



## 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the African Bird Club

10am on Saturday 29 October 2022 BST

### Agenda

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the 28<sup>th</sup> AGM, which was once again held virtually. A total of 35 members joined the meeting and it was positive to see people from so many different countries in attendance. Taking part were:

David Fox; Susie Squier; Michel Louette; Alexis Dall'Asta; Marlene Reid; John Caddick; Liz Anderson; Yahkat Barshep; Adrian Skerrett; Richard Charles; Million Chimdessa; Helen Baker; Edwin Kamughisha; Anne Varney; Paul Buckley; Francis Guetse; Daniel Hollands; Ulrich Sunder; Bruktawit Abdu; Samson Da'an; Gad Niwihisemo; Cedric Tuyisenge; Russell Leavett; Josiah Ibrahim; Camille Tchankpan; Stephen Lowe; Mohamed Amezian; Rahila Yilangai; Chris Bowden; Khaled Etayeb; Nonie Coulthard; Sam Ivande; Phil Belman; Momoh Sesay; Jose Dala

#### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Lynda Donaldson, Ian Francis, Nigel Redman and Mairianne Walker

#### 3. Approval of the Minutes of the 27th AGM

A draft of the minutes had been published with the notice of the AGM on the ABC website. No corrections were raised and the minutes were approved as published.

#### 4. Presentation of the Trustees' Report for 2021

The Chair presented the Trustees' Report for 2021, giving an overview of the Club's activities in 2021 (please see the slides below). The Chair listed the names of the trustees serving on Council since the last AGM and thanked them for their contributions. Special thanks were given to the trustees retiring at this year's AGM: Stephen Lowe, John Caddick and Nigel Redman.

It was noted that ABC had raised over £45,000 in 2021, enabling the Club to fund 13 conservation awards and two expedition awards. This takes the total grants made since setting up the Conservation Fund to over £500,000, representing a major milestone. Conservation awards supported projects in Cameroon, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. The expedition awards will support projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe. The Chair recognised the significant contribution of the members of the Conservation Committee, who manage the awards programme.

Thanks were also given to the Club's major donors and all who support the Club financially, including our Corporate Sponsors, whose support is hugely appreciated. The Club is always looking for new donors and is currently advertising for a Fundraising Officer to support our fundraising efforts. The Chair noted that the Club is seeking to broaden its corporate sponsorship base beyond four companies and was pleased to announce that Zeiss had become a Gold-tier sponsor.

In 2021, ABC renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with BirdLife International, further strengthening the links between the two organisations. The Club also worked with the Birdsong Project to facilitate the creation of a Guide to the Birdsong of Western Africa, an album of music created by musicians from Western Africa and inspired by the songs of endangered birds from the region, with 100% of the funds from sales supporting local organisations working to save these species.

The Club ran a series of virtual presentations for members in 2021 on a range of topics. Membership is now around 1,200, including over 400 Supported Members, across 70 countries. Members were encouraged to pay for their membership by direct debit where

possible and to renew on time. Everyone is encouraged to recruit or recommend new members, including Supported Members, on which a brief overview was given.

The Club produced two issues of the Bulletin in 2021, totalling 272 pages. The latest edition will be out soon. Digital editions are also available, including via the Bulletin app. The Club has launched its new, mobile-friendly website, which offers an improved interface for membership renewals and donations. ABC T-shirts are also available for purchase on the site, from which the Club makes a small profit from each item sold, all of which goes to the Conservation Fund. The Chair provided an update on the ABC Birds of Africa App, which now includes around 2,300 species on the checklists of 40 countries. Providing photos, sounds, text and maps, it has been described as "Outstandingly the 'go-to' app for those with a keen interest in African birds".

We continued to engage in campaigning during 2021, backing efforts in Sudan to persuade authorities to curb hunting of wildlife and enforce protected areas and lending support to Kasanka Trust's campaign to stop land clearance in one of the buffer zones around the Kasanka National Park in Zambia. The Club exhibited at the virtual 2021 African Birdfair and at the 5<sup>th</sup> Jos Bird Fair in Nigeria, where we were able to welcome visitors and sign up new members.

The Chair closed by giving thanks to those on whose efforts ABC depends, including our Membership Administrator, the teams behind the Bulletin, website and Birds of Africa App and our ABC Representatives across 55 countries and territories.



ABC 28th AGM 2021  
Trustees' Report.ppt

## **5. Presentation of the Club's Accounts for 2021**

The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2021, which had been posted on the website in advance. The Club received £32,000 of unrestricted funds and £45,000 of restricted funds. The Treasurer explained the distinctions between the two categories and the significance of the fact that restricted funds were ring fenced and could not be used for wider purposes. It was noted that unrestricted funds were down due to reduced corporate sponsorship (as a result of the pandemic), while the App and the website represent significant expenditures (in addition to conservation grants).

It was queried whether income from donations had reduced from £165,000 to £75,000, which seemed a significant amount. The Treasurer explained that the figure for 2020 included the reserves that were brought over from old charity (upon incorporating as a CIO). Once you account for the reserves, the years are comparable. Essentially, 2020 was an unusual year and £75,000 in income is normal for the Club. Income has reduced somewhat due to the lack of physical events (which otherwise provide opportunities for fund raising, such as raffles) and reduction in corporate sponsorship, which we hope to recover in future.

## **6. Reappointment of the Independent Examiner: Wettone Matthews**

The Treasurer reported that the incumbents were content to continue as the Independent Examiner and as they have done a good job thus far, recommended that they be retained for 2022, to which there were no objections.

## **7. Resolution to amend the Constitution**

A resolution to amend Clause 16 of the Constitution had been published with the notice of the AGM. The Secretary provided an overview of the amendments, which would increase the cap on the number of consecutive years' service by a trustee after which a gap in service is required from four years to five and reduce the mandatory gap in service from three years to one. The purpose of the limitations in Clause 16 are to ensure the vitality and diversity of viewpoints and experience on Council, but it is equally important not to lose effective trustees, who are hard to replace. Council had concluded that the existing position was unduly restrictive and proposed the amendments accordingly.

John Caddick moved the resolution, which was seconded by Richard Charles and passed unanimously by the members present.

[Due to an oversight, the resolution and amended constitution was not submitted to the Charity Commission within 15 days of the AGM, as required. As a result, the amendment will not take effect and will need to be reconsidered at the next AGM.]

## **8. Election of Trustees**

In accordance with Clause 13 of the Club's constitution, at each AGM, the four trustees who are longest serving must retire. As a result, the following Trustees are retiring from office with immediate effect: Paul Buckley, Stephen Lowe, John Caddick and Nigel Redman. In addition, John Kinghorn stepped down with effect on 1 September.

Paul Buckley (who is to continue as Vice Chair) is eligible for reappointment and will be standing for election along with Mairianne Walker, who was co-opted to Council in April.

Susie Squier proposed the appointment, Richard Charles seconded it and it was passed by those members present.

## **9. Any other Business**

The Chair gave an overview of the Pan-African Ornithological Congress and ABC's involvement, which involves sponsoring five African ornithologists to attend as well as supporting production of the abstracts booklet and printing of the programme. The Chair and John Caddick will be representing ABC at the Congress and looked forward to seeing any other members there.

It was noted that Rockjumper would be operating a conservation tour focusing on locations in Kenya where ABC grants have funded land acquisitions. If you are interested in joining, let Stephen Lowe know (he remains the Club's Corporate Sponsorship officer). The trip will also be advertised.

Following the meeting, the Vice Chair introduced the two speakers. Dr. Rowan Martin, Director of the World Parrot Trust's Africa Conservation Programme, presented on "Africa's parrots: threats, challenges and solutions". Dr. Chima Nwaogu, Research Fellow at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology presented on "Why tropical birds breed when they do".