

Mediterranean IBA tourism app goes interactive

Title

BirdLife's EU-funded project to promote sustainable birdwatching tourism in the Natura 2000 protected area network is about to take a giant leap forward. A new app gives birding tourists the opportunity to plan their trips using interactive maps, species lists and access and facilities information for all the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) around the places they are intending to visit.

An early version of the app has already been available, in the form of the IberAves app for visitors to Spain and Portugal. The new Android version also covers Greece and Cyprus, and for the first time enables visitors to update the site maps with their own discoveries, such as hides and other good viewing points, trees and fields worth checking, and handy places to eat.

In 2012, SEO/BirdLife (Spain) and SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) were joined by BirdLife Cyprus and the Hellenic Ornithological Society (BirdLife in Greece) in the MediterAves project, the latest incarnation of the EU's Leonardo da Vinci Agency-funded International Project on Ornithological Tourism, which is led and implemented by the Birdlife Partnership.

All four BirdLife Partners were at this year's British Birdwatching Fair, where SEO/BirdLife shared a stand with the Institute of Tourism of Spain. The new app was demonstrated on the BirdLife International stand. BirdFair was the ideal venue to get feedback from the world's most dedicated birders, as well as major birding tour operators and professional tour leaders.

Many of the people who attended the demonstration were impressed by the ease and convenience of being able to plan their trips in such close and reliable detail from one source, said Ade Long, BirdLife's Head of Communications. Others were excited about the new interactive capabilities, which will make the app the first multi-country site guide which can be continually updated with the best of birders' own experiences.

The Mediterranean Birds App is available from

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.rai.iberianbirdsuk>

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Project Web Pages:

IPOPOT <http://www.seo.org/proyecto-ipot-mediterraves/>

Iberaves (in Spanish and English <http://www.seo.org/iberaves>)

BirdLife Cyprus <http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/en>

HOS: <http://www.ornithologiki.gr/>

SEO/BirdLife <http://www.seo.org>

SPEA <http://www.spea.pt>

European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/lip/index_en.php
