

# **SEO/ BirdLife in Spain receives the Spanish « Fondena » Award for its important contribution to the protection of nature**

## **Title**

Every two years, the Spanish Foundation 'Fondo para la Defensa de la Naturaleza' (Fondena) awards an organisation for its work in protecting nature. This year, and more precisely on 22 November, the Spanish king Juan Carlos delivered the Fondena Award, endowed with 40 000 euros, to SEO/ BirdLife in Spain, for its important nature conservation work on Spanish territory.

Since its creation in 1954, SEO/BirdLife celebrated lots of success-stories in the protection of nature and biodiversity in Spain. In 1969, thanks to SEO/BirdLife's efforts, the National Park Donana became a reality, followed by the Monfrague Park in 1977. SEO/BirdLife also took the initiative to call on the European Union several times, to press Spain to take effective action to protect the environment and the species it shelters.

The results have been numerous: in 1993, the European Court of Justice ordered Spain to put in place necessary actions to protect marine species; in 2005 it ordered Spain to stop the Royal Court Hunting; and in 2007 Spain was requested to work more actively on designating sites rich in biodiversity. SEO/BirdLife has been working for a long time on the recognition of important natural sites, also called Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Important Birds Areas (IBAs).

Already in 1990, the organisation published its first inventory of Spanish IBAs. Fortunately, this huge amount of work has again been crowned with success: in October, the Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs published a proposal designating 41 out of the 44 Spanish marine Important Birds Areas censused by SEO/BirdLife. 3 have been left aside but only because their limits extended beyond Spanish waters. The 41 sites will represent the first complete national network of Marine SPAs in Europe.

This valuable work developed by SEO/BirdLife, in the designation of marine and terrestrial IBA's, is what the Fontena Award has rewarded a few weeks ago. *As the new Executive Director of SEO/BirdLife, it is an honour to receive the Fontena Award, rewarding the labour that SEO/BirdLife has produced for over more than 50 years. This award is rewarding the work done by all our members, working groups, sympathizers, collaborators, volunteers and employees. All of them permitted SEO/BirdLife not only to be the oldest organisation of conservation of nature in Spain, but also to be one of the main organisations in the country?* said Asuncion Ruiz, Executive Director of SEO/BirdLife. SEO/BirdLife in Spain has more than 12000 members and 7000 volunteers. Its national Office is based in Madrid and it has 8 other offices spread all over the country. Its network is composed of 38 local groups of volunteers mobilises one billion of sympathizers that participate regularly and enthusiastically to SEO/BirdLife's educative events, and support SEO's campaigns for the protection of nature.

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