

# The European Network for Ornithological Tourism (RETO)



Picture: Alberto Portero ©







## Cultural route of the cranes



## European Network for Ornithological Tourism



## Tourism Network Of Nature-Watching Space



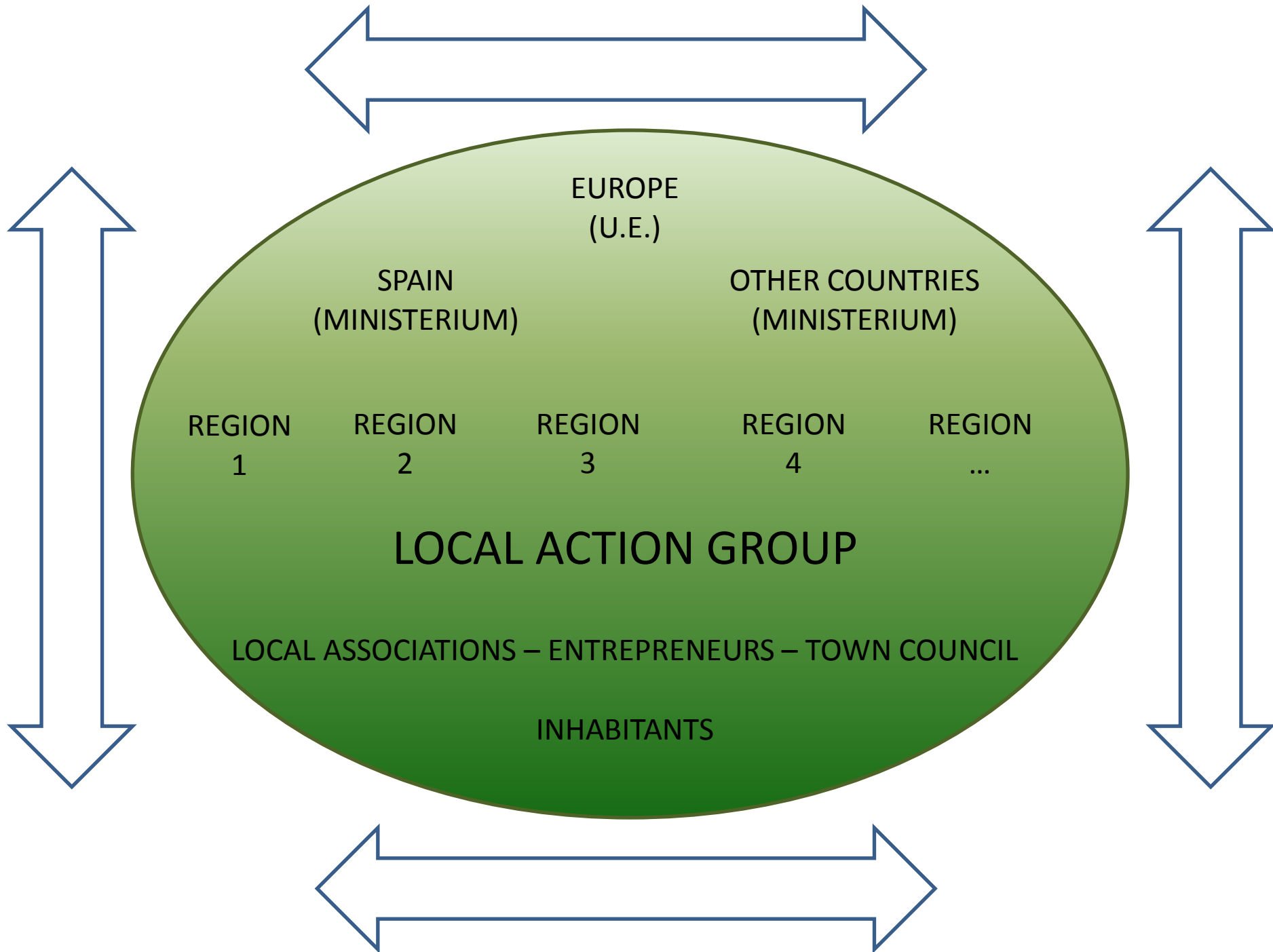
1998-2000



2004-2008



2009-2011





## Cultural route of the cranes



### Local Action Groups

**Adri Jiloca Gallocanta** (Aragón, Spain)

**Adegaso** (Gállego-Sotón, Aragón, Spain)

**Omezma** (Mezquín-Matarraña, Aragón, Spain),

**La Serena** (Extremadura, Spain)

**Natural Park of Schaalsee** (Mecklenburg, Germany)

**Swedish Crane Working Group** (Skaraborg, Sweden).

**The Rural Economy and Agricultural Society of Skaraborg**  
(Sweden).

**La Creuse** (Limousin, France)

**Ludwigslust**, (Germany)

**Nort-West-Mecklenburg**, (Germany)

**Rügen** (Mecklenburg, Germany),

### Description of the project

#### *Objectives*

Personal meeting and discover-sharing concerns and objectives of the other.

To create a cultural route around a common bird, the crane



1998-2000



## Cultural route of the cranes



## Main actions

- Promotional video around the migration of the cranes and the people who live in these territories.
- Crane concerts
- Changes between ornithologist, young people, associations, artisans and farmers.

## Difficulties

- Language barriers
- Different mentalities
- Complicated attitudes

## Results

- 9 transnational meetings
- 2 Crane Festivals (Gallocanta, Rügen)
- 1 promotional video
- 1 travelling exhibition "Nature's Spirits"

## Added value of the project

- At this time, the whole project, to do TNC with other countries.



1998-2000





## Cultural route of the cranes



*Naturally, the participation of all groups is not the same for all actions or the degree of involvement, since each has characteristics different from the other, either in structure, objectives and priorities, funding calls or infrastructures. At the moment when everyone will be ready to do in this way, each group will be able to take initiatives in one of the actions with the knowledge of rest. Leader review 1999*

Daroca-Calamocha (Zaragoza)

Actualidad  
Leader 36

## Tras el vuelo de las grullas

ADRI Daroca y Calamocha

**Grupos LEADER de cuatro países europeos se han unido en el proyecto GRUS para crear la "ruta cultural de las grullas", un recorrido imaginario que atraviesa Europa occidental por Suecia, Alemania, Francia y España, siguiendo el mismo itinerario que realizan las grullas en su migración anual.**

**El objetivo del proyecto Grus es promover, potenciar y comercializar los recursos culturales y naturales de las comarcas**

Grus grus es el nombre científico de la grulla común europea, un ave de gran tamaño que se desplaza en grandes grupos en busca de las zonas húmedas como lugares ideales de reposo. Once entidades de cuatro países, pertenecientes todas ellas a comarcas eminentemente rurales, se han unido en este ambicioso proyecto que tiene como nexo de unión la grulla. Su objetivo es promover, potenciar y comercializar los recursos culturales y naturales, desde el patrimonio al turismo ornitológico, desde los artistas locales y la artesanía a los productos agroalimentarios, desde el censo y seguimiento de aves al trabajo con agricultores.

de Galloca, fue una de las razones que propiciaron el primer contacto entre españoles y alemanes. Y la imagen inspiró la primera acción conjunta, que fue la realización de un documental y de un video promocional. Su rodaje así comenzó con los primeros encuentros y se planteó como motor y elemento aglutinador del proyecto, en una fase de elaboración en la que la abstracción a menudo resta fuerzas. La construcción de una web Grus y el uso de otros recursos tecnológicos por Internet será en un futuro próximo el medio por el que fluya la mayor parte de la comunicación entre los socios. También sirvió como escaparate de sus



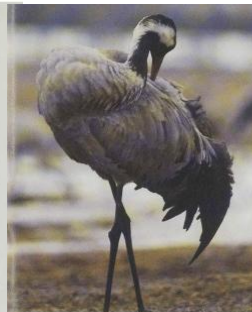
La ruta "cultural de las grullas", un recorrido imaginario que atraviesa Europa occidental por Suecia, Alemania, Francia y España. Foto: Pablo Vicente

Su puesta en marcha ha comenzado recientemente tras un largo periodo de más de dos años de preparación y contactos en el que se han descubierto las bases de la cooperación en su verdadero significado: el conocimiento mutuo y personal, y el descubrir-compartir las inquietudes y objetivos del otro. La difícil comunicación entre las cuatro lenguas participantes y las diferentes mentalidades y actitudes que surgen al afrontar situaciones diversas, ocasionaron algunos problemas de entendimiento que finalmente se pudieron resolver con paciencia y buena voluntad.

La música del "Concierto para grullas, grullas y grillos" (Lahiez), inspirado en la Laguna

territorios y de sus productos, contará con una telelenda, un museo virtual, una página con la ubicación y el censo de la población de grullas, y un lugar de encuentro para todos aquellos que compartan la filosofía del Desarrollo Sostenible.

Al igual que la web, ha comenzado recientemente el intercambio de algunos colectivos como los ornitólogos, al que se sumarán en breve grupos de jóvenes, y se mantiene el con-



La grulla es el nexo de unión del proyecto de cooperación liderado por el LEADER de Daroca-Calamocha.

tacto entre asociaciones de artistas y artesanos, así como promotores agroalimentarios. Todas las entidades asociadas coinciden en que la participación e implicación de estos y otros colectivos es una de las claves del éxito de un proyecto cuyos beneficiarios últimos deben ser en gran parte ellos.

Otras de las acciones planificadas son la edición de una guía turística que incluye la ruta de las grullas, una exposición itinerante con la obra de artistas y artesanos con el título de "Nature's Spirits", y la creación de la infraestructura mínima de apoyo a la comercialización de productos locales de calidad. Entre los intercambios se prevé que grupos de agricultores conozcan otras experiencias en medios agroambientales y que jóvenes y niños se sensibilicen a los procesos medioambientales y en la protección de la naturaleza, utilizando Internet como herramienta de investigación e intercomunicación.

### El Festival de las grullas

Para cada una de estas acciones se crea una línea de trabajo independiente, y para reforzar los objetivos conjuntos se diseña una planificación que incluye la creación de un logotipo, de una marca de calidad que refleje la comercialización, la creación de nuevos productos, como una oferta conjunta de turismo ornitológico, y eventos como el "Festival de las grullas" que de forma periódica sean foro público de la cultura y los productos de todas estas comarcas. Está prevista su celebración, este otoño en la isla de Rügen (Alemania) y en el otoño del 2000 en la Laguna de Galloca. Se han establecido tres fases para el GRUS, tanto para sus

acciones individuales como para el conjunto: ya se ha avanzado en el conocimiento mutuo como primera fase, la valorización de las actividades y de los recursos propios es el segundo paso que se comienza a dar, y la tercera etapa es crear conjuntamente actividades económicas y culturales. Naturalmente, la participación de todos los grupos no es la misma para todas las acciones, ni tampoco es el mismo el grado de implicación, ya que cada uno tiene características diferentes a los otros, ya sea en estructura, objetivos o prioridades, vías de financiación o infraestructuras. En el momento que esté preparado para ello, cada grupo puede asumir iniciativas en una de las acciones con el conocimiento del resto.

El grupo que desde un inicio tomó la iniciativa en el proyecto y en la ejecución de acciones es ADRI Daroca-Calamocha, asociación que gestiona el LEADER "Laguna de Galloca" (Aragón), coordinador y promotor del GRUS.

Los primeros socios fueron el Parque Natural de Schaalsee (Mecklenburg, Alemania) y la asociación "Swedish Crane Working Group" (Skaraborg, Suecia). Más tarde se sumaron los grupos LEADER aragoneses ADEGA-SO (Galligo-Sotón) y OMEZYMA (Mezquifu-Matarraña), el LEADER extremeño de "La Serena", el francés de "La Creuse" (Limousin), los alemanes de "Lahwiesluis", "North-West-Mecklenburg" y "Rügen" (Mecklenburg), y la asociación "The Rural Economy and Agricultural Society of Skaraborg" (Dacia). Por lo que de los once socios, ocho son GAL gestionando programas LEADER, y tres son asociaciones: un Parque Natural, una asociación de trabajo con grullas y otra asociación de agricultores.

El carácter abierto, dinámico e innovador del GRUS hace que sea para todos sus socios una referencia para la identidad cultural de sus territorios y la comercialización de sus productos, y al mismo tiempo proyecte una imagen de calidad de todos sus recursos y de respeto por el medio en el que trabajan.

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E-mail: daroca@adri.es

Actualidad  
Leader 37

SIN FRONTERAS



Algunos de los productos de todos los socios del proyecto. Foto: Pablo Vicente



European Network for  
Ornithological Tourism



## Local Action Groups

- 15 spanish
- 2 french

## Description of the project

The main **objective** is the creation of network around Special Protection Areas, Important Bird Areas, Natural Parks...

- Specific Objectives
  - Increase transnational cooperation
  - Sustainable development looking for the balance between tourism and nature
  - Encourage local people to work in
  - Change of knowledge
  - To have more conscience into environmental themes
  - To Increase natural tourism
  - Support the associations



2004-2008



European Network for  
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## Main actions

### MANAGEMENT

### PROMOTION

- M.I.C. / Communication Plan
- Official project presentation

### ENVIRONMENTAL

- Environmental information to the local territory
- Nature Classroom
- Conference of Environmental Voluntary people
- Environmental training

### TOURISM

- Elaboration of a strategy of tourist development; creation of a tourist products
- Study and implantation of systems of tourist management, formation of the tourist sector and edition of a manual of good practices.

### NEW TECHNOLOGIES

- Migranet



2004-2008





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# Official presentation Agriculture Ministerium of Spain 2005





European Network for  
Ornithological Tourism



# Promotion: Brochures

## +20.000 units



RETO

AVEC CES CIRCUITS  
TOURISTIQUES, VOUS  
PARTICIPEREZ AU PROJET  
RETO DONT L'OBJECTIF EST  
D'ASSOCIER LE  
DEVELOPPEMENT DU  
TOURISME RURAL AVEC LA  
PRESERVATION DE SITES  
NATURELS FRAGILES ET  
D'ESPECES PROTEGEES EN  
EUROPE



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Jiloca - Gallicantu  
Zona de 5 Villas  
Hoya de Huesca  
Somontano  
Dulcinea  
Aljarafe - Doñana  
Campiña Sur  
La Serena  
Tajo - Salor - Almonte  
Valle de Alagón  
Montaña Palentina  
Asón - Agüera  
Liébana  
Ribera de Navarra  
Montaña de Navarra

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Unión Europea FEDER-O



# Réseau Européen de Tourisme Ornithologique



Le développement des  
zones rurales est un des  
objectifs clés de l'Union  
Européenne. Le maintien de  
populations et d'activités est  
essentiel pour la  
conservation de nombreux  
écosystèmes et des espèces  
qui y vivent. Le tourisme de  
nature constitue aujourd'hui  
un formidable outil de  
développement durable  
de ces zones rurales.



GROUPES DE COOPÉRATION EN ESPAGNE:

Aragón:

Jiloca - Gallicantu  
Zona de 5 Villas  
Hoya de Huesca  
Somontano

Castille - La Manche:

Dulcinea

Andalousie:

Aljarafe - Doñana  
Campiña Sur  
La Serena  
Tajo - Salor - Almonte  
Valle de Alagón

Castille - León:

Montagne de Palencia

Cantabrie:

Asón - Agüera  
Liébana

Navarre:

Berge de Navarre

Interrégional Navarre Aragón:

Montagne de Navarre

GROUPES DE COOPÉRATION EN FRANCE:

P.N.R. de la Brenne

Pays Combraille en Marche





European Network for  
Ornithological Tourism

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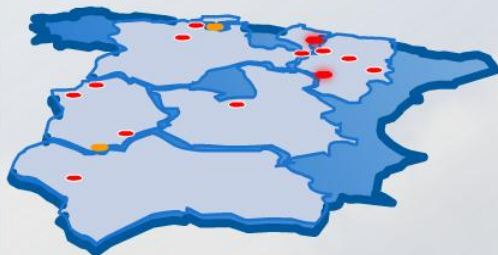
migranet

jeu

liens



Espagne



France



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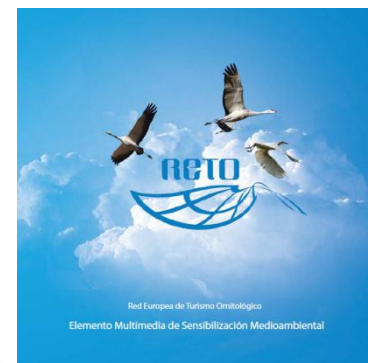




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# CD Environmental for schools +10.000 units





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# Environmental volunteer journey +35 people







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**Class nature**  
**+1500 students**







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# Formation for entrepreneurs + 100 businessman



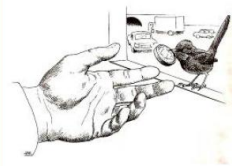


European Network for  
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# Strategy, training for business man + 15 touristic products

**ASISTENCIA  
TÉCNICA PARA LA  
ELABORACIÓN DE UNA:**

**"ESTRATEGIA PARA LA  
CREACIÓN DE UNA  
RED DE ESPACIOS DE  
TURISMO ORNITOLÓGICO"**



**Estudio y Bases Para la Implantación de Sistema  
De Gestión Turística.  
Manual de Buenas prácticas.  
Orientaciones para la Formación del empresariado  
RETO.**



*Acción formativa de RETO*

Gallocaña, 14 al 16 de marzo de 2008



**Marzo 2007**





European Network for  
Ornithological Tourism

# Fairs, Exhibitions + 10 national / international

## Fio Monfragüe (Spain) 2005-2008



Feria Internacional de Turismo Ornitológico  
Extremadura Birdwatching Fair







European Network for  
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## Fairs, Exhibitions + 10 national / international

**British Birdwatching Fair (UK)**  
**2006, 2007, 2008**



**Expotural (Madrid)**  
**2006 -2007**





European Network for  
Ornithological Tourism

# Fairs, Exhibitions + 10 national / international

## Fiera Internazionale Birdwatching (Italy) 2007







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**Famtrips / workshops**





## European Network for Ornithological Tourism



# Results



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## Spain – Aragon

Cranes, Lammergeiers & Wallcreepers

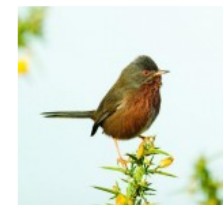
12 November to 19 November 2013

Principal Leader: Steve West

Maximum of 14 clients (two leaders with more than seven clients).

2013 Cost: £1,499 single room supplement £100

Early November sees the gathering of thousands of Common Cranes at their single most important stopover site in Western Europe. These birds breed in the swamps and marshes of Scandinavia, Finland and Russia. Some will be making a short stop on their southward migration, which will take them to the dehesas of Extremadura, while others will stay around Gallocanta to benefit from the safe haven provided by the lagoon and the food available in the surrounding fields. We shall be treated to one of the world's great spectacles as these birds fly in large flocks overhead, trumpeting as they go. Our local guide Steve West will also help us explore some great habitats where we can look for some of the special birds of Spain. Who cannot be tempted when there is mention of Dupont's Lark, Bonelli's Eagle, Great Bustard, Lammergeier, Wallcreeper, Black Woodpecker and Citril Finch? We stay at three very comfortable and well located hotels. At this time of year the day length is getting shorter and the birds are active, feeding up before winter arrives. This tour is packed with some great birds and some little-visited locations. Why not travel with Steve and see why we think this itinerary is such a winner.



**Further Info**  
**Download Brochure Info**  
**Booking Information**



## Outline Itinerary

Day 1 Fly to Madrid and transfer to Gallocanta  
Day 2 Gallocanta  
Days 3-4 Lécera  
Days 5-7 Loarre  
Day 8 Depart Barcelona



2004-2008

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## European Network for Ornithological Tourism



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SPAIN

### Spain – Aragon

Cranes, Lammergeiers & Wallcreepers

Tuesday 12 November – Tuesday 19 November 2013

Principal Leader: Steve West

2013 Cost: £1,499 single room supplement £100



Early November sees the gathering of thousands of Common Cranes at their single most important stopover site in Western Europe. These birds breed in the swamps and marshes of Scandinavia, Finland and Russia. Some will be making a short stop on their southward migration, which will take them to the delta of the Ebro, while others will stay around Calatayud to benefit from the safe haven provided by the lagoon and the food available in the surrounding fields. We shall be treated to one of the world's great spectacles as these birds fly in large flocks overhead, trumpeting as they go. Our local guide Steve West will also help us explore some great habitats where we can look for some of the special birds of Spain. Who cannot be surprised when there is mention of Dupont's Lark, Bonelli's Eagle, Great Bustard, Lammergeier, Wallcreeper, Black Woodpecker and Cirl Finch? We stay at three very comfortable and well located hotels. At this time of year the day length is getting shorter and the birds are active, feeding up before winter arrives. This tour is packed with some great birds and some little-visited locations. Why not travel with Steve and see why we think this itinerary is such a winner.

#### ITINERARY

##### Days 1 & 2

We leave London, or regional airports, on a flight to Madrid, where we collect our mini-buses and transfer to our hotel at Calatayud, where we stay for two nights. In the morning we will look for the flocks of Common Cranes, and I would take a hard-headed naturalist not be thrilled by the sights and sounds of flock after flock of Common Cranes flying overhead to and from the lagoon, and elching their slender silhouette on the skyline above this high plateau. The lagoon of Calatayud itself doesn't always contain much water, but when it does it is home to a variety of ducks and waders, which may include Red-crested Pochard, Black-necked Grebe and Marsh Plover. The surrounding open steppe-type farmland holds a regular

population of wintering Great Bustards, which of course we will be keen to locate, along with Calandra and Crested Larks and the occasional black-bellied Sandpiper. Raptors are often noteworthy, and in the course of a day it would not be unusual to see species such as Golden Eagle, Hen Harrier, Eurasian Goshawk, Vulture, Merlin, Western Marsh Harrier and Red Kite.

##### Days 3 & 4

We take leave of Calatayud and its cranes today to make full contact with the best steppes in northern Spain. But let's not rush things: first of all we should take a look at some of the relatively unknown countryside lying between us and our next hotel in Loeza, where we stay for two nights. By doing so we increase our chances of seeing certain avian gems such as Bonelli's Eagle and Black Wheatear, along with a rich

supporting cast including the likes of Rock Sparrow, Cirl Bunting, Blue Rock Thrush, Crag Martin, Red-bellied Cuckoo and Dartford Warbler. To name just a few. Whispers from the past break through the solitude of the river Martín area: steep-walled gorges hold Neolithic cave paintings, rock-loving birds and even small numbers of Spanish ibex. It's not surprising to learn that Eurasian Eagle Owls hunt these parts, although it would be more so to actually see one of these magnificent birds in the daytime!

The next day we make an early start, which is well-justified, as a dawn visit to the steppes of Belchite to see the sun rise over the rolling plains is a must-see experience, especially if accompanied by good chances of seeing the rare and elusive Dupont's Lark. That can be a difficult

Pin-tailed Sandpiper



Common Cranes

undertaking, but even if we do not set eyes on this rare bird we still have great opportunities for seeing both Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandpiper and Calandra, Thrush and Lesser Short-toed Larks, and for working up a healthy appetite for a rather more drawn-out breakfast than usual. After breakfast we will return to different parts of the plains to look at sandpiper again and perhaps encounter additional species like Iberian Grey Shrike or Little Owl, before making contact with the banks of the river Ebro. A walk along one of the Ebro's meanders will give us opportunities to encounter a completely different array of birds, including Common Kingfisher, Penduline TIT, Cetti's Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, Short-toed Tropicbird, Green Woodpecker (chappal race) and maybe a White Stork or two.

##### Days 5 to 7

Today we head into the hills – after passing through the steppes of the Moncayo. This is one of the most arid regions of Spain, and seemingly in its vast expanses very little grows or prospers. But we look beyond initial appearances to find the characteristic steep-sided hills in what is a unique habitat in Europe. Just to the north the wonderful Sierra de Guara imposes on the skyline, with its highest peak reaching just over 2,000 metres, and with untold expanses of vertical rock faces, gorges and fascinating rock formations. A ruined castle at its southern edge is a good starting point, where one can usually see Black Wheatear, Rock Sparrow, Thrush Lark and several birds of prey. However, the main attraction of the afternoon will be the next site, where Eurasian Griffon Vultures pass us in flight, above and below, as we look southwards over the countryside of Huesca from our lofty perch at Sato del Rodan. Apart from the stunning views

we should also set eyes on birds like Crag Martin, Black Redstart, Rock Bunting and Firecrest, before we make our way to our hotel at Loeza and a three-night stay.

The village of Loeza takes second place to the castle of the same name that dominates the hillside above it. It is one of the best preserved castles in northern Spain and well-worth a visit, even if only for birding around its walls: Blue Rock Thrush, Cirl Bunting, Woodcock, Rock Bunting, Rock Sparrow and even Alpine Accentor can all be found here. However, it is the Sierra de Guara and a couple of its very special birds that most of us will have been waiting for: the Wallcreeper and the Lammergeier. We visit a number of sites where both of these emblematic species are regularly encountered, and at close quarters at this time of year. Hawfinch is another interesting species that can be seen in this area, which would add the finishing touches to a fine day's birding.

Our last full day will be spent at some of the best-known birding sites in this region. Over the years, Riglos has earned fame as being a good place to see wintering Wallcreepers and Alpine Accentors, and the woods around the monastery of San Juan de la Peña are inhabited by the Black Woodpecker. At the top of the same plateau it is often possible to see Cirl Finches, and a gentle walk through its pine woods often reveals an interesting variety of woodland birds including Crested Tit, Bullfinch and more.

Day 8  
After some final birding we transfer to Barcelona Airport for our flight back to London, or regional airports.



Thrush Lark

**Outline Itinerary**  
Day 1 Fly to Madrid and transfer to Calatayud  
Day 2 Calatayud  
Days 3-4 Loeza  
Days 5-7 Loeza  
Day 8 Depart Barcelona

**Party Size**  
Maximum of 14 clients (two leaders with more than seven clients).

**Accommodation**  
Comfortable accommodation in twin/double and single rooms with private facilities.

**Transport**  
By minibuses driven by the leaders.

**Includes**  
All flights, meals, accommodation, transport, entry fees, services of the leaders, VAT, airport taxes and tips.

#### Grading

- Good
- 160
- Cool
- Low
- Normal
- Relaxed
- Good
- Moderate
- Scheduled



Dartford Warbler

SPAIN





## European Network for Ornithological Tourism

### Spain - Learning Spanish in La Montana Palentina

Naturetrek Tour Report

8 - 15 September 2011



Great Bustards at Fuente de la Nava



La Montana Palentina from Monte Aguilar



2011 Naturetrek Group



White-throated Dipper

Report & images compiled by Byron Palacios



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## LEARN SPANISH IN WILD SPAIN! - LA MONTANA PALENTINA

Tour Code: [ESP22](#)

*An 8-day opportunity for aspiring Spanish speakers to improve their Spanish and enjoy the birds, mammals and other wildlife in La Montaña Palentina, a wild and beautiful corner of northern Spain.*

8 days from

**£1195** (inc flights)

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SUMMARY

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The ancient villages in the rugged Palentian Mountains are today largely deserted, this wild region left for reclamation by Wolves, Brown Bears, Wild Boar, and numerous Chamois, Red Deer and Roe Deer, not to mention a host of smaller mammals. Our base for this week-long exploration of this wildlife haven is in one such village, where our guide Tino and his wife Rosa have sympathetically restored three terraced farm cottages. From these, we will explore the mountains with Tino, spending the majority of each day on foot, either walking from our base or accessing remote valleys by minibus or 4WD, before returning each evening to a hearty meal, freshly prepared by Rosa. Throughout, we aim to speak Spanish – mostly!

- Practice your Spanish with our Spanish-speaking guides
- This is a Naturetrek 'house party' in Spain – a fun and unique week!
- Tino and Rosa's charming rural cottages are our base
- Enjoy Rosa's hearty local cuisine and wines
- Raptors, Middle-spotted and Black Woodpeckers
- Chance of Wolf, Brown Bear or Wildcat
- Good walking opportunities
- Expert guidance from Tino, and Naturetrek's Byron Palacios

### Food

All included in the price.



Visiting: Spain

### TOUR DOWNLOADS

[Tour Summary](#)

[Tour itinerary](#)

[Tour report - September 2011](#)

[Tour report - September 2010](#)

### CAN I HELP YOU?



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Operations  
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### TOUR FOCUS

### TOUR LEADERS

[Byron Palacios](#)

### TOUR REVIEWS

*A very good trip for improving my*



## European Network for Ornithological Tourism

Wild Spain - La Montana Palentina

Tour Itinerary

NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

There still remain corners of rural Spain, far from the reality of this fast developing and increasingly urban-dwelling country, that have been forgotten by time, largely abandoned by all but the older generation, and which are being reclaimed by a wildlife no longer so persecuted by man. The Montana Palentina – the Palentinian Mountains – is one such place: a wild, unpopulated region of high and chilly ridges, rounded summits, sweeping valleys and magnificent panoramic vistas extending southwards to the great plains of Castile and Leon. Nestling in the shadow of northern Spain's Cordillera Cantabrica, not far from the jagged limestone peaks of the Picos de Europa, the Palentinian Mountains are dominated by the majestic Sierra de Peña Labra, essentially a high mountain ridge boasting a handful of 2,000-metre summits, amongst them Valdecebollas (2,136m) and Pico Tres Mares (2,175m) – Peak of the Three Seas. A raindrop falling on the latter could, in theory, end up in any one of the Bay of Biscay, the Atlantic or the Mediterranean, such is the peculiar hydro-geographical jigsaw that places this mountain at the source of such mighty watercourses as the Ebro and the Duero.

The ancient Palentinian villages of the region are largely deserted, with hardly an occupied house in each. For this reason, so too are the Palentinian Mountains... left for reclamation by Wolves, Brown Bears, Wild Boar, and numerous Chamois, Red Deer and Roe Deer, not to mention a host of smaller mammals such as Iberian and Brown Hare, Beech Marten, Pine Marten, Wildcat and the elusive Genet.

### Day 1

#### Cordovilla de Aguilar

We depart mid-afternoon today (times TBC) from London Stansted on a Ryanair flight direct to Santander on Spain's north coast. On arrival we will pick up a minibus and drive south for an hour and a half or so to the small town of Aguilar de Campo. Here we turn off and head up into the hills. Our base for this week-long exploration of this little-known mountain wildlife haven is in a picturesque village. Here, our guide Tino and his wife Rosa have sympathetically restored three terraced farm cottages in a remote and mumbledown hamlet. On arrival, in the late evening, we will settle in to our accommodation where Rosa will have prepared the first of many tasty meals for us.

### Days 2-7

#### Cordovilla de Aguilar

The cottages are very much central to our daily outings, with the majority of each day spent on foot, either walking from our base, or in quiet locations accessed by minibus or 4x4. A range of habitats can be found in close proximity, with a full suite of raptors present, including resident Golden Eagles and Peregrines and both Griffon and Egyptian Vultures. Black and Middle-spotted Woodpeckers both breed here, the latter possibly being easier to see here than throughout much of the rest of its range. Another highlight is the Wallcreeper which, although probably proving elusive at high altitudes at this season, drops to the damp walls of the region's reservoirs at the onset of colder weather, and can from then on be seen quite easily.



## Wild Spain - La Montana Palentina

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

2012

### Outline itinerary

Day 1	Fly Santander & transfer to Cordovilla
Day 2/7	The Palentinian Mountains
Day 8	Return Santander; fly London

### Dates

Thursday 7th June – Thursday 14th June

### Cost

£1,195 (London/London); £1,095 (Santander/Santander)

### Single room supplement

£150

### Grading

A/B. Some longer optional walks sometimes involving substantial altitude gain, but not generally over difficult terrain

### Focus

Birds, mammals, plants



Bleakthroat



Fuentes Carrionas



Putanilla vulgaris

Tour Itinerary

Wild Spain - La Montana Palentina

The cottages lie on the doorstep of a truly wild landscape, comprising high mountain ridges rich in alpine flora, jagged crags and cliffs, and vast oak and beech forests which support a high percentage of the endangered eastern population of the European Brown Bear. Much-maligned, these magnificent creatures are notoriously difficult to see, roaming elusively over vast tracts of difficult terrain. Nevertheless, we do stand a small chance of a sighting if we put in the effort at dawn and dusk, when the Bears are most active. At these times, our local Spanish naturalist guides, Tino and his friend Nacho, will use their 4-wheel drive vehicles to take us to remote view-points for optional opportunities to scan from the ridges for Bears, Wolves, Wild Boar and other mammals. The guides will make us feel very much at home, sharing a rich passion for, and knowledge of, these mountains... and regaling us with tales and photographs of their close encounters with both Bears and Wolves. Interesting mammalian encounters are not reserved, however, for the remote valleys; for our hosts will proudly show us images of Wildcat and Beech Marten taken by a remote camera not feet away from our front door (and will no doubt demonstrate this piece of kit during our stay!).

On one day we will drive further afield to explore the steppes and plains of the *meseta*, home to Great Bustard, Stone Curlew and other grassland birds, and a large (depending on rainfall) reed-fringed lake, which supports large numbers of ducks, geese, waders and such interesting passerines as Penduline Tit and Monstrous Warbler. A short distance away, in the midst of Castile and Leon's vast cereal belt, a pack of Wolves secretly flourish, unbeknown to all but a very few keen Spanish naturalists and conservationists and a backing dog in the nearby village. Although we cannot guarantee the presence of the pack (they sometimes move to a different area and are difficult to track), an atmospheric night at dusk may reveal the Wolves as they tentatively venture out into the scrub from their daytime home – the only spurney for miles around.

Flexibility will be the key to this tour and, whatever time we arrive back at our cottages, we can be sure that a hearty meal, prepared by Rosa, will be waiting for us on our return each day from the wilds of this forgotten corner of Europe. It will be hard to leave!

### Day 8

#### London

Today we should have time for another excursion into the mountains for a further wildlife encounter, or a repeat visit to our favourite area, before we have to leave for the drive back to Santander in time for our direct flight back to London Stansted.

### Grading

Grade B. This tour will suit keener walkers and those prepared to put in long hours in sometimes cool conditions.

### Food & accommodation included in the price

All food and accommodation is included in the price of this holiday.

Our accommodation comprises up to 3 old farm cottages. Please note that facilities are not en suite.

  
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European Network for  
Ornithological Tourism



2004-2008

## Difficulties

- Ambitious project / objectives
- Few French groups not connected between them and with Spanish groups
- To have other countries
- To have enough businessman to create the network
- To recover the funds of some partners
- To have continuity to finish better
- Financial, administrative and legal restrictions

## Results

- More than 30 national and international presentations of the project.
- More than 100 schools and 10.000 students
- More than 200.000 visitors in the web
- More than 100 businessman formed
- More than 30 touristic products created
- Two other cooperation projects had been created

## Added value of the project

- Application of the Leader philosophy
- Technical and professional staff (LAG'S) and implication of the public target
- Monitoring and evaluation by the Secretary General of Tourism of Spain



## **Local Action Groups**

30 spanish LAGS

## **Description of the project**

### *Objectives*

The aim is to equip rural areas of planning strategic principles from participatory, cooperative and commissioning sustainable socio-economic value values of the Natura 2000 network.

### *Main actions*

- Knowledge and analysis of Tourism experiences nature observation
- Training sessions and exchange of knowledge and experience
- Defining a global strategy and developing strategic
- Territorial and global plans
- Promotion





## **Difficulties**

- It was a huge field work
- No funds for personal staff
- Not enough time to develop the plans

## **Results**

- More than 300 meetings with local businessman
- More than 15 official presentations
- 28 strategic territorial plans, 1 global plans

## **Added value of the project**

- Well sized
- Knowledge from Leader II
- Same base more partners

# The European Network for Ornithological Tourism (RETO)



## Basic pillars of the project

### *Personal:*

To have a cooperation team full time

It's necessary to have specific and stable staff with specific and stable funds

### *Building the project:*

Study the limitations of a project / of a LAG

To prepare so well the preliminary plan

Involve local actors

Links with Public Administration

Look for (good vs interesting) partners

Communication

Needing to give results to civil society

Timing

### *End of the project:*

Evaluation of the project

Sharing the knowledge

## Reflections:

Evolution of a Project in 10 years (Transnational till national Project)







## Conclusions

- **Partners from Europe at the beginning, partners from Spain at the end.** *Administrative/ bureaucracy; and legal difficulties. Different countries, different times, different mentalities...*
- **Cooperation is the way to develop the whole territory.** *Leader program is not only to give subventions.*
- **It's important to build an European mentality.** *European global vision for the citizens.*
- **We've tried to work in European Directives to develop from the territory.** *Nature 2000 Network is a tool that should be develop by Administration. Please use us! (Bottom up)*
- **Cooperation is not only a complement of Leader.** *is a real and strategic way to obtain the results of the Development Rural Program of each territory and in network.*
- **Cooperation could help to develop the territory but is not the solution to fix all problems.** *This axis contribute to develop the strategy of it.*
- **If you work hard, you have well results.** *We need a little bit money, good partners, work in network with local people, continue with the enthusiasm, being happy with our work.*



*“That’s all Folks!”*

l s b e r g®

**Thanks for your kind attention**