS\_journal) had over 17,500 followers at the year-end (an increase of >1,700 compared to the end of 2019).
- The BOU's Facebook account (@IBIS\_journal) had over 9,800 likes and 10,500 followers at the year-end.
- The BOU Instagram account (@IBIS\_journal) continues to grow, with over 1,300 followers, posting content focused on IBIS papers, BOU blogs, BOU events and the British List.

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## SUPPORTING MEMBERS



Towards the end of 2020 we developed a member mentoring scheme which will be trialed from early 2021.

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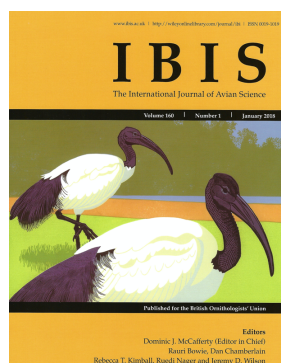
## Conferences

See BOU Office (page 7) and Meetings Committee (page 21).

### Looking ahead – a member mentoring scheme

Access to a community of like-minded individuals that support and empower each other is really effective in helping people manage and navigate through their careers. The global pandemic has demonstrated the tremendous value of community, but it has also made it much harder for conventional, face-to-face interactions and has left some people feeling isolated.

To extend the BOU's support to its members, the Committee is launching a pilot mentoring scheme in early 2021 to provide peer-to-peer support for ornithologists at all career stages. The 6-month trial will convene small groups of mentees who share a common focus or face similar challenges (e.g. career progression, work/life balance,



## IBIS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### Chair

Dr Jen Smart (RSPB)

### Members

Mr Graham Appleton, BOU Honorary

Treasurer

Dr Richard Broughton (UK Centre for Ecology  
& Hydrology)

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

Dr Dan Chamberlain, Editor (University of  
Turin)

Mr Steve Dudley, BOU COO

Dr Rosemarie Kentie (NIOZ Netherlands  
Institute for Sea Research)

Dr Rebecca Kimball, Editor (University of  
Florida)

Mrs Angela Langford, Journal Manager

Dr Dominic McCafferty, Editor in Chief  
(University of Glasgow)

Dr Ruedi Nager, Editor (University of Glasgow)

Dr Staffan Roos (Swedish University of  
Agricultural Sciences)

Prof Jeremy Wilson, Editor (RSPB)

women in ornithology). The mentees will meet via monthly video calls to get to know each other, discuss decisions or challenges, identify opportunities and seek advice from mentors. Mentors will be selected by a facilitator to meet the specific needs of each group.

This scheme is a brand-new initiative for the BOU, and the Committee will be monitoring its uptake, gathering feedback and adapting the format as lessons are learned. Pending the result of the pilot, we hope this will create a long-term peer support base to guide individuals through their careers and reinforce the BOU community, as ornithologists from any location and all career stages engage to support one another

## IBIS Management Committee

IBIS.AC.UK

The IBIS Management Committee provides strategic direction, support and advice to editors and staff on the management of the journal, and with our publisher, Wiley.

The Committee's annual journal publishing meeting with Wiley was held in February, where annual reports covering editorial, production, marketing and finance were presented. We held an additional online editorial meeting in November that was attended by the full editorial team, for the first time in my time as Chair, demonstrating how the use of online meetings really increases inclusivity given the team are spread round the globe. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss the impacts of Covid-19, the change to blind reviewing, progress with increasing the number of reviews being submitted for publication, our ethical policy and several minor editorial matters. Other business throughout the year was conducted by email.

### Impacts of Covid-19

We saw an increase of over 20% in the number of manuscripts submitted between April and September, compared to the same period in 2019, which may have been a result of cancelled fieldwork. The effects of increased submissions, coupled with the fact that many people were under increased family-related pressures while working from home, may have affected the speed with which manuscripts were processed but the full impacts are unlikely to be understood until our annual publisher's report is available early in 2021.

### Editorial team

There were no changes to the editorial team in 2020. Thanks go to the whole team who really make the journal a success. Our Editor in Chief, Dominic McCafferty, continues to do an excellent job, with the help of our great team of Editors; Rauri Bowie, Dan Chamberlain, Rebecca Kimball, Ruedi Nager and Jeremy Wilson and our Journal



## TOP CITED PAPERS

From most recent Impact Factor period (2019)

**A review and meta-analysis of the effects of climate change on Holarctic mountain and upland bird populations** / Davide Scridel et al / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12585

**A review of the occurrence of inter-colony segregation of seabird foraging areas and the implications for marine environmental impact assessment** / Mark Bolton, Georgia Conolly, Matthew Carroll, Ewan D. Wakefield, Richard Caldwell / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12677

**Effects of environmental conditions on reproductive effort and nest success of Arctic-breeding shorebirds** / Emily L. Weiser et al / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12571



## MOST DOWNLOADED IBIS PAPERS

Papers downloaded in 2020

**A review and meta-analysis of the effects of climate change on Holarctic mountain and upland bird populations** / Davide Scridel et al / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12585

**Patterns and processes in shorebird survival rates: a global review** / Verónica Méndez, José A. Alves, Jennifer A. Gill, Tómas G. Gunnarsson / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12586

**The impacts of introduced House Mice on the breeding success of nesting seabirds on Gough Island** / Anthony Caravaggi, Richard J. Cuthbert, Peter G. Ryan, John Cooper Alexander L Bond / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12664

Manager, Angela Langford, and Steve Dudley, who manages the business and marketing areas of the journal.

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. In 2020, we welcomed David Douglas, Melanie Kershaw, Alexandre Millon, Chima Nwaogu, Álvaro Ramírez García, Chevonne Reynolds and Martin Stervander to the Board. Sarah Burthe and Auriel Fournier retired from the Board this year and we thank them for their support and commitment during their time as Associate Editors.

### Journal publishing and management

IBIS is published on behalf of the BOU by Wiley Publishing from whom we continue to receive excellent service, support and advice and the efforts of Wiley staff during 2020 are greatly appreciated, especially Andreas Petersen, our Journal Publishing Manager. 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.

### Journal impact factors and article level metrics

IBIS's 2019 2-year Impact Factor (the number of papers published in the previous two years that are cited in other papers) was 2.076, ranking us fourth out of the 28 Ornithology journals listed by Thompson Reuters ISI. It is positive to see our impact factor and ranking improve on 2018 (1.944; 5/28). Over the last two years, the Committee has made progress to better understand factors that influence submission and citation rates and to implement changes that we hope will continue to improve our impact factor, our online profile and for IBIS to remain competitive among the ornithology journals, for many years to come. Two changes that have been implemented are i) special issues and ii) increased promotion to encourage submission of review papers. In April 2020, we published a special issue which brought together an outstanding collection of 20 original articles and 5 short communications on Avian Migration and Movement. Our promotion targeting submission of review papers has been extremely successful, with seven manuscripts submitted resulting directly from promotion in February 2020. This initiative, together with several existing reviews in the system now gives us a healthy pipeline of diverse review papers. An additional benefit has also become apparent, in that a high percentage of these review papers have first authors who are early career-researchers (ECRs) and around 50% are female first authors.

IBIS continues to have an excellent social media presence, developed by our Chief Operations Officer, Steve Dudley and the wider activities of our Engagement Committee. Together we promote IBIS papers across all our social platforms, including our excellent BOU blog (#theBOUblog) and our electronic newsletters, which should pay dividends in terms of citation rates in future. Jente Ottenburgh, our Journal Publicity Support Officer, continues to do a brilliant job, writing blog posts covering papers





## TOP ALTMETRIC PAPERS

Papers published in 2020

**Four-legged foes: dogs disturb nesting plovers more than people do on tourist beaches** / Miguel Ángel Gómez-Serrano / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12879

**Urban gulls adapt foraging schedule to human-activity patterns** / Anouk Spelt, Oliver Soutar, Cara Williamson, Jane Memmott, Judy Shamoun-Baranes, Peter Rock, Shane Windsor / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12892

**Killing of raptors on grouse moors: evidence and effects** / Ian Newton / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12886

**Implications of bacterial, viral and mycotic microorganisms in vultures for wildlife conservation, ecosystem services and public health** / Pablo I. Plaza, Guillermo Blanco, Sergio A. Lambertucci / DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12865



Dean Evans' paper was voted the best ECR paper published in IBIS in 2019

**Individual condition but not fledging phenology carries over to affect post-fledging survival in a Neotropical migratory songbird**  
Dean R. Evans, Keith A. Hobson, Jackson W. Kusack, Michael D. Cadman, C. Myles Falconer, Greg W. Mitchell. / DOI:10.1111/ibi.12727

published in IBIS, with 25 articles published this year on #theBOUblog. An additional 16 blog posts were penned by authors themselves, and collectively these 41 articles highlight the breadth of the avian science we publish. (see also Altmetrics, page 11)

## The future

As reported last year, the immediate publishing future of IBIS is secure; 2020 was the first year of a new four-year publishing contract with Wiley. The journal, however, could not operate without the support of members of our community, who submit high quality papers and contribute freely of their time to assist with the review and editorial process that keeps IBIS at the forefront of publishing in ornithology. Thank you!

The landscape of scientific publishing continues to develop at pace and the IBIS Management Committee is dedicated to improving journal management and staying abreast of the changes in publishing. We are always keen to hear from members of our community with feedback or ideas that could help us to achieve a better journal for everyone. Authors (published and prospective) can do this via our own IBIS author contact form on the BOU website ([BOU.ORG.UK/IBIS/AUTHOR-CONTACT-FORM/](http://BOU.ORG.UK/IBIS/AUTHOR-CONTACT-FORM/)) and by replying to Wiley's 'Voice of the Author' surveys after publishing with us (our authors are contacted directly by Wiley).

On a personal note, this is my last report as Chair of the IBIS Management Committee as I move onto other commitments and step aside for a new Chair. It has been an absolute pleasure working with everyone involved in IBIS and the BOU and I am absolutely sure that the journal will successfully adapt to the changing publishing environment and continue to be at the forefront of ornithological publishing.

## Meetings Committee

[BOU.ORG.UK/CONFERENCES-AND-MEETINGS/](http://BOU.ORG.UK/CONFERENCES-AND-MEETINGS/)

The Meetings Committee is responsible for maintaining the ongoing programme of BOU conferences and meetings and providing advice and support to the BOU Office and others responsible for organising and running BOU events.

The Committee met (remotely) twice during the year and also conducted business by email and telephone. Dr David Douglas completed his term in 2020 and we thank him for his commitment to BOU events and for being the lead on two – BOUsci18, Grassland Birds meeting in Vancouver in August 2018, and the Restoring Bird Populations conference which was due to delivered in 2020 and which will now be held on Zoom in spring 2021. The Committee welcomed Dr Ana Payo Payo and Dr Joeline Hughes as new members during the year.

In 2019, Council approved membership extensions for a further two years beyond an individual's current four-year term. Dr Maria Bogdanova and Dr José Alves agreed to

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## MEETINGS COMMITTEE

### Chair

Dr Francis Daunt (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology)

### Members

Dr José Alves (University of Aveiro, Portugal and University of Iceland)  
Dr Maria Bogdanova (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology)  
Mr Steve Dudley, BOU COO  
Mr Danny Heptinstall (JNCC)  
Dr Joeline Hughes (RSPB)  
Mrs Angela Langford, Journal & Office Manager  
Dr Cat Morrison (University of East Anglia)  
Dr Ana Payo-Payo (University of Aberdeen)  
Dr Rob Robinson (BTO)  
Dr Amanda Trask (Institute of Zoology)

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stay on for a further two years until 2022. Dr Rob Robinson was the first member to undertake this extension in 2019 and will complete his extended term with us in July 2021, so we will be recruiting one new member this coming year.

### 2020 conferences

Conferences remain a major focal point for many small societies, a key way to engage with members and their wider research communities.

#### **Annual conference - Restoring bird populations (#BOU2020)**

Like all other societies, our conference activities were dominated by the global Covid-19 pandemic. In mid-March, with a national lockdown looking inevitable, BOU Council decided to postpone our 2020 annual conference on 'Restoring Bird Populations' to 2021. The response to this decision was universally positive. The Scientific Programme Committee of Dr David Douglas (RSPB; Chair), Dr Nancy Ockendon (Endangered Landscapes Programme), Dr Geoff Hilton (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust) and Dr Amanda Trask (Institute of Zoology) kindly agreed to continue in their roles and the vast majority of presenters indicated that they would be willing to move their talks back 12 months (see below for further details of 2021 annual conference).

The additional work and strain required to cancel an event just three weeks before the scheduled start cannot be understated. The Committee is not only thankful to organisers and presenters for agreeing quickly to the postponement, but also to the BOU Office who implemented not just the cancellation of the 2020 event but also oversaw the switch to 2021. We are grateful to the University of Nottingham for supporting this move before the country was put into lockdown, and for ensuring the deposits paid towards BOU2020 would be transferred in full to 2021, and now to 2022.

The BOU has run and supported Twitter conferences for some time, so when in-person events became impossible due to the Covid-19 pandemic we were already well-placed to deliver conferences virtually and for free. In fact, before the pandemic struck, we already had two events scheduled as Twitter conferences, so these events took on a greater importance, as ornithologists looked for online means of sharing their research and engaging with other researchers.

#### **6th World Seabird Twitter Conference - #WSTC6**

The BOU again supported WSTC, helping to promote and market the event more widely within the ornithological community and beyond and to support the organisers when called upon.

The seabird researcher community is one of the most active groups within our wider ornithological community and this event provides an excellent way of promoting the BOU to this key group.

**International Shorebird Twitter Conference - #ISTC20**

The first ever International Shorebird Twitter Conference was held on 7-8 October 2020 jointly with International Wader Study Group. This was the first taxon-specific Twitter conference the BOU had delivered. It ran over two days with nine keynotes and 65 offered presentations. The nine keynotes were carefully selected to cover all regions, providing wider geographic coverage which resulted in a larger audience. A peak audience of 2,604 included 670 active participants generating, generating over 5,000 tweets and retweets across the two days.

The event was excellent promotion for the BOU but it is not possible to know if this led to more memberships or whether it will increase future bookings for our conferences.

We are very grateful for the support from our sponsors Lotek UK and Wildlife Acoustics.

**Autumn scientific meeting - Climate change and birds - #BOUsci20**

#BOUsci20 was already scheduled to be a dual platform one-day conference, with an in-person event and parallel Twitter event originally scheduled to take place in Peterborough on 24 November 2020.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, we quickly moved the in-person component onto Zoom and delivered our first ever totally remote, virtual conference simultaneously across two platforms - Zoom and Twitter.

Over the course of the summer, Committee members experienced a number of virtual meetings in different formats and on different platforms, from which a pre-recorded event on Zoom was selected for our autumn 2020 event. Because of the extra planning needed to deliver our first virtual conference, we appointed Ryan Burrell as a Support Officer for this event following his successful delivery of the International Wader Study Group virtual conference. Ryan's first-hand experience proved invaluable and working alongside our own Steve Dudley ensured the high standard we expected from a BOU event would be delivered for this meeting.

The theme of the conference was unchanged from the original plan for an in-person event. The conference aim was to bring together scientists, conservationists and policy experts to understand future vulnerabilities to climate change and evidence that adapting our conservation practice will provide solutions to the climate crisis for birds. In particular, it considered different approaches to estimating future impacts of climate change on birds and their habitats, and how these can inform adaptation needs. It tackled the question of adapting biodiversity conservation to make climate-smart choices, considering potential implications for landscapes, protected site management and species, and to synthesise evidence to inform decision-making. It was tasked with identifying key knowledge gaps that will inform future work. The conference was organised by Prof James Pearce-Higgins (BTO), Dr Jo Gilbert (RSPB), Dr Christine Howard (Durham University) and Dr Francis Daunt (UK Centre for Ecology &

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

We welcome everyone to BOU events, be these in person at our conferences, meetings and workshops, or online events such as Twitter conferences.

We work hard to engender and promote a welcoming environment that is collaborative, supportive and engaging for everyone involved. Our events provide opportunities to share, develop and broaden viewpoints in a safe and inclusive environment.

We celebrate diversity in all its forms and expect that all our participants are respectful and considerate of each other, that they provide supportive critique, and embrace the multitude of opinions that are on offer.

If you have any concerns, feel that any participant of an event has breached this code, or have suggestions for how we can make our events more inclusive and productive, please contact any member of the BOU staff, BOU's Meetings Committee or event organisers (named contacts are listed in all event programmes). During an event, please report any incident as soon as you feel able, to allow us to act upon your concerns.

Hydrology). Keynote speakers were Dr Alessi Lehtikainen (University of Helsinki), Dr Beth Scott (University of Aberdeen), Dr Graham White (RSPB), Prof Kathy Martin (University of British Columbia) and Dr Ben Zuckerberg (University of Wisconsin-Madison). The latter two speakers were added once the decision had been made to extend the conference schedule into the evening, to attract delegates from the Americas.

Since this was our first virtual conference, we decided to focus on delivering an excellent core scientific programme without adding additional activities around it. A decision was made some weeks before the conference to pre-record all talks as technical problems with live talks had proved to be the most challenging problem with conferences organised by other societies over the preceding months. This proved an excellent decision, with few technical problems on the day.

All 37 Zoom presentations were summarised as Twitter presentations as part of the parallel Twitter event which also included 17 Twitter-only presentations during the Zoom programme breaks.

We rescheduled the day so that it ran long enough into the evening to attract an audience from the Americas, with the programme schedule running from 09:00 - 23:00 UTC. The programme was advertised from the early autumn, and included five excellent keynote speakers, a rich diversity of other presentations, and a schedule of regular breaks, to avoid screen fatigue. We were hopeful that the format, scheduling and affordable registration rate would allow us to attract a much larger and more diverse, international audience than we usually achieve with physical conferences. We were delighted with the response, with 375 registering for the event, by far the largest number of people attending a BOU conference. The international composition was strikingly different from a typical in-person BOU event. For an in-person event we expect our audience to be made up by 85% of attendees coming from the UK. This virtual event attracted attendees from 41 countries with 58% of attendees from outside the UK. As such, moving the international reach and diversity was substantially enhanced.

Engagement from delegates on the day was excellent, with up to 311 people (83% of those registered) logging into the event at any one time. Interaction with delegates was via the Q&A function within Zoom (for live questions with each presenter at the end of each talk) hosted by the session chair. A Slack channel was set up for further discussion, which was extensively used, with 55% of delegates attending the live event using it.

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Whilst 375 people registered for the Zoom component, 1,818 people followed the event on Twitter, with 503 active participants reaching 650,000 impressions.

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## FUTURE CONFERENCING



Long before the Covid-19 pandemic, ornithology, and the BOU, have led the way by hosting global Twitter conferences (#BOU17TC, #BOU18TC and supporting the World Seabird Union's WSTC events). These events were widely lauded by researchers all around the world and inspired other groups to take to Twitter to hold similar events.

When the pandemic took hold in spring 2020, we were already involved in running three Twitter conferences later in the year. With just three weeks' notice, we could not replace our annual spring conference, so #WSTC6, #ISTC20 and the dual platform #BOUsci20 (see page 23) all took on wider societal significance, as our community looked for new ways to conference, network and share research during a pandemic.

The Zoom event was recorded in its entirety and the recording was made available (until early January 2021) to those who had registered.

The feedback from the conference was universally positive. As an output from the conference, the Scientific Programme Committee and keynote speakers are writing a ten-year update of a previously published IBIS Viewpoint from the 2010 BOU conference 'Birds and climate change'. We learnt a great deal about what works well in a virtual conference and are taking these experiences forward to help design the 2021 annual conference.

### Third party conferences

BOU contributed to NAOC2020, with Steve Dudley acting as Chair of their Marketing Committee. With the switch to a virtual event and the expected time commitment going forward, Steve had to withdraw from the committee so that he could focus on the increased impacts of the pandemic on the BOU Office. The BOU was still acknowledged as a partner, recognising that pre-conference marketing had delivered a record number of submissions for a NOAC conference and a record attendance of more than 2,800 delegates.

### Future events

#### Future conferencing

The dual format #BOUsci20 Climate Change and Birds Zoom and Twitter conference was particularly lauded by our community. This event delivered a win-win format, with a relatively cheap pay-to-attend Zoom event for those happy to pay, running simultaneously with a wider event available on a free social media platform (Twitter). We recognise that social media events are not necessarily 'free' to access for everyone (e.g. relative to income, those in developing countries pay disproportionately more to access online services), but they are ideal media to reach our global community and improve accessibility to our core activities.

With the success of #BOUsci20 we have taken the decision that from 2021 all BOU conferences will be run similarly, in full, across an in-the-room platform (either in-person or virtually) and on Twitter.

#### 2021 annual conference - Restoring Bird Populations - #BOU2021

Following the postponement of the 2020 annual conference to spring 2021, a decision on the exact format of the conference - in particular whether it would be a physical or virtual conference - was postponed until later in the year, to allow as much time as possible to assess the likely situation of the pandemic in spring 2021. This also allowed the Committee time to observe different virtual conference formats during the course of 2020, including our experiences of our own 2020 autumn conference (see below).

With the pandemic seemingly unabating, and with little chance of people committing to attend an in-person event months in advance of spring 2021, the decision to move the



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## 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



### RESTORING BIRD POPULATIONS

30 Mar – 1 Apr 2021 | on Zoom & Twitter

With ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in the UK, we reached an agreement with the University of Nottingham to cancel our in-person meeting in spring 2021 and have switched the event on to Zoom and Twitter over three half-days, Tues, 30 March through to Thur, 1 April 2021.

The conference will bring together the latest science underpinning the restoration of bird species and their ecosystems, focusing on successes, challenges and future directions. It comes on the eve of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration that will run from 2021 through to 2030. It will be of interest to conservation-, population- and community-ecologists, practitioners and policy makers.

#### SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME COMMITTEE:

Dr David Douglas: Chair (RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, UK)

Dr Nancy Ockendon (Endangered Landscapes Programme, UK)

Dr Geoff Hilton (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, UK)

Dr Amanda Trask (Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London, UK)

Image: Female Great Hornbill | Angadachappa | CC BY SA 4.0 via ky.m.wikipedia.org

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event wholly online was taken in the latter part of 2020. All Zoom presentations will be summarised as Twitter presentations, with separate Twitter-only presentations, following the success of this approach at the autumn 2020 meeting. In order to attract a wider audience, including those from the Americas, and to minimise screen fatigue, the conference will run over three afternoons from the 30 March to 1 April 2021. It will include a range of activities for early-career researchers on the previous afternoon (29th) and during the main conference. The AGM will be on the Wednesday evening.

The conference theme remains unchanged, with the focus on new techniques in restoration science and research/policy surrounding the 2020 biodiversity targets. The natural world is under huge pressure from human activity, placing bird populations and their habitats at risk. At the same time, there is growing recognition that avian conservation should look beyond slowing species' declines and avoiding extinction, to actively restoring avian abundance and diversity in landscapes and working to restore whole ecosystems. Despite the challenges facing nature, our understanding of how to restore species and ecosystems has never been greater, and the momentum for ecological restoration is building globally. Restoring bird populations requires working at a range of scales, from individual animals to whole ecosystems, and from local sites to whole flyways. Birds can be indicators of recovery trajectories for entire ecosystems and can be integral to the success of habitat restoration, for example through their functional roles as predators, scavengers and dispersal agents. The conference will bring together the latest science underpinning the restoration of bird species and their ecosystems, focusing on successes, challenges and future directions. The Alfred Newton Lecture will be delivered by Prof Carl Jones (Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust) and the other keynote speakers are Mary Colwell (Freelance producer and writer), Nicola Crockford (RSPB), Dr John Ewen (Institute of Zoology), Dr Karen Varnham (RSPB) and Dr Joe Tobias (Imperial College).

We are again extremely grateful to the University of Nottingham for again supporting us and allowing for the deposits paid originally towards BOU2020 to be transferred in full to 2022.

#### 2021 autumn meetings

In 2019, we decided to increase the number of autumn meetings from one to two from 2021.

In response to the marked increase in research and wider interests of **birds and conflicts**, an in-person event in Peterborough is planned to take place on this topic on 9 November 2021. The Scientific Programme Committee is led by Dr Barry McMahon (University College Dublin, Ireland) and includes Dr Juliette Young (INRAE, National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, France), Dr Isla Hodgson (University of Stirling), Dr Bea Arroyo (Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Cinegéticos/Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spain) and Dr Francis Daunt (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology).

## 2021 AUTUMN CONFERENCES



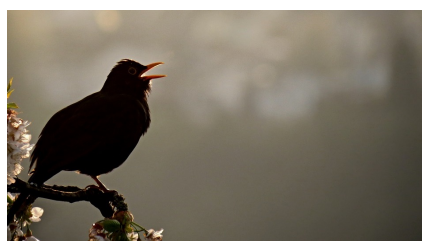
### BIRDS AND PEOPLE

9 November 2021 | in-person & Twitter  
#BOUaut21

The first of two autumn meetings in 2021 will be on our relationship with birds, the conflicts, the resolutions and the successes.

The Scientific Programme Committee is Chaired by Dr Barry McMahon (University College Dublin, Ireland) – see page 26.

Further details in due course at [BOU.ORG.UK](https://bou.org.uk).



### DEVELOPMENTS IN MONITORING SCIENCE

24-25 November 2021 | on Zoom & Twitter  
#BOUsci21

The second autumn 2021 one-day meeting will be on the advances in the monitoring of birds, with an emphasis on the development and use of new technologies.

The Scientific Programme Committee is Chaired by Dr Mark Eaton (Rare Birds Breeding Panel & RSPB, UK) – see right.

Further details in due course at [BOU.ORG.UK](https://bou.org.uk).

Conference images: CC0 PD

The second of our 2021 autumn conferences will be on the theme of **advances in bird monitoring**, chosen to showcase the many new data collection and analysis methods that have been developed in recent years. This is planned to be a virtual Zoom conference on the 24 – 25 November 2021. Dr Mark Eaton (Rare Breeding Birds Panel & RSPB) has agreed to lead the Scientific Programme Committee and will be supported by Dr Dawn Balmer (BTO), Dr Fiona Burns (RSPB) and Dr José Alves (University of Aveiro, Portugal).

Keynote speakers are currently being invited to both events, and the programme will develop in the early months of 2021.

### 2022 annual conference – Avian reproduction – #BOU2022

With the postponement of the 2020 conference to 2021, we have moved the 2021 conference on ‘Avian Reproduction’ to 2022. This will take place on 12-14 April 2022 at the University of Nottingham. Planning for this conference will take place during the first half of 2021. The Scientific Programme Committee comprises Dr Ian Hartley (University of Lancaster; Chair), Dr Becky Laidlaw (NRW), Dr Sarah Burthe (UKCEH) and Dr Rob Robinson (BTO).

### Improving BOU conferences

Our focus during 2020 was on how to deliver online conferences successfully. We were delighted with the success of the dual platform (Zoom and Twitter) 2020 autumn conference and have carried forward much of what we learnt from this into planning for the 2021 conferences and other future events. Please see earlier sections for the various approaches and innovations that we took forward.

At the end of 2020 a decision was made jointly by the Meetings and Engagement committees that, whether in-person or virtual, all conferences will involve dual oral and Twitter presentations, following the success of this format at the 2020 autumn conference.

At the 2021 annual conference, we will trial a new idea, originally planned for the postponed in-person 2020 conference and following feedback that conferences could be a good opportunity to help postdocs in build a peer community. The Committee agreed to trial a workshop for postdocs that runs in parallel to the ECR workshops, to be driven and delivered by postdocs themselves.

The use of blind review of submissions continues to work well for conferences. We have published a conference code of conduct (see page 24 and [BOU.ORG.UK/BOU-CONFERENCES/CODE-OF-CONDUCT/](https://bou.org.uk/BOU-CONFERENCES/CODE-OF-CONDUCT/)) and continue to implement equality, diversity and inclusiveness initiatives ([BOU.ORG.UK/ABOUT-THE-BOU/EQUALITY-AND-DIVERSITY/](https://bou.org.uk/ABOUT-THE-BOU/EQUALITY-AND-DIVERSITY/)) into all of our activities, working with the Engagement Committee’s Equality and Diversity Working Group. Online events offer significant opportunities for enhancing diversity at

our conferences, and we are encouraging all event Scientific Programme Committees to make maximum use of this. Regardless of conference format, ensuring that presentation materials are accessible to everyone is vital, and we issued guidance for presenters on the use of colour palettes, to ensure that presentations are colour-blind aware.

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## GRANTS COMMITTEE

### Chair

Dr Sonya Clegg (University of Oxford)

### Members

Dr Tom Bradfer-Lawrence (RSPB)

Mr Steve Dudley, BOU COO

Dr Ilya Maclean (University of Exeter)

Dr Sam Patrick (University of Liverpool)

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## Grants Committee

[BOU.ORG.UK/FUNDING/](http://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 and career development bursaries from BOU members and those from developing countries. It also assesses applications for the BOU John & Pat Warham Studentships, which are 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.

The Committee met once during the year to consider research grant and career development bursary applications and conducted the rest of its business by email.

Prof Phil Atkinson (BTO) retired as Chair of the Committee this year and we would like to thank him for his greatly valued input and leadership as Chair and as an ordinary member, during his eight years with us. Existing Committee member Dr Sonya Clegg was elected as the new Chair of the Committee at the BOU AGM in June and Dr Tom Bradfer-Lawrence (RSPB) joined us to replace Sonya as an ordinary member.

### Small Ornithological Research Grant scheme

The Committee received 51 grant applications (55 in 2019, 62 in 2018, 68 in 2017), which was broadly in line with expectations. One application was rejected due to breaches in submission criteria, leaving 50 to be assessed (46 in 2019, 48 in 2018, 47 in 2017). 18 applications were removed during an initial sift by the Committee Chair, on the basis of scientific quality. Committee members were able to view all of these rejected applications and request any individual application be considered in full. The remaining 32 applications were scored individually by Committee, ahead of their annual meeting held on 4 February 2020, when their combined scores and comments were used for the basis of the on-the-day discussions to determine which projects to support.

Council approved six awards, totaling £10,029, to be made in 2020:



**Josh Arbon** (UK) | £1,750 (requested £2,000)

*PhD candidate, University of Exeter, UK.*

Does pair-bond strength affect parental care strategies?

**Fraser Bell** (UK) | £1,989 (amount requested)

*PhD candidate, University of Exeter, UK*

Patterns and consequences of parasite infection in a declining long-distance migratory passerine



**Amanda Bourne** (South Africa) | £1,020 (amount requested)

*PhD candidate, University of Cape Town, South Africa*

Do seasonal changes in food resources predict breeding phenology and reproductive success in Southern Pied Babblers *Turdoides bicolor*?

**Crinan Jarrett** (UK) | £1,600 (requested £2,000)

*PhD candidate, University of Glasgow, UK*

Putting a price on the menu: Quantifying bird ecosystem services in African cocoa plantations



**Jenna McCullough** (USA) | £1,600 (requested £2,000)

*PhD candidate, University of New Mexico, US*

Island kingfishers as an emerging model system to study the genomics of speciation

**Darren O'Connell** (Ireland) | £1,650 (requested £2,000)

*PhD candidate, Newcastle University, UK*

Birds as monitors of ecosystem restoration: using avian soundscapes for assessing biodiversity and functioning of restored mangrove forests

Due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, all the above projects bar one (Amanda Bourne) were not undertaken during 2020. With funding already paid out we hope that the five outstanding projects can be undertaken in the coming year.

## Career Development Bursary scheme

A total of seven applications were received this year (7 in 2019, 5 in 2018, 10 in 2017, 6 in 2016). All satisfied our submission criteria and were assessed by the Committee.

Council approved two awards, totaling £4,880, to be made in 2020:

**Amparo Herrera-Dueñas** (Spain) | Awarded £2,400 (amount requested)

*Freelance scientific counsellor*

Project: Getting older in the city (evaluating the effects of urbanisation on the telomere attrition in adult and nestling Blue Tits)

Project location: University of Glasgow, UK

Supervisor: Davide Dominoni

The BOU's small ornithological research grants and career development bursaries enable members to undertake small to medium scale research projects, across a wide range of subjects, around the world.

Images:

top © Darren Evans

centre © Elfego Cuevas Domínguez

bottom © Mark Mainwaring



**Kate Rogerson** (UK) | Awarded £2,480 (amount requested)

*PhD candidate, University of East Anglia, UK*

Project: Identifying priorities for seabird conservation using a “ridge to reef” approach

Project location: Birdlife International, Cambridge UK

Supervisor: Maria Dias

Due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, these two bursaries were not taken up during 2020, with the funding held over until 2021, in the hope these projects can be undertaken in the coming year. With these two awards being held over to 2021, no new awards have been advertised or will be made in the coming year.

## John & Pat Warham Studentships

Of the four fully funded studentships available, three have been appointed in previous years. Updates from each of the three students on their respective projects are included below. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we suspended awarding the next studentship in 2021 and will review the situation for a 2022 studentship in early 2021.

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## WARHAM STUDENT



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

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

### The 'Round Island petrel' conundrum

Principal supervisor: Prof Jennifer Gill

The main aim of my BOU-funded PhD is to explore the factors influencing the extraordinary levels of individual variation in ocean movement patterns of Round Island petrels. Over 420 geolocators (GLS) have been deployed on adult petrels since 2009, and ongoing retrieval of these has resulted in me being able to process 263 complete migration tracks, using up-to-date processing methods.

Similarities between the second BOU Warham studentship [Paige Green, University of Tasmania – see below) and my own provided a great opportunity for Paige and I to discuss and refine these analytical methods and apply them to our individual data sets. Using these data, I have also developed a method for consistent classification of daily locations, in order to calculate colony arrival and departure dates of migrating petrels.

I have just finished the first data chapter of my thesis, which uses these GLS data to explore the within- and between-individual variation in migratory locations and timings, and more specifically to investigate how repeatable are petrel migratory journeys from year to year. Having quantified the extraordinary levels of between-individual variation in petrel migrations, I am now starting my next chapter, where I will be using Bayesian cluster analysis in combination with genetic and environmental data to investigate what is driving this variation. In addition, I have conducted a comprehensive literature review of tracking studies in which repeatability of avian migratory timings was reported, allowing the assessment of repeatability across species, seasons, and tracking methods. This review paper on repeatability of avian phenology has been submitted for publication.



As part of my PhD I have been incredibly lucky to spend three wonderful months in Mauritius and see my study system in the flesh. This fieldwork involved the installation and set-up of ten remote cameras on Round Island, to trial the use of time-lapse photography for monitoring the breeding activity of the petrel population. Since these cameras were deployed, the team on Round Island have transferred nearly 100,000 images to me online and I have investigated different methods for speeding up image processing. This has led to an exciting spin-off collaboration with Tom Hart (University of Oxford) and Mark Jessopp (University College Cork) hosting my petrel images through their citizen science project website, Seabird Watch. In the remaining time of my PhD I also plan to test the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning to process the images. These two methods, along with the 'expert' manual classification of images undertaken by myself and a final year undergraduate student (Max Hellicar) who I am supervising, should inform us as to what might be best in the long-term for image processing and will also inform a suitable sampling strategy in terms of image frequency and timing.

During my PhD I have been very fortunate that other opportunities have made available to me. In June 2019 I spent two weeks in Látrabjarg, Iceland, where I joined project LOMVIA, tracking Common and Brünnich's Guillemots. As part of an Institute of Zoology and Queensland government (Australia) collaboration, I have processed a set of GLS tags for Herald Petrels from Raine Island. I've attended an animal migration workshop in Copenhagen, Denmark, presented a poster at the BOU 2019 annual conference, as well as presenting two Twitter-presentations at the 5th and 6th World Seabird Twitter Conferences (#WSTC5, #WSTC6). I've also been involved in the organisation of two WSTCs (including one year as Chair) and have been part of a team writing a paper on the role of Twitter conferences in ecology and ornithology, which is currently under review.

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## WARHAM STUDENT



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

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**Paige Greene, University of Tasmania, Australia** (commenced 2019)

### **Quantifying the ecological factors under-pinning population trends in crested penguins**

Principal supervisor: Prof Mark Hindell

I am currently 18 months into my PhD project. I can't believe how times goes by! I've been busy completing the first data chapter of my thesis in which I investigated the niche differentiation between two endemic New Zealand crested penguins, the Snares and Fiordland Penguins. In this chapter we developed new methods for calculating utilisation distributions with geolocation data as well as quantifying niche overlaps. We're in the process of getting this manuscript published. Once we have, I will write a blog post for BOU so please keep an eye out! I also participated in the International Penguin Conference (Sept 2019) and the World Seabird Twitter Conference (#WSTC6, May 2020) – and yes, that means I've joined Twitter!

As I am using light geolocation data to track penguins, I have had to process the raw light files collected from the geolocation devices into tracks with longitude and latitude co-ordinates, so that they are usable in my studies. A single track can take between 20–60 mins to process. So far, I have completed over 400 tracks, for six different species, across 24 colonies throughout the Southern Ocean. Phew! For my next data chapter, I will use the tracks for Macaroni and the three Rockhopper species to develop ecological niche models in the first near-global distribution study. This will then allow us to predict future distributions of these species under climate change conditions.

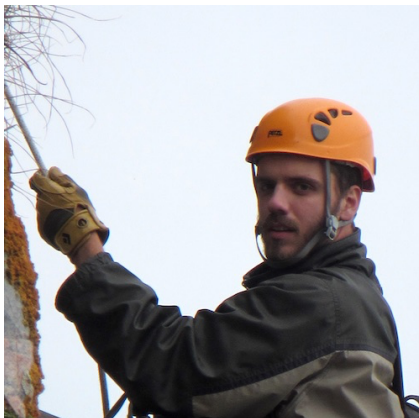
We have been extremely lucky that our fieldwork season has gone ahead despite Covid-19 related setbacks. For a while we thought we would have to postpone our deployments for a full year, but very excitingly we have been able to deploy our tracking devices this season. These devices will collect the first non-breeding tracks for Rockhopper penguins at the Antipodes, as well as the first ever collected tracks for Erect-crested Penguins. As yet, there is no knowledge of where Erect-crested Penguins forage and so, once the devices are collected again next season, we will be able to provide the first insights into the foraging ecology of this species. We should collect the devices back from birds on the Antipodes at the end of this year, which will then allow me to process these data and start the analyses for my final data chapter.

By the end of this year, I aim to have complete drafts of my second data chapter and my introduction chapter. Further, I would like to present my findings at the World Seabird Conference, in Hobart, Tasmania (where I am based) which has been planned for October 2021.

The learning curve in using R and understanding new analyses has been steep but rewarding. A PhD is never a smooth ride but I am immensely grateful for the incredible supervisory team I have who continually support and encourage me. This project really is a dream come true for me.

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## WARHAM STUDENT



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

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

**Foraging behaviour of King Penguins under extreme climatic events**

Principal supervisor: Dr Kyle Elliott

I'm back in the field on the other side of the world on the Kerguelen Islands! I have a sketchy internet, but at least I'm surrounded by penguins . . . and albatross . . . and petrels . . . and prions . . . and skuas! So, things are more than fine!

What have I been up to? I've been working on two papers recently. The first will look at the year 2010, which was catastrophic for the reproduction of King Penguins at Kerguelen. It will help us understand how climate can cause extremely dramatic effects on the penguins. This paper is well advanced, but we are waiting on results of tests we are currently conducting during this field season: we are putting GLS on penguins to know where the Kerguelen population overwinter. This will help us



understand which climatic indices are crucial for penguins during the pre-reproduction season (so we can then check whether something happened just before the reproduction of 2010, which could have caused a cascade of effects into the reproduction).

The second paper looks at a new method to remotely detect prey captures using accelerometers. Accelerometers can be attached to penguins, and we hypothesized that they can be used to detect small bursts of acceleration associated with prey capture. This will in turn be useful to calculate energy budgets of penguins by looking at how much prey they ingest during each foraging trip (and see if this metric varies with different climatic conditions). This paper is almost ready and will be submitted in early 2021.

Since all conferences were cancelled this year, our entire budget went into covering fieldwork costs. We are lucky enough that we can still conduct fieldwork out here, so we might as well take the opportunity to collect as much data as we can! Most of the budget was spent on the purchase of loggers that we are currently deploying.

Luckily my work on the Kerguelen Islands hasn't really been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The NGO responsible for the logistics of all scientific projects on Kerguelen is very active and they are taking extreme measures to ensure scientific projects can continue on the island without contamination. I had to quarantine before taking the boat here and I was tested twice. Thankfully, Covid-19 still hasn't reached the island, so those measures are working so far! The only real change for me has been outside the field season, when I work at home (in Canada) on my data rather than in the lab. I also might have wanted to go to a conference or two, but like everyone else, I'll have to wait a little longer for those kinds of events to come back. Other than that, Covid-19 hasn't really slowed down my project!

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## RECORDS COMMITTEE

### Chair

Dr James Gilroy (University of East Anglia)

### Secretary

Dr Chris McInerney (University of Glasgow)

### Members

Ms Dawn Balmer (BTO)

Mr Chris Batty (Lancashire)

Mr Steve Dudley, BOU COO

Mr Paul French (BBRC Chairman)

Dr Alex Lees (Manchester Metro University)

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

Mr Andrew Stoddart (Norfolk, UK)

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## Records Committee

[bou.org.uk/british-list/](http://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 once (remotely) during the year with other business conducted by email.

Andy Musgrove retired as an Ordinary member of the Committee in July 2020. We are enormously grateful for Andy's hard work over the course of his term, in particular in maintaining the spreadsheet version of the British List – a task he has kindly offered to continue into the future. We welcomed Piere-André Crochet as a new Ordinary member of the Committee; Pierre-André also serves on the Portuguese, Egyptian and French



'Mandt's' Black Guillemot (Lincolnshire, December 2017) was one of three sub-species admitted to the British List in the Records Committee's 51st and 52nd reports.

Image © Steve Gantlett / cleybirds.com

rarities committees as well as the French Avifaunistic Committee, and we are very excited that his appointment will lead to greater collaboration and synergy with other European committees

### Changes to the British List

The Committee's 51st Report, covering the period from October 2019 to January 2020, was published in February 2020 (IBIS 162: 600-603), and included the following changes:

- Merlin *Falco columbarius* – North American subspecies *columbarius* added.
- Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* – North American subspecies group *alpestris/praticola/hoyti* added.

The 52nd Report, covering the period from February 2020 to October 2020, was published in December (IBIS 163: 305-308), including the following change:

- Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* – subspecies *mandtii* added.

These changes to the British List, together with taxonomic changes in line with IOC taxonomy, brings the total to 622 species as at 31 December 2020.

### 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 informal 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.

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## 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: Raurie Bowie, Dan Chamberlain, Rebecca Kimball, Dominic McCafferty, 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; Farhath Jabeen, Andreas Petersen, Anita Sye, Joe Walsh and colleagues at Wiley, for their help in delivering our high quality journal; Leica (UK) for their support of our science communication and IBIS ECR awards; Nigel Crocker, Richard Price and Stephen Rumsey for their excellent management of the Union's investment portfolio; Dr David Douglas (RSPB; Chair), Dr Nancy Ockendon (Endangered Landscapes Programme), Dr Geoff Hilton (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust) and Dr Amanda Trask (Institute of Zoology) for their work preparing the programme for the postponed annual conference (Restoring bird populations); Dr James Pearce-Higgins (BTO), Dr Jo Gilbert (RSPB), Dr Christine Howard (Durham University), Ryan Burrell (University of Bournemouth) and Monika Reiss (Liverpool John Moores University) for the planning and delivery of our autumn Zoom and Twitter conference (Climate change and birds); the International Wader Study Group, in particular, Triin Kaasiku, Elwyn Sharps, Camilo Carneiro, Verónica Méndez Aragon and Yvonne Verkuil for their support delivering the International Shorebird Twitter Conference (#ISTC20); Lotek UK and Wildlife Acoustics for supporting #ISTC20; Yachang Cheng and Zhu Lei for running our Weibo account in China; Sophie Detchon, Agnes Szmat, Robert Bogdan, Stoycho Stoychov, Brian Edwards and Charlie Douglass at Douglass Digital for delivering our new website; Maria Rogers and the conference staff at the University of Nottingham Conferences for working with us on the ongoing postponement of our in-person annual conference; City College Peterborough (venue for BOU meetings pre-pandemic); Chas Holt (BBRC Secretary), Bob McGowan (National Museums Scotland), British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC), and bird records committees across Europe who have assisted BOURC; and Caroline Gillis, Tracey Richardson and colleagues at Azets (accountants and auditors).

We apologise to anyone we have inadvertently omitted.

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## Membership

At the end of the year our total membership stood at 1,041 (1,022 at 31 Dec 2019) comprising 751 full members (725 at 31 Dec 2019) and 290 reduced rate subscribers (297 at 31 Dec 2019) made up of 273 early career researchers (ECRs) and 17 from developing countries.

27 resignations were received during the year, and Council noted, with sadness, the following deaths: Mr A Archer, Mr Hermann Hoetker, Dr Krzysztof Rajkowski, Mr John Simms, Dr Adelheid Studer-Thiersch, Dr Denis Summers-Smith and Mr Robin Woods.

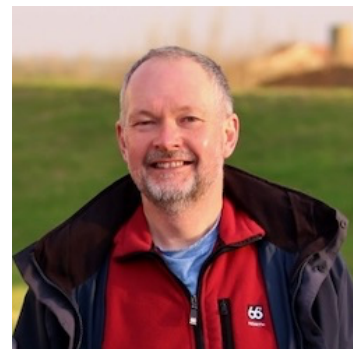
Subscription rates remained unchanged for 2019 but following review, and in light of reducing membership and increased costs coming into effect during 2020, Council agreed to a membership subscription increase to be implemented from mid-2020.

It's always encouraging to see our membership total hold up year on year, but even more so during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are very grateful for the continued support of our members and hope we can count on your continued commitment to the BOU and ornithology during what will almost certainly be an equally challenging 2021.



## Financial review

Graham Appleton, Honorary Treasurer



The Covid-19 pandemic meant that 2020 was a difficult year for the charity sector. By acting quickly and using technological solutions to keep conferences and other activities going, the Union has fared better than most. Over the course of the year, we made an operating loss of £77,046, most of which (£75,162) can be attributed to 2020 payments for the three John & Pat Warham Studentships. The pandemic significantly limited activities in support of the Union's charitable aims, thereby reducing planned expenditure. A fall in the value of assets of £62,890 means that the declared loss is £139,936. This is reflected in the balance sheet.

There were more between-year changes to income and expenditure than might normally be expected. Many of these changes, such as the reduced income and expenditure related to conferences, lower costs of Council and committee meetings and a trimmed marketing budget, reflected changes brought about by or in response to the pandemic. We were fortunate that Council was scheduled to meet on 11 March. By this stage, at a time when the evidence of the spread of Covid-19 within the UK was clear to scientists, the decision to call off our Nottingham conference was obvious. It was made early enough for there not to be a huge financial penalty; we are grateful that the University felt able to hold over our deposit to 2021 (and now to 2022).

For 2020, we had already budgeted for a drop in sponsorship income, with the ending of the support from Leica during 2019, and a reduction in journal income, in line with the new contract with Wiley from 1 January 2020. Reduced journal sales to institutes impacted on IBIS income further and there was a drop in income from investments. The autumn conference, switched from in-person to a virtual event, made a useful contribution to income, having attracted a much larger number of attendees, thanks to great work by Steve Dudley and the event's Scientific Programme Committee. One kind member made a donation equivalent to the cost of the money usually paid to attend a spring conference but everyone else helped simply by maintaining their memberships.

The only unusual costs in 2020 were associated with the new BOU website and the purchase of a new batch of Godman Salvin Prize medals, for which we had to pay for the creation of new dies.

### Investments

The value of reserves dropped sharply in the spring, as markets reacted to the pandemic, but recovered somewhat during the rest of the year. We are grateful to our Investment Trustees, Nigel Crocker, Richard Price and Stephen Rumsey, who guided us through a tricky 2020.

The Union relies on a mix of income and capital from investment funds to pay for grants and the John and Pat Warham Studentships. The timing of the fall in global markets meant that we were able to act quickly to slightly trim the amount of money that we made available via grants and travel scholarships in 2020 and to delay the start of the fourth Warham Studentship.

### Council policies

The Union is continuing to reduce the amount of cash savings we hold, in line with the expectations of the Charity Commissioners. Council has agreed that we should reduce Unrestricted Funds to £350k, in the medium term, representing one year of operations (£250k) and a buffer of £100k. The size of this reserve takes account of uncertainty over medium-term income from journal publishing, which is currently a significant part of the Union's turnover.

## 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 3 March 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Vickery', written in a cursive style.

**Prof Juliet Vickery** President