**DRAFT/csb/**

**Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Neotropical Bird Club.**

The Annual General Meeting of the Neotropical Bird Club was held on Saturday 18 July 2018 at 19:45 in the “Harrier” Marquee at the British Bird Fair, Rutland Water,

**Council members present:**

David Fisher (NBC Chairman and Chairman of the meeting), Chris Balchin (Secretary) Chris Collins (Treasurer) Roberta Goodall, Carl Downing John Thirtle, Mike Dawson Manuel Sanchez Charles Wilkins and Alex Lees.

The Chairman opened the meeting and noted there were sufficient members present for the meeting to be quorate.

**1. Apologies for absence.**

The Chairman reported apologies for absence from the following:

Rob Clay, Ivan Samuels, David Beadle , Professor Torbjorn Haugasen, Gordon Ellis, Samuel H Page, Lisa Price, Chris Sharpe, Tom Stuart, John Richardson, Michael Webster, Paula Webster, John Cutting, Shoaib Tareen, William B Sterling and Rob Williams.

**2. Minutes of 24th. Annual General Meeting**

The Chairman referred to the draft minutes of the 24th AGM (2017) prepared for the meeting.

**A motion proposed by David White and seconded by John Thirtle to approve the minutes of the 2017 AGM was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**3. Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Chairman's report for 2017.**

David Fisher (Chairman) delivered his report for 2017. As follows:

2017 was another good year for the NBC, as we continued with our two main activities; the publication of *Cotinga* and *Neotropical Birding* and the funding of conservation projects within the region.

During the year, the NBC published one issue of *Cotinga* and two issues of *Neotropical Birding*.

*Cotinga 39*, our peer-reviewed journal contained a wide variety of papers including:

- A new locality for White-masked Antbird in Peru;

- A list of the birds of Parque Nacional Saslaya in Nicaragua; and

- Birds of a habitat mosaic in the threatened Cerrado of central Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The short communications were equally varied and included details of the first record of Ruff for Cuba, notes on the nest and breeding of Chestnut-vented Conebill in southern Ecuador, the rediscovery of the Black-fronted Piping-guan in Itajaí Valley, Santa Catarina, southern Brazil and the first documented record of White-collared Kite in Bahia, Brazil.

*Neotropical Birding 20* included articles on:

- Birding's World Cup: the Global Big Day;

- The first photographs of the White-fronted Swift, a poorly known Mexican endemic; and

- a Photospot on the Fuegian Snipe at Cape Horn.

Articles in *Neotropical Birding 21* included:

- an account of the NBC fundraising tour to Chile;

- a report on the web-based sound collection xeno-canto, a decade on from the first report that we published; and

- an article on the activities of the Waderquest organisation in the Neotropics.

The other major club activity is funding conservation projects and 2017 was the most successful year to date for this programme with a total fourteen awards being made (compared to 7 in 2016). The grants totalled £27,569 during the year (an increase from £18,989 in 2016), which means that over the last 18 years £116,573 has been provided to support Neotropical bird conservation projects.

Projects funded in 2017 included:

- a study of Poylepis communities in Peru;

- a project on some of the rarer species on Grenada;

- a study of the endangered Peruvian Plantcutter;

- a study of parrots in Venezuela;

- work on nest predation avoidance for the critically endangered Masafuera Rayadito;

- a project on restoring the population of Yellow Cardinals in Argentina;

- a project on the conservation of the endangered Recurve-billed Bushbird in Venezuela;

- a study of the critically endangered Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird in Colombia;

- a project to reintroduce Great Green Macaws in Ecuador;

- a nest box scheme for Grey-cheeked Parakeets in Ecuador;

- a study on the foraging habits of the Black-capped Petrel in the Dominican Republic;

- a project to reintroduce endangered Black-fronted Piping-guans into areas where they had become extinct in Brazil;

- and a project monitoring Crown Solitary Eagles in Argentina.

Council would like to thank the various organisations and individuals who made donations during the year, especially the March Conservation Fund of Tides Foundation, whose ongoing support makes a huge difference to the number and size of conservation awards which could be funded.

**Other activities**

In July 2017 the club held its summer meeting and AGM at the Brazilian embassy in London. Talks were given at the meeting by Rick Simpson and Alex Lees.

In August 2017, the Club had a stand at the Rutland Bird Fair to promote the club and raise funds and this included its annual raffle with prizes being Swarovski binoculars, a stay at El Septimo Paraiso Lodge in Ecuador and a book donated by Lynx Editions. The Club would like to thank Swarovski, El Septimo Paraiso and Lynx for their ongoing support in providing prizes for this annual fundraising event. (I should just mention that those superb prizes are on offer again in this year’s raffle and if you have not yet bought your tickets you can do so here tonight – or at the NBC stand tomorrow – don’t leave it too late though as the raffle is drawn on the stand at about 4.00 pm.)

In collaboration with the other regional bird clubs, NBC has been involved in developing a code of practice to encourage "best practice" whilst in the field. It is intended for individual birders, field workers, tour companies and their guides and photographers and was developed in response to concerns about reports of less than ideal behaviour. This has been published on the NBC website.

The bird tour company Birding Ecotours organised a highly successful tour to Costa Rica on behalf of the club with those who participated seeing a great selection of the country's specialities, and this trip raising over US$3,000 for the club.

During the year, the Club continued to operate an active website, a Facebook site and a Twitter account.

**Membership**

Membership of the Club decreased very slightly during the year to 781 (down by 5 on 2016).

**FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

Planned for in 2017, but put into place in 2018 was the introduction a new membership category from the beginning of 2018, allowing members to receive copies of the club's publications in digital format via the internet, rather than in the traditional printed form.

Part of the reason for this was our awareness of unreliable postal services in a number of countries within the region (and reports that as a consequence quite a few regional members were not receive the journals they had paid for).

The new digital format also made it possible for us to reduce the cost of membership to everyone choosing this option as we don’t have to cover postage costs on the publications (which outside of Europe is quite substantial).

We hope that this new option will not only ensure more reliable delivery of the club's publications but will also boost membership, especially in the Neotropical region.

We also took the decision to include many more colour pages in both publications, so that almost all photographs now appear in colour, rather than black-and-white.

**Thanks**

I would like to finish by offering my thanks to everyone not mentioned so far in this report; all members of NBC council, especially Chris Balchin who does the bulk of the club’s administrative work; Alex Lees, Jez Bird, Rob Clay and Chris Sharpe who between them have been organising our Conservation Awards programme; the editors of our publications, Guy Kirwan and James Lowen, who both do sterling work on our behalf, all of our Corporate Supporters, and especially Sunbird who kindly provided the drinks and nibbles for this meeting; and Tim Appleton and the Birdfair for providing this venue for our 2018 meeting, essentially free-of-charge.

**Questions**

1. David White commented on the lack of advertising for meeting at the Birdfair, suggesting that details could have been promoted at other stands connected with the club. In response David Fisher stated that there had been plenty of notifications to members prior to the Birdfair but council will take his point on board for future meetings.
2. A discussion on the behaviour of people in field highlighted the need for club members to set an example to others. David Fisher concluded the discussion by reminding those present of clubs “Code of Conduct”, available on our website, which addresses these concerns.

There were no further questions from the membership.

**5. Treasurer's Report and presentation of independently examined accounts for 2017 and Trustees' report 2017.**

Chris Collins (Treasurer) referred to the draft accounts and report prepared for the meeting. He reported that the Club’s finances were in a reasonably healthy state and as a consequence the club had been able to fund over £30,000 of conservation awards which was the most the club had ever made in a year. He noted that a significant part of the clubs income was held as restricted funds, i.e. only available for Conservation Awards, having more unrestricted funds would give council more flexibility to invest in the club.

**A motion proposed by James Lowen and seconded by Manuel Sanchez to approve the independently examined accounts for 2017 and Trustees' report 2017 was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**6. Election of Officers.**

The Chairman advised the meeting of those members who had agreed to stand for election

**A motion proposed by Rick Simpson and seconded by David White to re-elect the David Fisher as Chairman was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**A motion proposed by James Lowen and seconded by Roberta Goodall to re-elect the Chris Collins as Treasuere was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**A motion proposed by David White and seconded by Anna Huges to re-lect the Chris Balchin as Secretary was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**7. Election of Council.**

The Chairman advised the meeting of those members who had agreed to stand for election for the first time, for re-election and to undertake specific roles (if any).

**A motion proposed by James Lowen and seconded by Rick Simpson to elect the following as members of Council was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously: Rob Clay (Conservation), Mike Dawson, Carl Downing, Roberta Goodall, Manuel Sanchez, Tom Stuart, Charles Wilkins, Robert Williams (Reprensentatives) and John Thirtle.**

**8. Election of Country Representatives.**

The Chairman advised the meeting of those members who had agreed to serve as NBC Regional Representatives pursuant to Clause 21 of the Club’s Constitution.

**A motion proposed by Charles Wilkins** **and seconded by John Thirtle to appoint the following as NBC Regional Representatives** **was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously:**

***{Argentina:*** *Ignacio Roesler;* ***Belgium:*** *Dr Johan Ingels;* ***Brazil:*** *Andy Foster;* ***Chile:*** *Manuel Marin;* ***Colombia:*** *Diego Calderon;* ***Denmark:*** *Morten Heergaard;* ***Ecuador:*** *Manuel Sanchez Nivicela****; France and French Guiana:*** *Nyls de Pracontal;* ***Italy:*** *Guiseppe Micali;* ***New Zealand:*** *Detlef Davies;* **Panama**: Michael S Roy; ***Paraguay:*** *Paul Smith;* ***Peru:*** *Rob Williams;* ***Uruguay:*** *Agustín Carriquiry**and* ***Venezuela:*** *David Ascanio.}*

**9. Election of Independent Examiner.**

The Secretary advised the meeting that Michael Goddard was willing tobe re-appointedas independent examiner**.**

**A motion proposed by David White and seconded by Manuel Sanchez to re-appoint Michael Goddard as independent examiner was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**10. Any other business.**

There was no other business.

**The meeting closed at 19:03**