

Title Terras do Priolo (Lands of the Priolo) is the name given to a remote and beautiful area in the eastern part of the island of São Miguel in the Azores, the only place on earth in which the Endangered Azores Bullfinch, or Priolo *Pyrrhula murina*, is found. Nearly half its territory is included in protected areas. Now Terras do Priolo has been awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas by the EUROPARC Federation Council. The Charter is a practical management tool that enables all relevant stakeholders to work in partnership to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and action plan, while maintaining and improving the conservation value of the area in the long term. The Charter has currently been assigned to 107 national parks and other protected areas in 13 countries. More than 100 people have been involved in the process for Terras do Priolo, including the major tourist companies and institutions responsible for tourism or conservation. The Lands of the Priolo lie within two municipalities, Nordeste and Povoação, which have been relatively isolated from the rest of the island. This has allowed them to preserve their natural patrimony, culture and traditions. In addition to the Priolo, the area contains the most important remains of laurel forest in the Azores, and a large expanse of peatlands. These are the two main habitats being restored by the Laurel Forest Project, supported by the EU-LIFE initiative, and coordinated by SPEA, the BirdLife Partner in Portugal. A large volcano crater lake (Lagoa das Furnas), tall sea cliffs and high waterfalls complete the picture of a perfect destination for people in search of nature, tradition and calm. A plan has been produced detailing the actions to be carried out between now and 2017. This plan includes coordination and conservation measures, the promotion of hiking trails and other sustainable activities in the protected area, cultural interpretation of the heritage, promotion of the territory as a tourist destination, improving the sustainability of tourist companies, and monitoring tourism and sustainability. ?The successful implementation of this plan should certainly be a decisive step towards the conservation of the enormous natural and cultural value of the Lands of Priolo, and we can also expect important economic benefits?, declared João Bettencourt, Regional Director of Environment of the Autonomous Region of Azores. ?The plan is an excellent example for the remaining network of Protected Areas in the region and the country?, said Luis Costa, Executive Director of SPEA. ?But it is important to understand that this is just the beginning of the process. This charter is a commitment assumed by all the participants towards more sustainable tourism, and the 55 actions defined in the action plan must be fully implemented over the next five years.? Azores Bullfinch is benefiting from the [BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme](#). Since 2008, [Birdwatch Magazine](#) has been the Species Champion for Azores Bullfinch. The species was downlisted in 2010 as a direct result of the work of BirdLife Species Guardian, SPEA.