

**8TH CONFERENCE
OF THE EUROPEAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION
27-30 AUGUST 2011, RIGA**

The European Ornithologists' Union (EOU), established in 1997, is an organisation uniting several hundreds of European ornithologists. It focuses on promoting scientific studies on birds and collaboration between ornithologists within our continent. Every two years the EOU holds a conference allowing people from all over Europe to meet and share views on ornithology and results of their studies. Since 1997 the conferences were held in Bologna, Gdańsk, Groningen, Chemnitz, Strasbourg, Vienna and Zurich. On 27-30 August 2011 European ornithologists gathered again for the 8th Conference of the EOU in Riga, the capital of Latvia.

The Conference was organised by the University of Latvia in Riga – the largest university in the country and the host of the Conference – together with the University of Daugavpils and the Latvian Ornithological Society (LOB). Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Māris Strazds (University of Latvia and LOB), dealt with all non-scientific issues (accommodation, finances, excursions etc.). All the presentations and posters were reviewed and arranged into a scientific programme by the Scientific Programme Committee, chaired by Leonida Fusani (University of Ferrara, Italy). About five hundred ornithologists took part in the conference; they represented most of European countries, but there were also several people from Africa and North America.

The Conference began on 27 August. All the participants gathered in Aula Magna, in the main building of the University of Latvia, where during the opening ceremony they were greeted by Tomasz Wesołowski, the president of the EOU, Mārcis Auziņš, rector of the University of Latvia and by representatives of the organizers. Three of four days of the Conference – 27, 28 and 30 August – were dedicated exclusively to the scientific programme. Altogether 384 abstracts were accepted by the Scientific Programme Committee and provided in the Abstract Book (available in PDF from EOU website: http://www.eouunion.org/pdf/EOU_Riga_Abstracts.pdf). Five plenary lectures and 212 presentations were given, grouped according to subject into symposia and oral sessions. The presentations covered a variety of topics from different fields of interest in current ornithology, from physiology and immunology to ecology and behaviour, from breeding biology to migrations. Much attention was paid to new methods of modelling and statistical analyses in ornithology as well as new techniques of monitoring bird movements, including advanced technologies (geolocators and radars). A lot of presentations dealt also with the impact of human activities on birds and different approaches to bird conservation. Over one hundred posters showed an

even greater variety of studies on birds, and each day, during the poster session, there was an opportunity to discuss the results with the authors.

Apart from stimulating scientific discussions and presentations, the organizers also provided entertaining non-scientific events. On 29 August the participants were taken on excursions to the most interesting natural sites in vicinity of Riga. They could admire the lakes of Kaņieris and Engure, the wild forests and bogs of the Ķemeri National Park and the cliffs along the Gauja river in the Gauja National Park. After the excursions the participants could listen to Latvian music and enjoy traditional Latvian dances during the social evenings. Finally, as the main building of the University of Latvia is located in the very centre of Riga, it was possible to spend some time exploring the old city and admire its brilliant architecture.

In our opinion the Conference in Riga was a great success. We could learn a lot about various kinds of ornithological research done in Europe, exchange ideas with colleagues from different countries, but also – last but not least – learn a lot about Latvia and its people, whose friendliness and support were unforgettable. We look forward to the next EOU conference, which is going to be held in 2013 in Norwich, UK.

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