

German Ornithological Society

Spring Letter from the President · 2026



Stralsund, March 2026

Dear Members of the German Ornithological Society,

It has been a few months since we last met at our annual conference in Erfurt in September 2025 – and quite a lot has happened since then. From organisational developments at the Secretariat to progress in digitalisation and new formats for scientific exchange, the past months have been both busy and exciting.

With this spring letter, I would like to share a few highlights and give you an overview of what has been happening across the Society.

Scientific Life of the Society

On 2–3 March 2026, the extended Executive Committee met for its **spring meeting** at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin. Once again, I was struck by the breadth of activities within the German Ornithological Society (DOG) and the energy with which many topics are currently being developed.

A real highlight for me was our **first DOG online conference** on 6 March 2026, organised by the '*Birds of Towns and Settlements*' specialist group. More than **260 people** registered, and up to **170 joined live** at peak times. It was great to see how well this format worked – and how much interest there is in additional opportunities to connect beyond our annual meetings.

Our **Research Commission** has also been very active and recently approved five new grants – an important contribution to supporting ongoing research within our community.

Our **website** is becoming more and more of a central hub. After some technical hurdles, **access to the *Journal of Ornithology*** is now fully restored. If you need to reset your login details, you can easily do so online or contact the office.

We are also regularly updating the **'News' section** with reports from specialist groups, conferences and other activities. In addition, **digital registration forms** for events are now in place, making organisation much easier for everyone involved.

Supporting Early-Career Researchers and Strengthening International Visibility

Supporting early-career researchers remains one of our key priorities. Through our **Early Career Programme**, we have awarded nine travel grants for the **EOU Fledglings Conference 2026** in Gdańsk. We will also present a DOG Prize for the best poster at the conference.

For the first time this year, we introduced a special **DOG Prize** at the Berlin regional round of the **'Jugend forscht'** competition. Initiatives like these are important for encouraging young researchers and strengthening their connection to our community.

As our Society becomes increasingly international, we are currently working on a **full English version of our website**. Our **social media activities** also continue to grow in importance. I would like to sincerely thank our social media team for their fantastic voluntary work in sharing our activities and reaching new audiences.

Head Office and Organisation

An important step in the organisational development of the DOG has been the agreement with the **Institute for Ornithology in Wilhelmshaven**. For the first time, we now have a permanent office space within a scientific institution.

The official handover took place in early February. With the establishment of an office for our Executive Director, Karl Falk, we aim to introduce **regular office hours** and make it easier for members to reach us.

Digitisation of Working Structures

We have also made significant progress in digitising our internal structures. A **central cloud-based system** for document management is now in place, helping to make our work more transparent and efficient.

At the same time, member data has been transferred to the **MeinVerein.de** platform. We are currently reviewing and updating this data step by step, with the goal of improving digital communication with our members.

Reflecting on the History of the DOG

A topic that is particularly important to me is the critical reflection on the history of our Society. As a scientific organisation, we have a responsibility to engage thoughtfully with our past.

To this end, a **workshop** will take place in **Leipzig on 11–12 April 2026**, focusing on the role of the DOG during the National Socialist period. The workshop is designed as an open forum for both members and external experts, and I would be very pleased to see many of you there.

Outlook and Invitation

Many of the developments of recent months will continue to shape our work in the future and are important steps towards a well-organised and internationally connected Society.

One of the highlights of the year will be our **159th Annual Conference in Mainz**. I warmly invite you to join us – I very much look forward to seeing many of you there. Further information on the programme and registration is available on our website.

Finally, **I would like to thank everyone** who contributes to the DOG – whether on the Executive Committee, Advisory Board, in our journals, commissions and specialist groups, on the social media team, or in many other ways. Your commitment is what makes this Society vibrant and forward-looking.

With warm regards,
Yours sincerely,



Dr. Dorit Visbeck-Liebers

President of the German Ornithological Society