SEO/BirdLife in Spain presents the first ?Atlas of Birds in Winter?

Title

Three years of fieldwork, including more than 70,000 kilometres of walked surveying and 30,000 hours of sampling highlight the effort behind the preparation of the Atlas of Birds in Winter in Spain (2007-2010). The study, presented in May by SEO (BirdLife in Spain) is a reference work, which fills an important gap in the study of Spain's bird fauna, and places the country at the highest level of ornithological study, as only a small number of countries have carried out similar studies. The compilation of the atlas has involved over 2,600 fieldworkers and ornithologists coming from different bird monitoring programmes. The study is illustrated with sketches by the artist and biologist Juan Varela (finalist in BBC Wildlife Artist of the Year 2013), produced with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment and published thanks to the National Parks Service. Included in its 820 pages there are up-to-date data on 407 species, of which 238 are listed as 'common' and a further 76 whose presence is 'scarce' or 'occasional'. Finally, 34 are considered as rarities and 59 are non-native species. This study sheds important new light on the distribution of birds in Spain. For example, it has been confirmed that geographical differences in land use are a more important factor in explaining winter bird distribution than differences in climate. Areas with a greater variety of habitats are those with the highest species richness in winter. *"What we present today is not just an atlas, because it's important to remember that the EU recognises the healthy state of wild bird populations as a key indicator of our quality of life. For that reason, looking after birds is looking after ourselves, because the environment and the natural world is our real richness"* stated Asunción Ruiz, Chief Executive of SEO/BirdLife. The atlas will from now on be regarded as a key reference point for new ornithological studies and an essential tool for the management of protected areas and the conservation of biodiversity. Furthermore, the recorded changes in short- and long-term distribution of birds give key clues to the possible effects of global change and other factors, such as land-use change, farming activity and other human pressures. The *Atlas of Birds in Winter in Spain (2007-2010)* can be ordered online from SEO/BirdLife website (in Spanish). For more information: please contact Juan Carlos del Moral, Head of Bird Monitoring at SEO/BirdLife