

Momentum gaining in the Mediterranean for IPOT sustainable birdwatching tourism project

Title

Partners from the International Project of Ornithological Tourism (IPOT) met for the second time on 16-18 July to discuss the development of a project that promotes sustainable birdwatching tourism- an industry that has the potential to benefit protected areas all over Europe. Originally piloted in Spain and Portugal with the *iberaves* project and designed to be expandable, the successes there (over 1,400 people downloaded the online training tool in the first two years) enabled partners to secure further funding for the expansion of the project into the Mediterranean basin.

Under the new name *Mediteraves*, the project will continue to develop well-documented training modules that are designed for professionals working in the bird tourism sector, and raise awareness of sustainable tourism. Delegates from SEO/Birdlife (Spain), SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal), BirdLife Cyprus and BirdLife International were hosted by the Hellenic Ornithological Society (BirdLife in Greece) at Lake Kerkini.

Partners discussed the development of the project in their countries, exchanged ideas and planned the setting up of pilot groups throughout the Mediterranean. **An appropriate location** Together after the meeting, participants visited the Lake Kerkini (Important Bird Area) to partake in some sustainable ornithological tourism themselves. Lake Kerkini is an Important Bird Area owing to its significance as a breeding site in Greece, and crucial refuelling point for migratory birds as the local guides pointed out. *The International Project on Ornithological Tourism (IPOT) was led by SEO/Birdlife with the Iberaves project, and consists of partners: SPEA, BirdLife Cyprus, HOS and the BirdLife International Secretariat. Partners from all countries are very grateful to the Leonardo da Vinci Agency, part of the European Lifelong Learning Programme, for funding the International Project on Ornithological Tourism, Iberaves*



and now Mediteraves.
