Project description

Background

North-west Spain’s Cantabrian mountains are home to an isolated and endangered population of capercaillie (Tetrao urogallus), which live in forests above 800 m. This population forms the south-western edge of the EU’s capercaillie distribution and survives in an area smaller than 2,000 km². Cantabrian capercaillies have suffered a serious decline in numbers during recent decades, particularly at the edges of the distribution range and at lower altitudes. The population is considered in danger of extinction according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Objectives

The LIFE Nature project’s objective is to improve the conservation status of the Cantabrian capercaillie (Tetrao urogallus cantabricus). Conservation works will target the Natura 2000 network sites that are being designated in the Cantabrian Mountains and so also benefit the birds’ habitat, as well as other allied species. Project outcomes are anticipated to improve the connectivity and functionality of the capercaillie’s habitat. A pilot phase will test the partnership approach required for implementing conservation actions across different municipality areas. This will be followed by implementation of a full, homogenous, cross-cutting project for the entire area where the species is found, combining in-situ conservation actions (e.g. habitat improvement, control of predators and competitors, non-natural mortality reduction) with ex-situ activities (a captive breeding and restocking programme). Experts, civil society and private landowners will participate via different, and at times innovative, conservation methodologies.
Expected results:
- The population decline of the Cantabrian capercaillie will be halted;
- Scientific knowledge about the species will be increased and best practices identified/published regarding habitat management for the Cantabrian capercaillie;
- Landowner participation will be secured in works to improve capercaillie habitats and traditional land use practices harmonised with the bird's conservation needs;
- The Cantabrian capercaillie will be established as a key species in SPA management along the Cantabrian mountain range and improvements made to the bird's habitat in the SPA;
- Measures will be implemented to reduce threats from competitors (such as red deer) and also pressures from predators;
- A breeding pool centre will be established, making available a captive stock of birds for release and restocking purposes;
- Opportunities will be identified for generating win-win benefits for nature conservation and rural employment through design of sustainable economic development strategies for the project area;
- Public awareness will be raised about the capercaillie and the importance/relevance of supporting its conservation.

Results

Top

Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Habitats - Grasslands

Keywords

endangered species, nature conservation, mountainous area

Target species

Tetrao urogallus

Natura 2000 sites

SPAES0000055 Fuentes del Narcea y del Ibias
SCI ES0000003 PICOS DE EUROPA
Beneficiaries:

Coordinator: Fundacion Biodiversidad
Type of organisation: NGO-Foundation
Description: The co-ordinating beneficiary, Fundación Biodiversidad, is an NGO with a mandate that includes nature conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity and international development co-operation.

Partners: Gobierno de Cantabria, Spain Fundación del Patrimonio Natural de Castilla y León, Spain Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales, Spain Gobierno del Principado de Asturias, Spain Xunta de Galicia, Spain Sociedad Española de Ornitología (Seo/BirdLife), Spain

Administrative data:

- **Project reference**: LIFE09 Nat/ES/000513
- **Duration**: 01-Oct-2010 to 30-Dec-2016
- **Total budget**: 7,028,505.00 €
- **EU contribution**: 3,509,252.00 €
- **Project location**: Castilla-León (España)
Read more:

Project web site: [Project's website](#)
Video link: "El gran gallo de los bosques cantábricos" (06')