

Minutes of the Berkshire Records Committee meeting 15th January 2019

1. The BRC met at 20.00 on 15th January 2019. Those present; R. J. Burness (Chairman), A. Horscroft (Secretary), A. Bassett, A. E. D. Hickman, K. E. Moore, H. Netley and M. F. Walford.
2. Minutes of the last meeting
The minutes of the last meeting, held on 18th September 2018, were accepted as written.
3. Actions outstanding
 - a) The action on RJB to notify observers that after 1st January 2017 Cat 2 and Cat 3 records without supporting evidence will not be accepted was completed by placing notices in county newsletters and on web-sites.
 - b) The action on RJB to make BRC minutes available on the BOC web site has been completed.
 - c) The action on RJB, AH and AB to pursue further supporting material from observers of pended records was completed with mixed success.
 - d) The action on MFW to review the Cat 2 and Cat 3 species list has been completed.
 - e) The action on RJB to publicise the necessity of having validation criteria was completed with action a) above.
 - f) RJB was asked to clarify the ramifications of data protection on BRC decisions. This matter was discussed with the BOC president.
 - g) The action on RJB to research the feasibility of developing a database of rare breeding birds within the county was discharged through conversations with the secretary of the RBBP.
 - h) The previous meeting had discussed definitions to be used in the BRC report in the *Birds of Berkshire* annual reviews. There was agreement that the term “poor description” should no longer be used but a consensus on other terminology has yet to be reached.
4. Work in Progress software

MFW gave a demonstration of the Work in Progress (WiP) software which is accessed through the Berksbirds website. Introduction of the software will change the BRC’s method of working. Operations should be much smoother with each committee member posting their comments and decisions on-line on a restricted area of the web site. Observers are also able to monitor progress of their records more quickly and simply. Committee members discussed aspects of the software and suggested amendments. **Action MFW**

The BRC will use this method to review Category 2 records for 2017. Category 3 records will be reviewed by distributing a dataset for comment. This new methodology will obviate the need for frequent committee meetings. Members of the committee will test the WiP software prior to the 2017 review. **Action all members**
5. Review process
 - a) The County Recorder and the Database manager will be responsible for the maintenance of the WiP table. **Action RJB and MFW**
 - b) The committee members will record their comments and decisions on the WiP tables **Action all members**

- c) The Database Manager will prepare a dataset of Category 3 records and send it to the County Recorder for initial comment. **Action MFW**
- d) The secretary will circulate the Category 3 dataset to members **Action AH**
- e) Members will record their comments and circulate the dataset **Action All members**
- f) The Database Manager will amend the database accordingly **Action MFW**

6. Review of the Category 2 and Category 3 species lists

There was a wide-ranging review of the species on the Category 2 and category 3 lists. The meeting was informed by research into the practices of other counties made by the chairman. In the light of the BRC's decision not to accept records lacking supporting evidence, the committee will assist observers by reducing the number of species listed, whilst retaining the scientific integrity of the historical record. The chairman introduced a document for discussion. Whilst there was general agreement with proposals there was debate about some of the changes being considered. The committee will finalise the species lists by email. **Action All Members**

Once the lists are finalised the chairman will make observers aware through the usual channels. (It was subsequently decided that changes should be implemented from 1st January 2018) **Action RJB**

7. BBRC Historical Data The Chairman informed the meeting that he had received a package of historical record descriptions from the BBRC that would otherwise have been destroyed. They will form part of the BOC archive but are available on loan with the proviso that some of the content may be confidential.

8. Any Other Business

- a) Berkshire rare breeding bird database. Following a suggestion from KEM the chairman had researched the potential for developing a continuing dataset of the species that breed in small numbers in the county. This will enable monitoring of their population stability. The chairman has discussed the setting of viable thresholds with the RBBP secretary. There are several species breeding in Berkshire that are not on the RBBP species list because of their abundance nationally. The information gathered could help the development of conservation strategy. **Action RJB and KEM**
- b) During the discussion on scarce breeding birds, members asked that Lapwing be made one of the "target species" for 2020 as its ongoing status as a breeding bird is unclear. **Action RJB**
- c) Recently there had been a request for the chairman to provide a table of first and last dates for annual migrants. The viability of developing such a table will be determined. **Action RJB**
- d) Returning to the issue of categorised species, AH raised the case of Barnacle Goose. MFW referred members to a paper published in *Ibis* in 2005 *Changes to Category C of the British List* by Dudley. Consensus of the meeting was that Barnacle Goose should be considered as being on Category C of the Berkshire list. That is "Species that, although introduced, now derive from the resulting self-sustaining populations".
- e) County Archive. AH queried the location of the county archive. He proposed that it should be held by the County Recorder.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 22.30 and thanked the members for their attendance and participation.