

Birds flying in the Prado Museum

Title

Kingfishers, bustards, robins, spoonbills, eagles, vultures, falcons, hoopoes and goldfinches, among many other birds who 'fly' in the Prado Museum. Their flight has been 'captured' by the brushes of artists such as Brueghel the Old, Rubens, Bosch, Goya, Snyders or Jan Fyt. This amazing but still hardly studied artistic, scientific and naturalistic beauty is now brought to light thanks to the exhaustive research led by SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain). This extensive study has identified over 700 images of birds - representing 136 world species - from the 7,600 paintings hosted in the Madrid-based museum. 'Birds have always had such an important role in our imaginary, representing a world people never managed to conquer completely. With their amazing colours, their songs and their freedom to fly, they have been chosen as main symbols in the mythology and religion, but also in people's daily lives', commented Eduardo de Juana Aranzana, President of SEO/BirdLife. To undertake this research, the Prado Museum opened its graphic database to SEO/BirdLife experts who could analyse the paintings to identify the numerous bird species. This through study revealed the brilliant, and sometimes unrecognised talent of some painters as naturalists, unveiling perfectly detailed painted birds but also invented ones, and showing the difficulties of painting flying birds in a time where photographs still did not exist. Such study has been conducted by the biologist and teacher Joaquín Gómez Cano and has benefited from the joint technical direction of Juan Varela and Gerardo Orellana, two important artists and experts. The study has led to the publication of *Birds in the Prado Museum*, a fantastic book issued with the support of Red Electrica de España and the cooperation of this magnificent museum. You can buy the book 'Las Aves en el Museo del Prado' at SEO/BirdLife [on line shop](#), at the Museo del Prado bookshop and other bookshops. Further information: www.seo.org
