



Natura 2000 Network Handbook for journalists





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INTRODUCTION



MORE THAN NATURAL RESERVES

By Pía Bucella

The LIFE + Project Natura 2000: connecting people with biodiversity aims at contributing to the effective implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives and promote a better understanding and protection of biodiversity as a whole.

Together with the LIFE instrument, these Directives have been the EU's key instruments for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity over the past two decades. Thanks to the Habitats Directive, our knowledge of the status and management needs of species and habitats in Europe, and our capacity for action has greatly increased. It has also allowed for increased funding for nature conservation for example using EU agriculture and cohesion funds.

The greatest contribution of the Habitats Directive has been the creation of Natura 2000, the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, which includes over 27,000 sites covering almost a fifth of the EU's land territory. In Spain, more than 1700 Natura 2000 sites have been designated. With more than one fourth of its land territory included under the Natura 2000 network, Spain is the Member State that provides a larger total surface to the network. This is an evidence of the rich biodiversity of this country, which is a real biodiversity 'hotspot' in the EU and in the world.

Natura 2000 is much more than nature reserves. It's about people and nature, because it ensures that conservation and sustainable use go hand in hand with benefits to local citizens and the wider economy. It also provides new opportunities for sustainable development, such as recreation and tourism. Natura 2000 has brought new ways of collaboration between local and public authorities, nature conservation organisations, land owners and users and has generated new ways to work with people.

But despite the important success achieved, the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive is still a work in progress. Much remains to be done before all species and habitats of EU conservation concern enjoy favourable conservation status. At EU level, only 17 % of the species and habitats listed in the Habitats Directive have attained that goal. The key challenge is currently to ensure that the Natura 2000 sites are effectively managed and restored. Likewise, protection of areas must also cover offshore marine environment where further efforts must be done.



Full and effective implementation of the nature Directives is one of the main pillars of the EU's 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, our plan to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services by 2020.

If we are to achieve these objectives, we need to provide the right policy framework and incentives for those who own and manage Nature 2000 sites, so that they are rewarded for the services they provide. Furthermore, we need to ensure that national and EU policies like transport, energy, agriculture, forestry and land-use fully embrace the protection requirements of Natura 2000 and wider biodiversity.

Investing in Natura 2000 is also about investing in our own future. Natura 2000 sites provide us with vital services such as carbon storage, flood conveyance, water quality maintenance. The services provided by the network are estimated to be worth around €200–300 billion per year. This is many times more than the cost of managing the network, estimated at less than 6 billion € per year. The Natura 2000 network constitutes a natural wealth. We all are responsible of conserving and enhancing it.

However, too few people in Europe and in Spain know about Natura 2000 and its values. One of the key actions of the EU biodiversity Strategy is therefore to enhance public awareness and communication about Natura 2000. I hope that this LIFE project will contribute to this objective and wish it all the best success in connecting people with biodiversity and Natura 2000.

Pía Bucella is Natural Capital Director of the European Commission.



INTRODUCTION



OUR REAL WEALTH

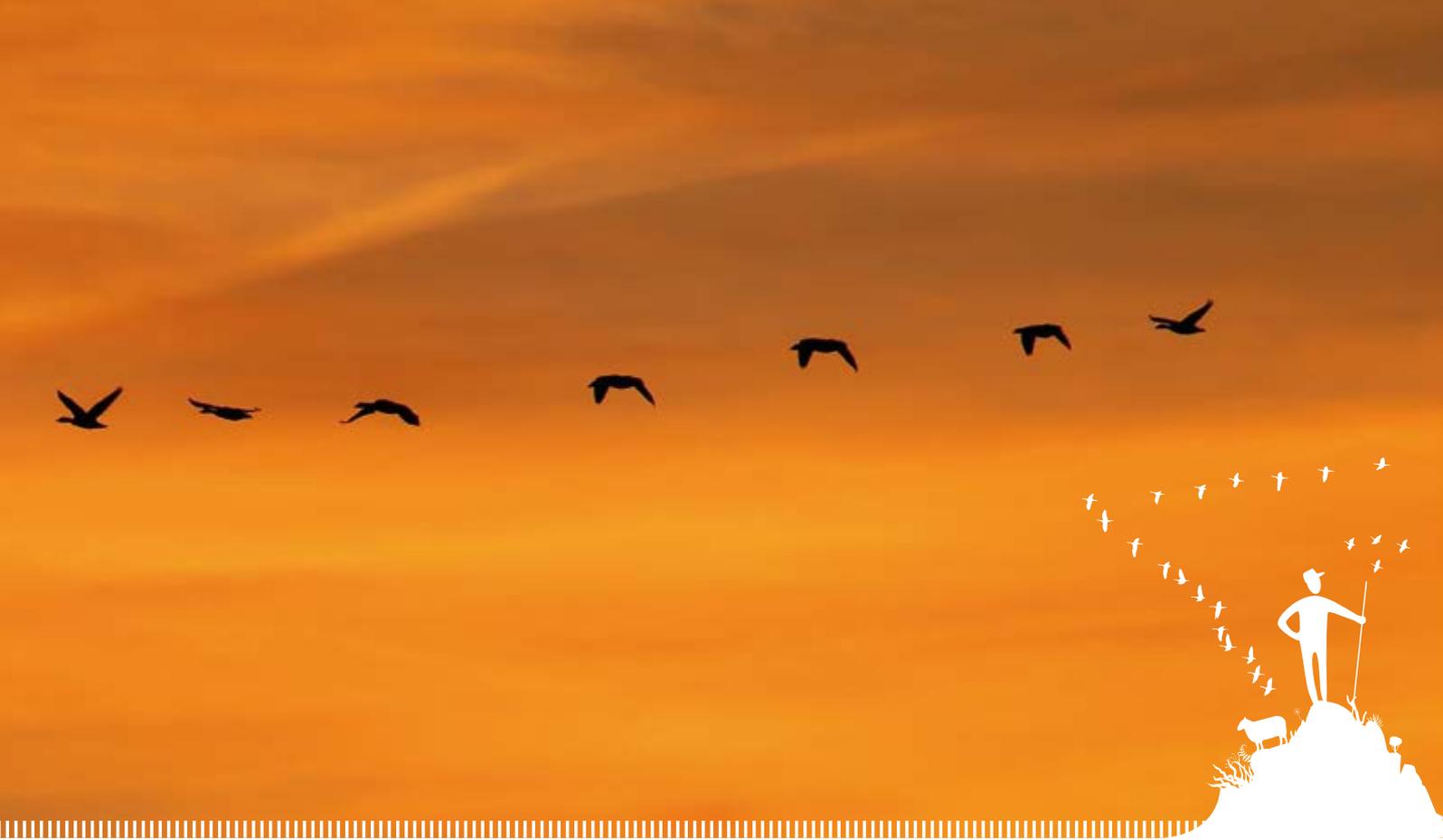
By Asun Ruiz

You cannot conserve what you do not know. This slogan has driven SEO/BirdLife's work since its foundation in 1954. For decades, that necessary knowledge has driven and served as the basis for the actions that our NGO has undertaken to defend, restore and disseminate knowledge on some of the most valuable sites in our territory. One of the first of those was Doñana, an initial battlefield where we fought to stop the destruction of a heritage that belongs to all citizens.

It was there, near the Guadalquivir wetlands, towards mid-XX century that the Spanish Society for Ornithology was shaped and where a new kind of europeism was born, too: that of peoples from all countries -scientifics, academics, naturalists, common citizens- that took action to make sure one of the natural paradises in the continent didn't dry up. Doñana was a wintering spot for dozens of thousands of European birds and what happened there regarded the whole continent. In this way, before the European Union was born, before the environment reached political agendas and before conservationism exploded as a social movement in every country of Europe, Doñana served to bring about a primitive form of Europe-wide movement behind the flag of nature conservation. SEO/BirdLife was there.

Much has changed in the landscape since then. After 60 years the EU is a 28 member state reality, environmental policy is basic for states and Europe has granted itself a protected area network that is the largest in the world: over 26.000 sites and one million square kilometres form the Natura 2000 Network.

However, despite these improvements, there is still a long way to go before we achieve a favourable conservation condition for our natural environment. We must return to the "to know in order to conserve" slogan. It is not very useful to have a Natura 2000 Network if, as surveys say, hardly 10 per cent of Europeans know of its existence and meaning. For this reason we must insist on the fact that only what is known can be conserved. The Natura 2000 Network will not be totally safe until it lives in the heart of each and everyone of us, until all us, citizens, are aware of the enormous treasure we have in our hands and we fight to avoid losing it.



The publication you have in your hands is part of the effort of SEO/BirdLife to publicize the importance of the Natura 2000 Network and to raise public awareness of its conservation. This is about making the most of our true wealth. With the Life+ Activate your true wealth. Red Natura 2000 project we want to make Spanish and European societies see that we are rich in biodiversity and that caring for and respecting that great natural asset is the best guarantee for seeing any crisis through.

Lastly, as SEO/BirdLife Director, I cannot fail to underline the importance that birds have had in the designation processes of the Natura 2000 Network and in the overall protection of natural heritage. The Natura 2000 Network was founded under two great European directives: the Habitats Directive, of 1992, and the Birds Directive, of 1979, as a result of which thousands of Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs) have been created.

It is no coincidence that this type of fauna has deserved a specific directive. Birds are a great indicator of the quality of ecosystems and, because of their ubiquity and mobility, they react quickly to alterations in the environment. So they are a thermometer for environmental changes and also act as a shield for the rest of biodiversity: when you protect birds you conserve the rest of elements that surround them, too.

In fact it has been shown that the most important areas for birds in the whole world -identified by BirdLife International and known as IBAs (Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas)- contain up to 80 per cent of the rest of world biodiversity. Our intention is to make the Natura 2000 Network succeed protecting all IBAs -including marine ones- that SEO/BirdLife has helped identify, many of which still lack legal protection.

SEO/BirdLife is a scientific and conservation organization devoted, for 60 years now, to the study, conservation and dissemination of knowledge on birds and nature. Through BirdLife International it is present in 121 countries, working towards a world rich in biodiversity where man and nature can coexist in harmony.

Asunción Ruiz is Executive Director of SEO/BirdLife.



INTRODUCTION

THE LARGEST COORDINATED NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS IN THE WORLD



Over 27.000 natural sites of high ecological value all over Europe are part of the Natura 2000 Network. With a total surface of nearly one million square kilometres, it is the largest network of conservation areas in the world. Nearly 30 per cent of the Spanish territory is included in it, which gives a clear idea of the great wealth of our country in terms of nature and biodiversity. With 1.858 sites (December 2014), Spain is the state that contributes the most to the network: 14 per cent of the total.

The Natura 2000 Network takes into account that the European landscape has been intervened by human beings for thousands of years and that the biodiversity they host is the result of cultural and historic interaction between man and nature. (ojo - albergan / son fruto fallo de concordancia en el original). That is why the network

does not propose the creation of strict nature reserves where human activities are excluded but fosters a kind of nature conservation goes hand in hand with the obtaining of benefits for the population and the economy at large. Far from being an obstacle to socioeconomic development, the Natura 2000 Network offers new opportunities for the development of traditional productive activities, recreational activities and tourism.

The need to preserve these sites in favourable condition is obvious. The European Commission estimates that the Natura 2000 Network renders European citizens vital services like the carbon sequestration, the maintenance of the quality of water or protection against floods or droughts for a value of 200.000-300.000 million euros.



Legal status

The Natura 2000 Network was born as such in 1992 and it includes sites designated under two key European laws: the Birds Directive, whose first version is from 1979 and the last from 2009, and the Habitats Directive, from 1992. It includes different types of sites:

- Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) are places that host natural habitats or species of particular value at a EU level. These sites are designated according to the Habitats Directive. The SCIs change their name to Special Conservation Areas (SCAs) once they have been official designated by member states and their management plans approved.
- The Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) are places that host wild bird species to be conserved in the European Union. SPAs are designated under the Birds Directive.

Both SCIs and SPAs can be land or marine areas, although the marine network is still much less developed than the land network.

The protection of these areas aims at guaranteeing the survival in the long term of the most valuable and endangered species and habitats. In order to achieve this, member states of the European Union must take the due measures to maintain a favourable conservation condition, such as the approval of specific management plans. These management plans are essential to get to know the conservation condition of our natural wealth and to maintain or improve it, as well as to ascertain the necessary funding for it.

In Spain about 24 per cent of Natura 2000 Network sites are being managed with a specific management plan, despite the fact that all sites should have had a plan approved before 2011, according to Law 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity.

In spite of the importance of the Natura 2000 Network, there is a general lack of knowledge of it in European society. The percentage of Europeans that can say that they know its name and what it stands for verges on 10 per cent.



INTRODUCTION

LIFE+ NATURA 2000: CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH BIODIVERSITY

The Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity calls society to action so that it gets to know and becomes involved in the conservation of the Natura 2000 Network. 80 per cent of Spanish citizens live in a place that hosts a Natura 2000 Network site, but in spite of its significance and geographical closeness, the Natura 2000 Network is not very well known by society. Several surveys show that only 10 per cent of Europeans know what it is. The rest have heard of it or know the name but could not explain what it is.

The Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity aims at increasing that knowledge and bridging the information breach. That is why between 2013 and 2017 very many actions will be undertaken in different realms in order to bring the Natura 2000 Network closer to Spanish society and to get society involved in its conservation.

SEO/BirdLife and EFE news agency develop this project, supported by the European Union. The co-funders are the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment of Spain, the Biodiversidad Foundation, *Red Eléctrica Española* and the autonomous communities of *Andalucía, Castilla y León, País Vasco, Navarra, Baleares, Castilla-La Mancha, Madrid* and *Cantabria*.

www.activarednatura2000.org



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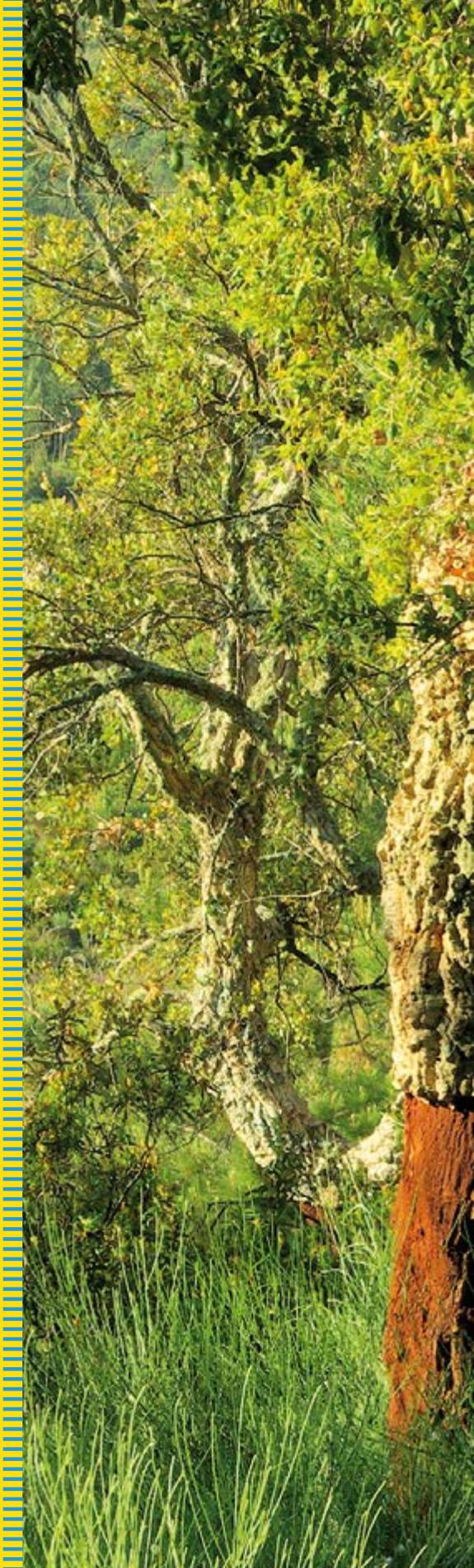
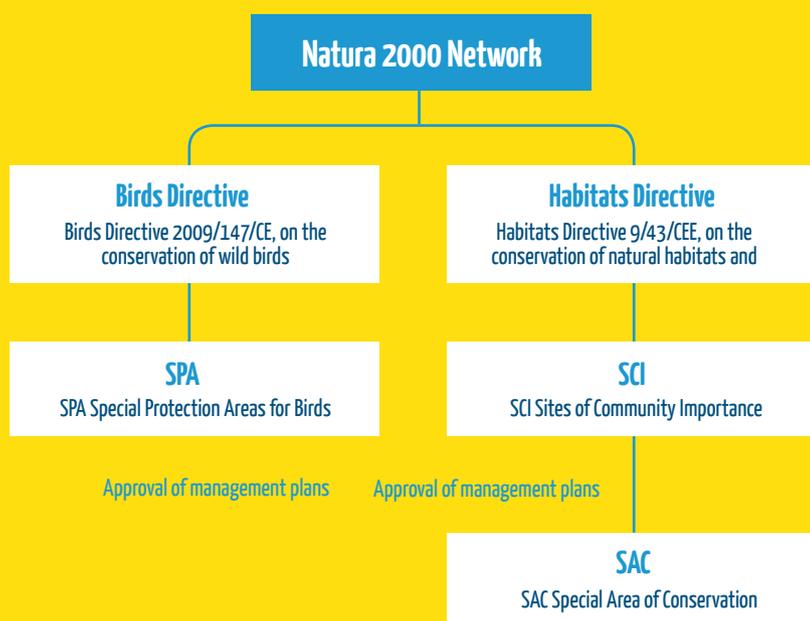


What is the Natura 2000 Network?

It is a Europe-wide network of protected natural areas of high ecological value with common objectives. This is the initiative of the European Union to conserve its most special biodiversity.

It is underpinned by two community Directives:

- The European Birds Directive (2009/147/CE), that brought into existence the Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs), whose main objective is to conserve and manage wild bird populations. The first version of the Birds Directive is from 1979 (79/409/CEE).
- The European Habitats Directive (92/43/CEE), that establishes Sites of Community Importance (SCIs). In Spain, these will be renamed as Special Conservation Areas (SCAs) once their management plan has been approved. Its objective is the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna.





Which extension is Spain's contribution to the Natura 2000 Network?

The Natura 2000 Network is composed by 1.461 SCIs (some of them already designated as SACs) and 634 SPAs. In total, it comprises 1.858 sites (some sites are designated both as a SCI and a SPA) that amount approximately to 27% of the Spanish territory (204.000 km²). Out of those, almost 138.000 km² are land sites and 66.000 km² are marine sites, according to data extracted on 30th September 2014 from the official database of the Natura 2000 Network in Spain (CNTRYES).

Spain is the European Union country with the largest Natura 2000 Network surface. This is due to a combination of factors that make it one of the European countries with a richer biodiversity:

- Spain is the second largest country in Europe, after France.
- Spain boasts a marine territory that verges on the million square kilometres, adding up the Atlantic ocean, the Cantabric sea and the Mediterranean sea coasts.
- The geographical situation of the Iberian peninsula has favoured its being a shelter area for flora and fauna during the most recent glacial periods.
- Its location, as a sort of bridge to the African continent, favours the passage and regular presence of many migratory species.
- Four of the nine biogeographical regions existing in Europe can be found in Spain: Mediterranean, Macaronesian, Atlantic and Alpine.

Which are the objectives of the Natura 2000 Network?

Ensuring the conservation of European biodiversity, both species and habitats. The network is the main conservation tool in the EU and, at the same time is an opportunity for fostering sustainable development of the human populations more closely linked with it, fostering a balance between social and economic activities and nature with a view to improving the quality of life of those populations.

Management of the Natura 2000 Network

Each member state must:

- lay down the necessary conservation measures.
- adopt measures to deter the degradation of natural habitats and key species habitats.
- carry out an evaluation of any project and plan that could affect the Natura 2000 Network and bar them if they could have negative effects on conservation objectives. However, there is a very strict exceptions regime for authorizing projects that may have an effect.

Who will manage the Natura 2000 Network in Spain?

The Spanish state is solely accountable to the European Union as regards the correct management, conservation and restoration if necessary of the Network. However, due to the particularities of our administrative divisions, it is the autonomous communities who have the powers and responsibility of managing the land, and hence the Natura 2000 Network. It is them who are in charge of drafting and agreeing upon the management plans as well as implementing them. That is with the exception of marine sites that have no ecological continuity with a land site, where it is the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment (MAGRAMA) that has powers.



What are the management plans?

In Spain, each site must have a management plan or tool that establishes which are the conservation objectives and the appropriate measures for keeping it in a favourable conservation status.

Who must approve the management plans?

It must be the autonomous communities who create the management plans through social participation and public surveys, except in the case of marine sites that have no ecological continuity with a land site, in which case it's government that has powers. It must be an open and participative process in which all social and economic sectors involved can defend their interests and needs.

Which projects must be evaluated before being developed in a Natura 2000 Network site?

Any that can affect species or habitats included in Natura 2000 Network, even if they are outside a Natura 2000 site. For example, transport and water infrastructures, new real estate developments or changes in use of large areas.

Are there farming, agricultural, forestry or fishing traditional activities that will be banned within the Natura 2000 Network?

As long as this does not hinder the conservation status of the habitats and species of the site, with reference to the conservation objectives of that space, this activity will not be affected. In fact, it could even receive economic support for its continuation if its specially beneficial for the natural environment.

It is the management plan of each site, approved by social consensus, that will establish which activities can or cannot be carried out.

What will happen if any activity should cease in order to guarantee the conservation of any species or habitat?

In case someone working in farming, agriculture or forestry has to stop partly or totally their traditional activity, in some cases they could even be compensated by the public authorities for the reduction in income, that is, for the ceasing of the activity.

Is property loss possible if it falls within the Natura 2000 Network?

No. The Natura 2000 Network does not change property status. It could put a limit to some uses if they are not compatible with the sustainable management of the territory. At the same time, it will promote other, new uses that will help rural development.

Do you receive funding from the European Union for being within the Natura 2000 Network?

No funding is received for the simple fact of having a property within this network. Some funding from public administrations could be received for the development of a project that helps achieving the objectives of the network: the conservation, improvement, recovery or restoration of natural habitats included in the two directives that form the basis of the Natura 2000 Network.

Which benefits could be obtained by a town, or specifically a cattle or land farmer, for being within the Natura 2000 Network?

The policies of the European Union will particularly favour those areas that are within the Natura 2000 Network. So, the production of biological or special foodstuffs, ecological tourism, the maintenance of land or cattle farming methods that are beneficial for the conservation of species or environmental education activities will have the opportunity of benefiting from funding. Likewise, the LIFE funds will show preference for those areas within the Natura 2000 Network.

Who must inform about the possible aids or legal constraints for those that undertake an activity within the Natura 2000 Network?

It is the official bodies of each autonomous communities who must give all information regarding the Natura 2000 Network: the environment or rural development departments, in the first place, and other sectors secondarily (industry, environmental quality, etc.)

The Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with Biodiversity project has set up a toll free phone number to give information in this respect **900 667 790**.

How much does the management of the Natura 2000 Network cost?

The Spanish government has estimated the investment need for the correct management of the Natura 2000 Network in 1.000 million euros per year. The European Commission, back in 2010, estimated the cost of managing the network in 5.800 million euros per year.

How will this investment be paid for?

There is no specific European financing tool for the management of the Natura 2000 Network, but it will receive investment coming from different European funds: rural development funds FEADER and FEDER, fisheries funds or LIFE funds, for example. That is, the fishing, agricultural, forestry or rural development policies will be embedded with environmental values and must seriously take into account, when investing money, whether a territory is within the Natura 2000 Network.

In this way, belonging to the network can mean an advantage over areas outside it.

The percentage of investment that each country must make will vary in each case according to the objectives and the assigned European funds.

Which benefits does the Natura 2000 bring?

200.000-300.000 millions euros per year. The EU itself considers this estimate conservative, as only a subset of environmental services has been evaluated, such as carbon sequestration, the provision and purification of water, the prevention of natural disasters and the possibilities for developing tourism and leisure activities, among others. If we didn't have natural ecosystems to render these services to us, we would have to pay for them: water, oxygen, landscape, etc. That would cost us between 200.000 and 300.000 million euros per year.

Is it profitable to invest in the Natura 2000 Network?

If we take into account that correctly managing Natura 2000 in the whole of the EU would cost us 5.800 million euros per year and that it yields 300.000 million euros value per year, it's a highly profitable investment. Besides, we must take into account the enormous investment required for trying to restore a habitat once it has deteriorated. That is why it is much more practical to opt for preventive conservation than to have to remedy the losses later.

Who benefits the most from a sustainable management of the resources of Natura 2000?

The society at large benefits from it, but the populations and persons living within the network benefit even more directly: those who use its natural resources, those who live in a natural environment that is a synonym for health and wellbeing or those who may suffer the effects of natural disasters, as great floods, due to an unsustainable use of the territory.





A WORKSHOP TO CONSULT THE SPECIALISTS

By Pedro Cáceres, Director for Comunicación of SEO/BirdLife

On 13 december 2013 SEO/BirdLife, EFE news agency and the Association of Environmental Information Journalists (APIA) held the workshop “Communicating the Natura 2000 Network”, a working day aimed at finding keys to better publicize the Natura 2000 Network. The workshop was one of the actions taken in the framework of the Life+ Connecting people with Biodiversity, coordinated by SEO/BirdLife and EFE news agency.

Attendants to the workshop “Communicating the Natura 2000 Network” were journalists and other communication professionals, mostly specialized in the environment and science. The working day was held at the International Centre for the Press, in Madrid, and it served as the final act of the X Conference on Environmental Journalism that APIA had organized. The delegates of the X Conference were invited to participate and take a previous survey on the Natura 2000 Network and then their answers and comments were used as working material for the workshop.

The meeting had a double objective. On the one hand, it was about reflecting on the causes of the lack of knowledge on the network that we observe in the majority of society. On the other, it was about identifying communication strategies to allow journalists to better publicize the Natura 2000 Network.



The workshop was of a practical nature and was open to the full participation of the attendants. It was a dynamic working session during which a group of journalism professionals exposed their particular take on the question and later worked with the workshop attendants to try to define two issues: the causes of the lack of knowledge of the Natura 2000 Network among citizens and what are the keys to start reverting this situation. The meeting was led by the experts of ARC Environmental Mediation.

The session had several phases that allowed for smaller groups to meet up to debate and reflect upon these questions. Each of these working teams drafted a series of proposals that were later taken to plenary discussion. At the end a series of recommendations were registered. Those may act as a guide, as a decalogue to help improving the way the Natura 2000 Network is publicized. It was a very stimulating task to organize and take part in this meeting. As many of my colleagues, I agree that the Natura 2000 Network is one of the most ambitious environment conservation initiatives ever undertaken, but that up to now it has not been possible to make public at large aware of the dimension of this EU project to protect its habitats and species. The causes of this are many and complex. The Natura 2000 Network has great strengths but also some weaknesses that hinder its adequate communication.

The following pages record the initial analyses exposed by guest speakers, as well as the ensuing discussion with the specialized public in the room and the conclusions of the meeting. I do hope that this publication is useful for any communication professional who wishes to deal with questions related to the Natura 2000 Network. Of course, it does not aspire at giving magical solutions but it does provide some starting points for reflection that may help along the way.



**PARQUE
NACIONAL**



A FRUITFUL DAY

By Clara Navío, APIA

One of the clearest conclusions of the survey undertaken by SEO/BirdLife among the delegates of the X Conference on Environmental Journalism (that was organised by the Association of Environmental Journalists) is that the Natura 2000 Network does not receive in Spanish media the attention it deserves. In other words, the natural heritage of this country –the most significant in Europe- is not part of the continuous (or even discontinuous) flow of information that the media offer to Spanish society. According to this very survey, the three main reasons for this are: a lack of the kind of information of interest to the media, a lack of interest in communicating on the part of the agents directly involved and a lack of interest on the part of the general public.

It is not a very encouraging scenario, there is no point in denying it... However, the information that the survey yielded was fundamental later when organising and holding the workshop Communicating the Natura 2000 Network, the conclusions of which are in this book. The objective was precisely finding out why the majority of society knows practically nothing about the Natura 2000 Network and, once the diagnosis had been done, looking for formulas to make it easier and more appealing for journalists to approach this type of stories. All with a view to promoting

a deeper knowledge of the natural wealth of our country among citizens. To begin with, the data obtained made it clear that, if we were to organise an activity aimed at finding out which could be the way to improve communication about the Natura 2000 Network -that is, increasing its presence in the media and bettering the knowledge that environmental journalists themselves have of this network of conservation areas- the formula was to be no other than a meeting. A meeting where a number of experts would, one by one, expose what to them was obvious and then let delegates do with that barrage of information whatever they could and would.

On the other hand, it was necessary to devise a very dynamic activity that allowed the pooling of all the doubts, shortcomings and difficulties but also proposals, ideas, needs, etc. exposed by the delegates, so that a useful roadmap for publicising the Natura 2000 Network could be created out of all those contributions. A working day, to put it shortly. That was the format finally chosen: a workshop led by a facilitator that helped make the most of this meeting of communicators.

But before the workshop on communication was actually held, we needed to reflect on the subject. A personal and inevitable moment of reflection to elaborate their contributions was the starting point for all the environmental journalists who acted as speakers, being as they are actors in the information process and those who the survey refers to. An inevitable and very healthy moment of reflection, too, because it made us confront our own knowledge –in terms of quality and quantity- of what the Natura 2000 Network is. But also to confront the reasons why ourselves, information professionals, are more or less interested in it, more or less attracted by things related to the Natura 2000 Network as a realm where to search for themes for news items, stories, articles, etc.

Once more, the working environment of the environmental journalist was also analyzed. These are journalists that work in media and live with the difficulty of “selling” certain themes to their bosses, who have the responsibility of deciding what is news and what isn't. Bosses whose knowledge of the subjects the journalist deals with is, often, not very deep - something that leads them to make an evaluation not always correct of terms and matters that are frequently complex. The Natura 2000 Network is one of those subjects.



The public, readers, television viewers, listeners... the society at large, in a word, is also part of the journalist's environment. Moreover, he has a duty to the public and its right to information. That is why the concept of audience was very present first in the phase of reflection and later in the brainstorming phase. Because the public, or readers to put it shortly, is very diverse and each one must know who one is addressing when providing content of a more or less popular nature, more or less specialised nature, more or less detailed, etc.

The characteristics of the Natura 2000 Network itself, its strengths and weaknesses, were not left out of this analysis, either. There was no room for complacency or compromises and it could be said that everyone "got some stick". That is why, after pooling of all that seeming chaos, the roadmap that emerged (those 13 points selected as the optimal method to reach the goal of better publicising the great network of protected areas comprised by the Natura 2000 Network) actually allotted tasks to everyone who is in any way involved in either the management or the dissemination of information about the network.

In the pages that follow the content of a whole working day has been compiled and organised: the presentations given, the ensuing debate and the conclusions reached. I have absolutely no doubt, as the President of APIA, that for us environmental journalists it was a very positive

meeting. We found in it the ideal conditions for fostering the debate on the environment, establishing a dialogue with the sources of information and promoting the capacity building of the professionals in environmental journalism – all three of them among the priority objectives of our association.

Cooperating with other organizations in order to achieve these objectives is part of our everyday tasks. That is why working hand in hand with SEO/BirdLife in the organising and running of this workshop has, simply, come quite naturally.







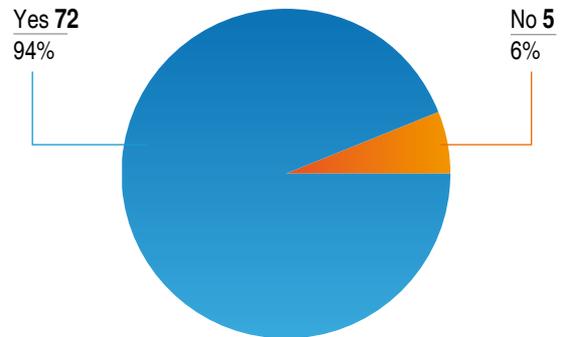
THE GENERAL PUBLIC OPINION / PREVIOUS SURVEY

A previous survey among journalists was carried out in preparation of the workshop on communicating Natura 2000 Network that was organized by SEO/BirdLife and EFE news agency with the cooperation of the Association of Environmental Information Journalists (APIA). Those were asked to answer a few questions on the Natura 2000 Network. The survey was made public during the X Conference on Environmental Journalism held by APIA in November 2013 and it remained online for several weeks, until 13 December, when the workshop took place. The results of the survey and the comments made by all those who took part in it became part of the material used in the workshop for generating debate.

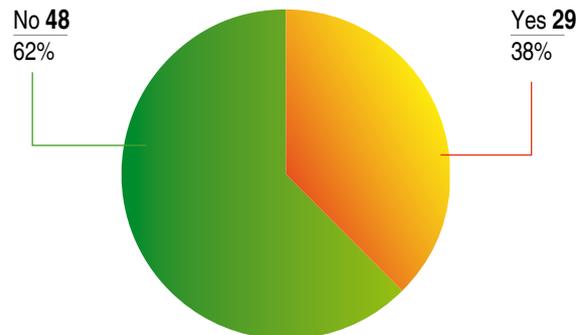


These are the questions put, which were then answered by 77 journalism professionals. The results are shown below.

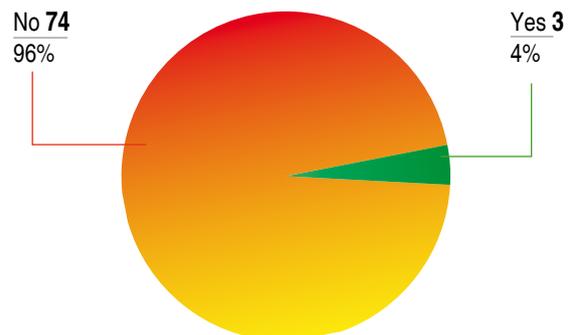
1. Do you know what the Natura 2000 Network is?



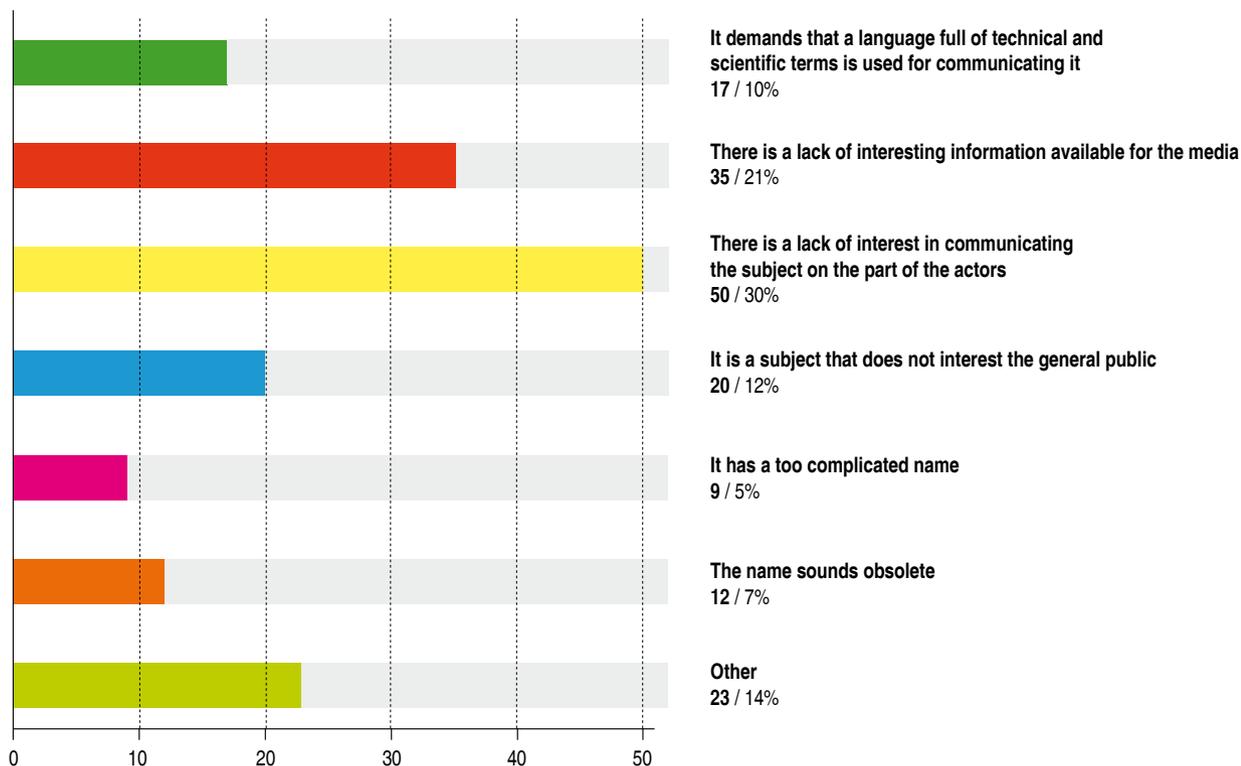
2. Do you think there are good information sources on the Natura 2000 Network?



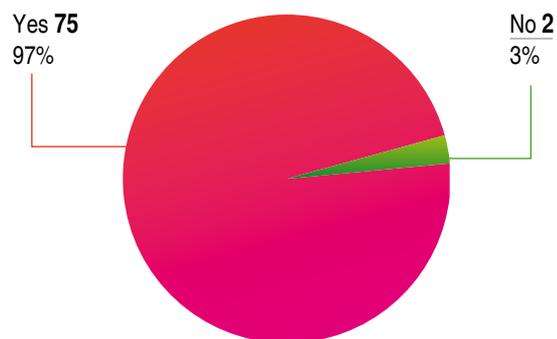
3. Do you think that the Natura 2000 Network gets the attention it deserves from the media in Spain?



4. What do you think are the reasons that the Natura 2000 Network does not have enough presence in media?



5. Should the presence of the Natura 2000 Network in the media be improved?



THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK, A DIFFUSE AND OBSOLETE CONCEPT



Araceli Acosta

Editor at ABC newspaper and coordinator of ABC's Natural supplement

She joined ABC in 1997 and, since 2001, she is responsible for environmental information in that newspaper. She coordinates the ABC Natural supplement and organises the ABC Natural discussion forums. In 2011 she was awarded the Fundación BBVA prize to Knowledge Dissemination and Awareness Raising for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Spain.

When I was invited to take part in this workshop, the first thing I did was a search in the digital archives of ABC with my name and the words "Natura Network". I did not include "2000" to filter out thousands of entries... Frankly, I did expect a "Sorry, no results found". I have to acknowledge, sorry about that, that I don't remember having ever given much attention to this concept. But 30 per cent of our territory belongs to that network and that percentage is much higher if we take into account simply our country's conservation areas. As in most cases, good news is no news. What is common, it's often no news either.



But let's return to my search in the paper's digital archive. Despite my initial pessimism, the search surprised me by returning five results. However, an analysis of those five articles made me feel pessimistic again and agree with the premise of this workshop – we need to reflect on the causes of the lack of knowledge of this network.

Out of these five articles, one -from 2007- deals with how the legal status of the network was reflected in our Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Law, where habitats -as opposed to just certain areas and species- are protected in their own right for the first time in Spanish law. Another one from 2009 reported on the finding of a dozen of new species in the waters of the Canary Islands, in the framework of a project aimed at identifying areas that, due to their ecological importance, could become protected marine sites. The idea was to support with scientific information their inclusion in the Natura 2000 Network. The other three, all from 2003, dealt with the controversial design of the Ebro river water transfer included in the Spanish National Hydrological Plan.



Precisely these examples give us an idea of the difficulty of putting the Natura 2000 Network concept across to the readers. To begin with, it is a diffuse concept that encompasses too many things and where different levels of protection (National Parks, Natural Parks, Protected Sites, Regional Parks, Biosphere Reserves, etc.) overlap. The matter becomes even more complex if we start talking about SCIs, SCAs and SPAs, so you end up talking about protected sites or places of interest in general because you cannot go into all the acronyms or explain the differences between them.

In the second place, the fact that the concept appears in stories about the design of the river Ebro water transfer also gives us a clue that it is a very common type of protection status. We must acknowledge that the territory involved in the transfer was quite large -it spanned more than 900 kilometres- but also that there are many areas within the Natura Network. As I said earlier, if something is usual and common it is more difficult to make it news material.

In the third place, another key I have spotted when it comes to informing about the Natura 2000 Network is that, due precisely to their scarcity, marine sites are more easily communicated than land sites. The cause lies in that there are many less marine sites in the network. Also in that there is less overlapping of protection statuses – derived from the sad fact that our seas enjoy a much lower level of protection than our land territory. In Spain there are 1.982 land areas and 108 marine areas within the Natura 2000 Network.

“It is necessary to get on the field and put a face to the Natura Network, to communicate it in positive terms, to emphasize its European character and to think outside the box to make it news material.”

I have only made reference to the articles written by me but logically ABC has published many others that mention the Natura 2000 Network. However, normally these mentions boil down to stating that a certain site belongs to the Natura 2000 Network. In other cases, the information is based on statements of persons interested in underlining the financial needs of the network or in singing its praises, which shows the apprehension with which this initiative is still faced, probably because of a lack of knowledge. So we find headlines along these lines: "The Natura 2000 Network seeks European co-funding" or "The financial needs of the Natura 2000 Network are not yet met". The latter is the headline of an interview with the State Secretary for the Environment, Federico Ramos. We also find a story regarding the Extremadura region with this headline: "Monago defends the Natura Network as an opportunity". That is, the virtues of the Natura Network are constantly emphasized and its existence justified, which is proof of the suspicion I talked about earlier. On the other hand, and this supports what I stated above, is easier to talk about -and in positive terms- the marine sites of the network. Some examples of headlines are: "Spain will propose to the EU another 50 new sites to be included in the marine Natura 2000 Network " or "New sites of high value for the marine Natura 2000 Network identified". The tone and interest of this information is clearly different from what we saw before.

I talk about misgivings about the Natura 2000 Network and it goes without saying that this is just my impression, but I feel that not even journalists believe in it. Not even some of us that have been doing environmental information for years. I don't know what is the reason for this but I do know that in all these years (15 already) writing for ABC, I have only written a few articles that made reference to this network but I have written hundreds on several of the sites within it - without mentioning the network, though. I normally underline other types of protection, as that of National Park, because in Spain there are only 15, or Biosphere Reserve or World Heritage, which are all more restrictive statuses. Something similar happens to me with the wetlands and the Ramsar convention: there are so many sites included in this international lists (almost 50) that it is not something I usually emphasize when I talk about them.

I am not sure if that is the reason or it is that network is a type of protection status that is still not ripe and needs more time. At the end of the day, the National Parks network already has 100 years of history behind it: the first law on National Parks was passed in 1916. I have written about each and every National Park and have never mentioned that they belong to the Natura 2000 Network.

I think that the fact that the site designation process has taken so long and that there are no management plans does not help at all, either. Even "Natura 2000 Network" sounds old. The year 2000 was a horizon, because talks about the Natura 2000 Network started already in the 80s. I actually got a bit weary of those long delays, with disagreements between different levels of government or different stakeholders, and for that I blame myself. Something similar happens to me with the climate change issue. Back in 1997, when I started working for the paper, the famous Kioto protocol had just been signed. It did not come into force until 2005 and most of those who signed it have withdrawn from it since. It was said at the time that it was necessary to find a way of giving continuity to the protocol after 2012 - the famous Kioto 2. Now we talk about 2020 and we leave the door open to all sorts of compromises and leeways... In the end, one ends up feeling that things are not very clear. The same can be said of the Natura 2000 Network.

That is why I propose looking for new formulas and angles to deal with it. For example, trying to communicate it in positive terms. Getting on the field and putting a face to the Natura 2000 Network to prevent the concept from becoming diffuse among so many types of protection statuses and public administrations. And also underlining the European and, above all, special character of these sites. Otherwise it will be difficult to make them stand out from the ordinary and become news.



THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK, A GREAT UNKNOWN, A WORLD WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED



Raúl Casado
EFEverde editor

He has been working as a journalist for 25 years for Agencia EFE, where he has developed his whole professional career - at first in different bureaus and later in the National department. He has specialized in scientific and environmental matters and has been the Agencia EFE correspondent in many world summits on climate change and biodiversity. Since January 2013 he is responsible for the Life+ Infonatur 2000 project, an initiative participated by Agencia EFE that aims to publicise the significance and meaning of the Natura 2000 Network.

Professionalism, rigour, specialization and critical sense. These are the four premises on which, in my opinion, journalism should be based as regards any area. And the environment no less. Professionalism to know what you want to put across and to whom; rigour to use the most reliable sources; specialization to know and understand what you want to communicate and be able to do it; and critical sense to appreciate the real value that data and opinions rightly have.

Let's us focus these arguments on the environment in general and the Natura 2000 Network in particular. I will build on them to vindicate some of my thoughts about what information about the Natura 2000 Network should be based on. Let's say these could be the main ideas, the background for writing or speaking about the network.

The essential background

1.- The Natura 2000 Network is the main biodiversity conservation instrument of the European Union and, in total, the largest network of conservation areas in the world. Over 26.000 sites or areas that add up to more than a million square kilometres, nearly 18 per cent of the earth's surface. Spain, with 150.000 square kilometres that amount to almost 30 per cent of its land territory, is the country that contributes the most to that network.

2.- These are not traditional protected sites or strict nature sanctuaries. On the contrary, they are very often areas long used and intervened by the hand of man. In fact, the kind of biodiversity conservation that the Natura 2000 Network proposes depends greatly on humans continuing doing in these sites the same things they have been doing for decades or even centuries.

An example: some ecosystems that have been radically shaped by humans, as the wooded pasturelands or the rice paddocks, are the ideal habitat for many species. The same could be said about grazing areas, cereal farms or pasture fields.

And another example that may help even more in understanding why the sites of the Natura 2000 Network cannot be thought of as nature reserves. Some of those sites are even urban: towns as *Cáceres*, *Almendralejo* and *Badajoz* host within them Special Protection Areas for Birds. And of course, nobody thinks of a town as a nature sanctuary.

3.- The Natura 2000 Network should be seen (this is one of the duties of journalism professionals) as an opportunity, as a driver for development and never as an obstacle for the economy and even less for the welfare of the local population that inhabits those areas.

“To inform professionally, with rigour and critical sense, and to train professionals will be the keys to success in making the Natura 2000 Network more and more known and valued.”

Problems and shortcomings

These would be the main ideas to be kept in mind when writing or talking about the Natura Network. However, which are, in my opinion, its main problems or shortcomings?

1.- The enormous, but maybe necessary, burocratization of the network. It is an huge group of sites and the management of each of the 27.000 is tremendously complex.

2.- The misgivings or doubts aroused by the Network in many places, due mainly to the wrong idea that it may hinder local economy development.

This suspicion cannot and should not be silenced. It can and must be overcome with truthful and transparent information. In many places where the network is already well established they have been left behind and the current impression totally different - people have come to understand that the Natura 2000 Network can be the best ally of development and sustainability.

But in order to achieve this, it is necessary to get all the sectors involved (because the success of the Natura 2000 Network will rely mostly on the commitment of farmers, cattle farmers, entrepreneurs, hunters or fishermen).

None of this is understandable without examples: some of the most important and iconic Life+ projects undertaken in Spain, as Iberlince or Indemares, have managed to bring all those sectors together: from hunters or fishermen organizations to professional organizations of farmers, plus conservation organizations or scientific bodies... In this sense it is specially important to communicate rigorously and for the journalists that deal with these matters to have enough critical sense to avoid dogmas or pre-established arguments, common places and emotional attitudes. This is about neither making dogma the conservation organizations views nor receiving skeptically those of the professionals associations or the local populations... Nor viceversa, of course. It's about critical sense and professionalism.

Access to sources

All the Natura 2000 Networks are perfectly listed and information on them is easily accesible for anybody who may want to write or talk about them. The two main sources of information, in my view, are the Network Viewer that the EU designed and allows you to take a look at any of the nearly 26.000 sites, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment of Spain, in whose website all the SCIs and SPAs of Spain can be found.

The factsheet on each of these places describes the geographical characteristics of the site, the importance of its ecosystems, the species it hosts, the socio-economic activities that take place in it, its potential and even its vulnerability and the main threats it faces. These are technical factsheets based on a massive amount of scientific and administrative work, but from a journalistic point of view they are not very useful without the testimony of the people who live and work in the Network.

Final conclusion

And finally, why is the Network so badly known? That is the question, and the answer is hard to find.

It is a massive and complex network that, like the EU itself, is constantly evolving. Political and economic crises like the current one do not help, because environmental matters are, unfortunately, one of the first things to be left out of political agendas in these cases.

Politicians, large companies and social agents have long acknowledged that they have not been able to put across the real value and meaning of the Natura 2000 Network. Neither have the media.

However, the European Union has made the raising awareness on the Network's importance one of its priority objectives for the next few years, as regards environmental matters. To that end, it has created several Europe-funded projects where autonomous communities, private companies and media participate.

Doing all this with professionalism, rigour and critical sense, as well as training professionals in this field, will be the basis upon which a change of trend may take place. The basis of success in making the Network better known and valued.





LOST IN A SEA OF NUMBERS



Miguel G. Corral

Science and environment editor at EL MUNDO newspaper

Graduated in Biology and in the Theory of Literature and Compared Literature. He took the Master of Journalism organised by El Mundo and Universidad San Pablo CEU. Since 2005 he is a Science section editor for *El Mundo*, where he has written about all sorts of questions related to the environment.

People get confused with the different protection statuses. It's understandable. Back in 2005 *Mundiprensa* publishers issued a book called *The definitive guide to the 10.000 nature sites of Spain*. 10.000 sites? That means there are almost 600 sites in each of the 17 autonomous communities and nearly 200 per province. The numbers has been growing in the last few years and, on top of that, the diversity of protection statuses and their different implications does not make it easier for anybody.



National Park, Natural Park, Natural Reserve, Fluvial Reserve, Natural Monument, Protected Landscape, Microreserve, SCI, SPA, SAC, Regional Park, Ramsar Wetland, Biosphere Reserve... The professionals are comfortable using all these concepts and terms, as well as the numbers they amount to -thousands only in Spain-, but citizens and rural populations, not so much.

Environmental journalists and experts linked to environmental matters are probably within that 3 per cent of the population that uses the Natura 2000 Network concept without a problem, according to a survey conducted by SEO/BirdLife. However, the SAC + SPA= RN 2000 formula is not well known outside those circles. I don't think that the objective should be that everybody gets to know it and where it comes from. The objective of professionals who deal with the Natura 2000 Network should be to get people to know which advantages and which constraints are implied when their territory is included in this European network of protected areas.



In Spain, the following equation is an axiom:
Protected area = Constraints to economic development.
Nearly 30 per cent of the Spanish territory belongs to the Network.
The contribution of Spain to it is greater than would be normal for its surface extension, population numbers, GDP or per capita income... The problem is that such thing is perceived as something negative.

Why in the Spanish public opinion the protection of a natural site is seen mostly as something that will mean constraints, instead of being taken as a guarantee of quality of the place where one lives? It happens because we Spaniards cannot answer questions like the following:
Can you build on a site included in the Natura 2000 Network?
Can you hunt and fish?
Can you enlarge your house or exploit a farm?
Do I receive funding or pay extra tax if I am a property owner there?
Will they force me to stop irrigation farming or cattle growing?

The role of the media, of journalism professionals and experts linked to the Natura 2000 Network is more to throw light on these kind of questions than to insist on imprinting in people's minds complex formulas and too diverse concepts that don't really have to be part of the discourse on this European network of protected areas. However, one must not forget that newspapers, radio and television (and their online versions) are there to give us news.

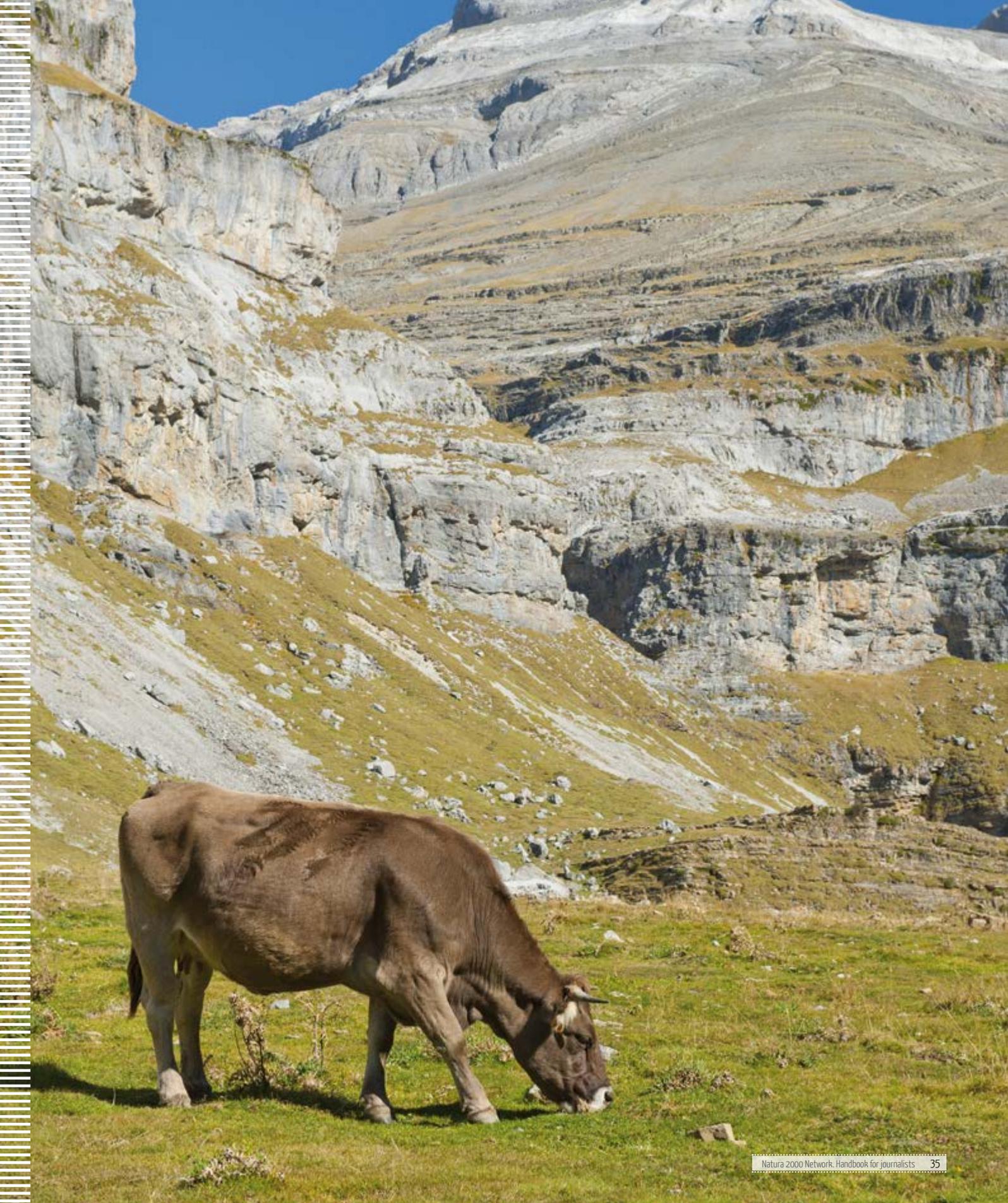
Journalism has shown itself in its ideal form as publishing projects whose objective is to educate, inform and entertain. Unfortunately, large media are heading day by day for a model where education and knowledge dissemination almost don't count. Space or air time are extremely expensive. These days, managing to publish an article titled What is the Natura 2000 Network? (*EL PAÍS*, 22 April 2013) is almost miraculous.

"The task of publicizing the Natura 2000 Network must find alternative channels to those of journalism. It is necessary to reach schools, environmental education centres, hunters' associations, small town councils, interpretation centres, agricultural associations..."

Newspapers need headlines. Media must receive information in the shape of news: if it is no news, there is no space on the paper or minutes of air time on television or radio. Science popularization articles are difficult to "sell" to chief editors, who are often not quite or familiar at all with environmental or conservation concepts. But miracles occasionally happen. It is the duty of a good journalist to benefit from current events to give some context information, to give readers the necessary tools for understanding the news without having to go into technical concepts that may put the average audience off.

Media have an important role in the dissemination of new concepts that must be vindicated and are worth fighting for. But the majority of us journalists do not have the capacity to reach a massive audience. In most cases not even our colleagues in television or radio (that have much larger audiences than papers) have the privilege of access to prime time - the daypart with the most viewers or listeners.

For this reason, popularization work on the Natura 2000 Network and its implications must reach audiences in other ways. It must reach schools, environmental education centres, hunters' societies, small town councils, interpretation centres, agricultural societies... It is true, too, that a programme to that end, the Activate Natura 2000 Network, already exists and will be in place until 2017. To succeed in making the Natura 2000 Network being seen as something of our own and a positive thing, it is essential to act locally.



HOW TO REACH ALL AUDIENCES



Josefina Maestre

Reserva Natural programme, Radio 5 (RNE) and director of *Aves y Naturaleza* magazine, SEO/BirdLife

She has been working as an environmental journalist for more than 20 years, during which she has directed the pioneering magazine *Ecología y sociedad*, broadcast over 5.000 radio chronicles, coordinated encyclopedias and authored publications like *Naturaleza monumental de España*. She also presided over APIA in 2003. She currently directs the programme *Reserva natural* (on Radio 5, RNE) and the magazine *Aves y Naturaleza* (for SEO/BirdLife).

When I started thinking about the theme of this workshop, several doubts and questions, that I will now expose, sprang to mind.

The first one is: what do I understand by Natura 2000 Network? When it comes to explaining it to myself again (because I have already done quite a lot of work on the matter) I am surprised to find something that still calls my attention: the amount of terminology and acronyms used, a terminology difficult to approach. That is, in the two decades that have elapsed since its creation, I have not become accustomed to it.

Terminology that is not even a substitute for a previous one but that overlaps with the already existing. Because there are three levels of protection that, also, overlap: the national or even the autonomous communities (National Park, Natural Park, Reserve, Protected Site, etc.), the European (SCIs, SCAs and SPAs, within the Natura 2000 Network) and the international protection statuses (Ramsar Site, Biosphere Reserve, World Heritage...). We journalists face this complex map of terms that must be used to inform in a clear and, if possible, concise manner.

So here comes another question: what do or should I make a priority of when informing about the protection status of a site?

If I talk about the Doñana National Park, that enjoys such wide recognition, I should not complicate the message by giving a long list of categories it belongs to. What do I stick to, then? Which one is the most important? What raises Doñana's profile more: mentioning that it is a National Park or that it belongs to the Natura 2000 Network or that it is a Ramsar Site or that it is a Biosphere Reserve?

Another doubt has come to mind in the last few days. I know that 30 per cent of the Spanish territory, 15 million hectares and almost 2.000 nature sites are part of the Natura 2000 Network: **1.461 SCIs y 645 SPAs**. But, how are sites that overlap counted? Because many belong to two categories at the same time.

With all this in mind, how do we journalists inform about the Natura 2000 Network?

We inform in different ways according to the medium (printed press, radio, television, internet, social networks), the kind of medium (general interest or specialized) and the format (feature, article or short piece).

In every case we must take into account which are the most convenient message and language in order to be understood by our audiences.

- General interest media will show preference for less technical information than specialized media.
- Written media will show preference for dwelling on definitions or descriptions more than audiovisual media.
- As regards social networks, where everything is shortened to the maximum, what works are good headlines although it is true that, more and more often, these direct the reader towards webpages.

Now I will talk about my own experience. I work for two quite different media: radio and the printed press. In the first case, although it is for a general interest medium, I direct a programme specialized in nature and the environment: Reserva Natural. A popularization programme aimed at reaching the maximum audience with a double objective: keeping informed those already environmentally aware and attracting those that are still not particularly sensitive to the matter. So, although some specialized language is used, the most accessible formula for the general audience is sought. The latter objective has been reinforced since the programme changed its time slot from the early hours of the morning to the afternoon.

When do I talk on the radio about the Natura 2000 Network? When we inform about something that has to do with its implementation, legalization, end or approval. That is, when the news is the network as such.

When I talk about a specific site I normally stay on the first level of protection categories, the national level: whether it is a National Park or a Natural Park, a Reserve or a SPA. However I usually do not speak of SCIs or SACs to keep things simple for the audience and because the essential has already been said: that it is a protected site. As regards mentioning that it belongs to the Natura 2000 Network, it sounds very generic. Like adding that it belongs to the network of protected areas in Spain or Europe. When I talk about Doñana, for example, I favour mentioning its category of National Park (the maximum level of protection in Spain) or that it is a wetland of international importance, because in that

way I am giving information on the specificities of the site: it is wetland and of global significance. However, note that often I don't mention the official name -Ramsar Wetland- because hardly anybody understands what Ramsar site means and that would force me to use as well the rest of the terms: of international significance. On the radio, not complicating the message is an important rule.

My other professional persona writes for a specialized magazine, *Aves y naturaleza*, published by SEO/BirdLife and whose readers are the organization members. So, for the most part, some interest in environmental matters is taken for granted and that asks for more detailed information.

There are, hence, three elements that are different from the previous case: a written medium, specialized as well, belonging to an NGO with a particular interest in creating awareness and whose readers are well predisposed towards getting more specific or technical data. That makes me mention habitually concepts related to the Natura 2000 Network and the term itself is almost an everyday occurrence. In this case I can dwell on the fact that a particular natural site belongs to the Natura 2000 Network and is a National Park, SPA, Ramsar Site, etc...

Given that there is only one Natura 2000 Network, it shouldn't be necessary to add the "2000". What once sounded modern and advanced, as is the case with this landmark year -the 2000, the 21st century-, may sound obsolete 13 years later. That is why, maybe, it would be good to leave the year out. Nowadays everything starts sounding old very easily. The name, in that way, would be shorter and more potent, easier to "sell" for all.

"It might be a good idea to drop the "2000", specially in these days when everything starts sounding old very easily. In that way the name would be shorter and more potent. It would be easier to "sell" for all."





COMMUNICATING THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK



Ismael Muñoz Linares

Environmental journalist and Director of www.rednatura2000.info

He graduated in Communication from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and has worked in radio and the printed press. In 1999 he created his own communication agency, specialized in environmental information (Altermedia Comunicación). He has been director for communication in several forestry and land management conferences. He currently runs the press department of the Official Association of Forestry Technical Engineers and is the technical director of *Foresta*, a magazine on forestry. In 2007 he set up the website www.rednatura2000.info, the only medium specialized in the Natura 2000 Network.

“The Natura 2000 Network is born with very scarce or no social participation at all in its creation and definition stages”.



It seems simple but it's not. Judging by the results, communicating and informing about the Natura 2000 Network must be more difficult than doing so about the secret documents of some international organization.

The flagship initiative of the European Union for the conservation of its most valuable nature was born with such a communication and social participation problem that, even 20 years after its creation, 85 per cent of the Spanish population does not know about it. Not something to be proud of, particularly on the part of the administrations that foster and manage the project, starting with the European Union and the Spanish central government - although there are always positive exceptions to the rule. So, any project that relates to the Natura 2000 Network faces a double obstacle in media. One is society's lack of knowledge, and hence the very, very limited demand for this information. The other, the obstacle posed by its origin, financing, branding, profitability and consolidation process.



Despite all that, there is no shortage of brave ones who give it a try, well aware of the opportunity that lies in being one of the firsts to focus in a specialized way on the Natura 2000 Network and also of the need to inform about what happens in 27 per cent of the Spanish territory, with a view to steer clear of myths, rumour and social prejudices that stem from the lack of knowledge. This is the case with the website www.rednatura2000.info

But neither is easy for the non-specialized press to publish news related to the Natura 2000 Network. Its name has been linked more often to possible conflicts of interest than to development opportunities. So, on the few occasions the Natura 2000 Network made it to the headlines in national media, this was due to problems. That furthers the doubts and fears that certain social sectors have about it.

To make matters worse, for a long time some politicians have used the Natura 2000 Network as a shield when a certain social sector has seen its interests compromised. The sentence “it is an obligation imposed by the European Union, we can do nothing about it” has been repeated with undecent frequency on the part of those who should be fostering its development instead. With such an attitude, we cannot expect much enthusiasm for the Natura 2000 Network among the population...

So we have a nature conservation proposal that comes from the political and scientific elites and a population that none of those has taken the trouble to keep correctly and currently informed of what the network was, how it was going to affect them, which were the potential benefits, which changes they could expect in their daily tasks and the different interpretations made of it.

The Natura 2000 Network is born with very scarce or no social participation at all in its creation and definition stages. What is even worse, the public authorities, pressed for time, are not promoting social participation in the making of those management plans that will set out which activities will or won't be allowed in the sites. The network has been dealt a hand of marked cards that force it to be, at the same time, the most important nature conservation instrument of the European Union and an opportunity for social and economic development on the basis of conservation itself. Besides, it was born without direct funding, without an EU budget that may allow it to reach its objectives.

A communication and marketing plan

It seems obvious that the first thing the public administrations with powers to manage the Natura 2000 Network must do is designing a communication plan that establishes objectives, identifies target audiences, elaborates adequate messages for each of those audiences, designs tools and channels to reach audiences, makes a calendar of actions to be undertaken and, once and for all, allots the necessary money for implementing all that.

This communication plan should take into account the experiences, studies, needs and particularities of each of the autonomous communities to integrate them into a common project, an information point of reference on everything related to the Natura 2000 Network - at least from an administrative point of view.

Complementarily, the next necessary step seems to be a marketing plan to make the most of the network; for the development of its own products, guaranteed by a brand, and the selling of those products.

Without planning it is impossible to reach all these objectives. The scattered ideas and studies that the Natura 2000 Network has generated, although they are in some cases valuable experiences, are often only loose ends.

“The first thing the different Spanish public bodies with powers in this matter should do is to design a communication plan for the Natura 2000 Network”.

Communicate, Conect, Share, Talk, Cooperate and Create a Community

With this in mind, we have developed the only medium in Spain that focuses on the Natura 2000 Network: www.rednatura2000.info. Our intention is to report on everything that happens in 27% per cent of the country's territory, paying special attention to management good practices that show how conserving the natural wealth contained in Natura 2000 is profitable and beneficial from a social, environmental and economic point of view.

It is true that we are obviously very partial to the Network, that we see it as a historic opportunity to show what sustainable development based on the conservation of biodiversity is. We are sure that it is necessary to conserve natural resources, but also that it is essential to manage taking the broader view that includes the sustainable development of the human settlements more directly linked to these sites. So we talk about rural development, entrepreneurial initiative, land use and management, species that inhabit it and opportunities to improve the living conditions of the people who live in it...

We see very clearly that what lies behind each event are collective or personal stories that make us feel identified with the territory we inhabit. These stories are of special interest for us. So our task is to Communicate what happens in this space, with a particular interest in positive experiences, to Connect people, institutions, associations and interests through the web and social networks, to Share objectives, information, interests, work, experiences, feelings and emotions, to Talk with the users and followers and to Collaborate with institutions, public authorities, professionals, conservation and rural development associations and media that help disseminating these values.

The final objective is to Create a Community. A COMMUNITY committed to the sustainable development of its territory, that sees production and conservation as two sides of the same coin, teamwork as essential, the contribution and participation in site management of the people who live in it as a basic tenet, who believes that without people it is very difficult to do conservation work and that social, open, democratic and committed participation is a requisite for the sustainable development of territories



OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATING THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK ON TELEVISION



Carolina Rueda

Instinto Animal programme, Telemadrid TV station

Journalist specialized in environmental matters with 25 years of experience in radio, television and magazines. Particularly interested in biodiversity and conservation areas. She is a contributor to the [www. rednatura2000.info](http://www.rednatura2000.info) website.

When it comes to communicating the Natura 2000 Network we encounter several strengths and weaknesses. Among its strengths are its size and variety, that offer many possibilities for attractive communication. Nearly 30 per cent of the Spanish territory is full of things to talk about, with an overwhelming diversity and richness. Moreover, we have the advantage that the Network connects nature and man. We know that the sites that are within the network have been included because they are an example of good practices and prove that the human presence is compatible with the conservation of biodiversity.

Oppositely, we have to deal with some of its weaknesses. In the first place, the complexity of the concept. Part of the problem is that the Natura 2000 Network is actually a technical concept relatively complex, and also very specific, that stems from two European directives: the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. There is a lot of confusion in this respect, even in scientific circles: some people get it mixed up with the IUCN list of endangered species, or the Red Book of endangered species. So, if this happens to them, how would it not happen to the common citizen?

On top of that there is another obvious weakness: the lack of signage on the sites. The National and Natural Parks have signs marking them and directing towards them and that is how citizens recognize their geographical boundaries. They know where they are. That is not the case with the Natura 2000 Network and the result is that it takes a different shape in the mind of each one. Urban audiences tend to identify it with the different traditional protection statuses (parks) and in the rural world there is more than one who doesn't even know that he lives inside the Natura 2000 Network.



It must be added that not enough information about the Natura 2000 Network is offered by mass media. Normally this is limited to occasional information when there is some news related to the network in its entirety, for example if there happens to be a lack of compliance when planning or managing and using land. It must be said that some cases of sustainable activities may be presented in television programmes on agriculture or the environment, but they are not expressly linked to the Natura 2000 Network.

Lastly, another weakness that should be noted is the lack of rules on the use and management of the Natura 2000 Network. Only a minimal part of the network has a management plan because the authorities have not done their job. Each site should have its plan. If we don't know how uses and activities are regulated within each site, how is compliance going to be checked for?

As a result of all these factors, the perceptions on the Network tend to be non-existent or slanted. A good part of urban audiences, if they know it, tend to associate it with tourism possibilities and a rich gastronomy, when it is much more. However it is also true that they identify it with a healthy environmental future. As for rural audiences, they perceive it as something imposed by Brussels that threatens their exploitation activities.

So, we informers have to:

- 1.- Simplify the concept as much as possible, without distorting it.
- 2.- Inform about the network from a positive angle, particularly in the rural world, to make it understood that this is not about reducing their possibilities. A good resource is using examples of good practices, many of which are already traditional and don't imply any changes. In other cases examples of new business opportunities are to be sought.
- 3.- Check that authorities do their job and go along the same lines as those positive informations. In this sense it must be underlined that Brussels is not a distant and foreign invention. We are all "Brussels".
- 4.- Give information with continuity (although that is more in the hands of the media top managers).

Televisión, a great opportunity for communicating the Network

Television is still the most consumed of mass media. The spread of Internet has not reduced the number of viewers, in fact it has made it increase thanks to online TV. So maybe we should reflect on how ambitious we are or should be when communicating the Natura 2000 Network. How many people do we want to reach? Of which type? Should we tell the story in the same way to everybody?

Currently there are specialized programmes on the environment and agricultural matters but only in broadcast television, either at a national or autonomous communities level. In privately-owned channels there are exceptional cases. Autonomous communities are more partial to programmes on agriculture and these are a clear niche to focus on.

But if we want to reach general audiences we must look for some space in prime time. From my point of view, that opportunity is offered by the evening newscasts. Two or three minutes at the end of the national newscast would be the ideal space for a series of stories on the Natura 2000 Network. It is not a new formula: this has already been done with historical commemorations or social issues.

A noteworthy case is that of the *Espai Terra*, on Televisión de Catalunya, a programme that is broadcast Monday-Friday at 7.30 pm. It includes weather reports, anecdotes and very basic and visual information but the central subject is the environment. So, conversely to what usually happens in those light information programmes that leave a bit of space for the environment, here the keystone is the environment and some space is left for other things. It aspires to be attractive, informative and educative. It is being broadcast since 2009 and it reaches 10 per cent of audience in Catalonia. The existence of such a programme shows a degree of sensitivity on the part of the channel management - another key for succeeding in communicating the Natura 2000 Network.



THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK NEEDS STORIES

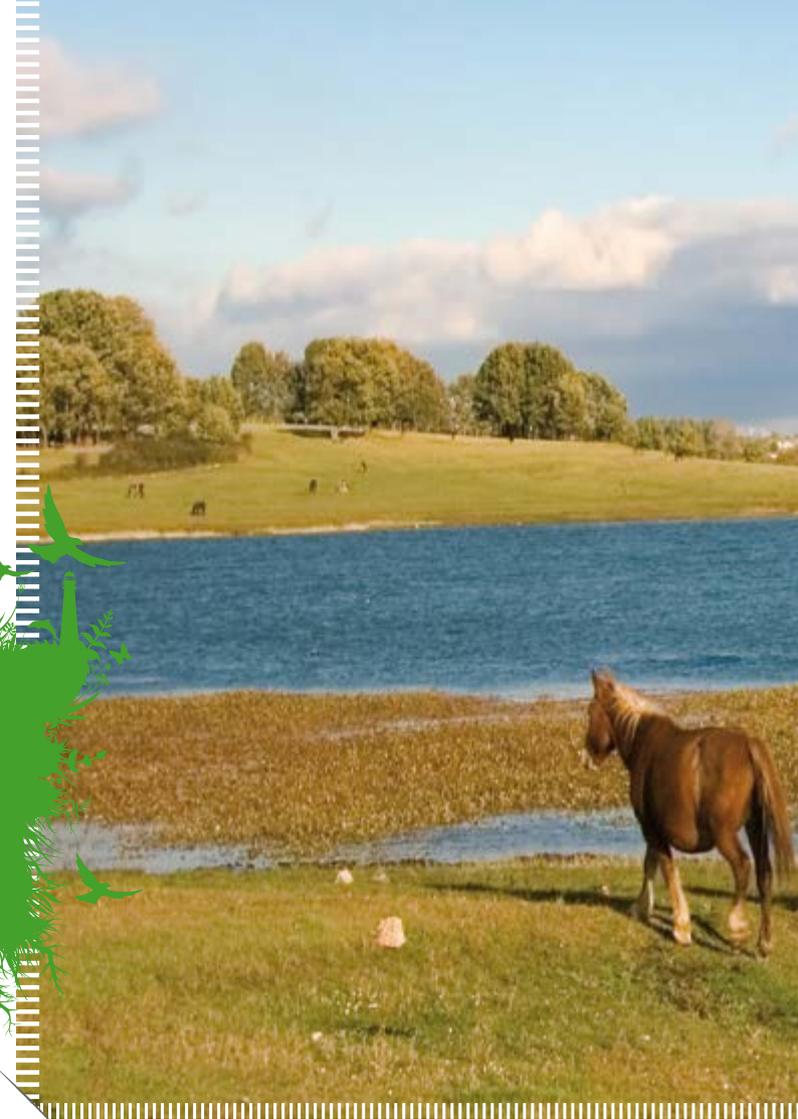


Rafa Ruiz

Culture and environment magazine *El Asombrario*,
www.elasombrario.com

Coordinator of the digital magazine on culture and the environment *El Asombrario*, that includes the weekly section *Ventana Verde*. A journalist, he spent 25 years working as an editor for *El País* and *El País Semanal*, specializing in culture, solidarity and ecology matters. He is a founding member of APIA. He is also the author of the childrens' stories *Toletis y Ninoninoni*, in a magical-ecological realism style.

"This is a about changing the wrapping, the packaging, completely, about creating a different aura, a mystery, so that the audience feels that, if they don't know about it, they are missing out on something"



When I received the invitation to take part in this workshop about the way to communicate the Natura 2000 Network, the first thing I did was to ask a friend who has worked for 30 years as an archivist for *El País* if she knew that network. Her answer was short and clear: no idea. I have worked myself for 25 years for that paper - for a long time the leader in informing from a progressive angle in Spain. I was writing precisely about the environment to a great extent, and still I can't remember ever writing an in-depth story on the subject. So there is an obvious question here: why?

I see three crucial problems

1. One is the very, very little sensitivity in this respect that media managers have shown - or even boasted of, as they felt proud of not being able to tell a bee-eater from a hummingbird, a National Park from a Natural Park or a building developer rat from a Pyrenees muskrat. I'll tell you two short anecdotes: they have rejected a story of mine about the forests in winter -with all the visual attractive that snow or frost-covered trees have- with the "brainy" argument that people don't go to the coun-



tryside in winter “because it’s very cold”. They have refused to publish on a Sunday supplement a double-page photo of an impressive flight of starlings against the sky because a deputy director saw -obsessively- in that photo the profile of a penis. With this depth of debate it is difficult to explain the virtues of the Natura 2000 Network. How can we talk middle management in media into understanding the value of a SPA or SCI, when they can’t even begin to define what they are, or even get right what lies behind acronyms like SEO or WWF?

2. The second is that, on the other hand, the Natura 2000 Network is seen as something too wide and undefined. 26.000 thousand sites in Europe, 2.000 in Spain, what amounts to nearly 30 per cent of the national territory... Something as wide and undefined raises doubts in public opinion, it enjoys little credibility. People don’t quite believe that something like that can be of any use.

3. On top of all that, it is seen as a network already created and finished. As something static, and hence, dead. Something that just lies there, that can be good or bad but doesn’t arouse their interest because it doesn’t make for news. The National Parks network in Spain, however, has caught quite well with the public and the media top managers because nothing is as attractive as a new protected site, an enlargement, a conflict between autonomous communities or with the neighbours. That network is seen as alive. Something that generates news that may be good or bad, but is alive.

Well, this is the scenario. What is to be done? How to reactivate the information flow around the Natura 2000 Network?

I’d like to bring two theories to the table now: one on dinosaurs and squirrels and one on gin and tonic.

Dinosaurs and squirrels

Once dinosaurs had disappeared due to a climatic disaster they could not adapt to, what appeared on earth were much smaller and agile mammals that needed less energy and less food and had more reaction capacity in the face of problems and changes. Think about this: exactly the same is happening now in the realm of media. The dinosaurs -large media groups- are having problems because of a sudden climate change -Internet, the social networks- and, to compensate for that, many chatty squirrels are springing up here and there with a strong purpose and ingenuity to communicate. So let's take all those squirrels into account - bloggers, Twitter users, small online magazines, Facebook users, Instagram users... - in order to make waves around whatever we are interested in publicizing.

Gin and tonic

Only five years ago there was no drink that sounded more old-fashioned than gin and tonic. Then tonic water and gin makers got on the job and managed to change its image completely until it became the coolest drink it is today, compared to rum and whisky. In just five years. All that was achieved with a mid-term communication and marketing plan, fighting on many fronts, creating a trend first, resorting to opinion leaders -barmen, restaurant owners, celebrities- as a first step to making it fashionable... Which was the key there? With the same raw product as a starting point, it was a matter of changing the wrapping, the packaging, completely, of creating a different aura, a mystery... so that the audience felt that, if they didn't know about it, they were missing out on something. Let's use the same strategy with the Natura 2000 Network. Let's treat it as a brand and not as an undefined concept. And let's design a mid-term communication and marketing plan starting with the squirrels, essential for creating a certain atmosphere, a "background music". Most things are already invented, it's all about shaping illusions of novelty.

To manage this change, I think it is fundamental to approach the communication plan by focusing on three points. These would be the first three steps to take:

1. To break down. The general has a short life. We can't "sell" to the journalists such a general concept time after time, once and again. Let's take the whole puzzle and regroup the pieces according to different criteria of interest: the largest zones, the zones that are closer to large cities, the ones that face a greater threat of degradation, the marine sites, the most populated, the most visually attractive... The importance of the network as a whole, the 27.000 European sites, can't be the first message put across year after year. It must be the second or third message, useful for supporting the news we have created. One thing is a databank like Wikipedia. A very different one is novelty, information flow, specially in a world full to the brim with messages that fight for our attention to the point of saturating us.



2. Let's put a face, a human face to this... From entrepreneurial farmers in SPAs with interesting experiences to talk about, to active and sustainable tourism companies that have something to tell us, to celebrities that live in one of the sites and are willing to talk about its natural value if there is any threat to it, to restaurants that specialize in the gastronomic traditions of the area, to town mayors involved in their conservation, to prestigious winemakers whose vineyards are within a SPA...

3. Let's write a script. Reality tends to be boring if it's not edited, scripted, shaped to make points of interest stand out... Attractive points can get diluted in a sea of normality. So, as in television reality shows, once we have gathered the pieces of the puzzle, once we have human faces, let's create stories that sell. Let's design certain informative tension, but with a clear idea, too: let's go for mountains, not plateaus. I'll explain this: it's very complex to maintain narrative-informative tension always at its highest (plateau). We will attract media attention more easily if we make a script with peaks, if we create novelties... (and even if we sometimes resort to the occasional problem as a hook, we must not put emphasis on the conflict, in news about disagreements, so that the Network does not end up being associated with problems).

4. In order to distribute all that material, let us make a communication plan that takes all the different channels into account, including the "squirrels": local press, regional press, radios, specialized magazines, bloggers, Twitter users, online media...

5. If this network has something positive as regards communicating it, that is its capacity to generate many and very appealing images. Let's create a good photo and video databank. This audiovisual material will open many doors when it comes to selling the Natura 2000 Network to magazines and television. Due to the precarious current situation of many media, providing them with a large amount of quality graphic material will always be welcome.

So let's get to work with a summarized message in mind: to break down, to be specific and to create a script for a concept as undefined and wide that, up to now, it has not penetrated society.



**DINOSAURS, NEANDERTHALS
AND GIANT SQUID IN THE NATURA
2000 NETWORK**



Rafael Serra

Director of *Quercus* magazine

He graduated in Journalism from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (1980). He joined *Quercus* magazine in February 1988 and became its director in 1992 (a position he still holds currently). He is a founding member of APIA (Association of Environmental Information Journalists) and all his professional life has been linked to nature, the environment and rural tourism. During three years he was a contributor to the *Rutas Verdes* section of *El País Semanal* supplement and his signature has appeared on the most important magazines on environmental matters of Spain. He is the author of the ecoguide *Las sierras de Gredos y Béjar* (1993), published by Anaya/Touring, and of the book *La naturaleza en Castilla-La Mancha* (1996), published by San Marcos.

As a magazine specialized in the conservation of biodiversity, in *Quercus* we have never encountered the usual problems that other media face when they must make reference to the Natura 2000 Network. We are aware that the majority of our readers know quite well what this network of conservation European areas is about. However, more than discussing the Network itself, we normally talk about the sites that compose it, although we always put them in their legal status context. This is a first question I would like to underline: the Natura 2000 Network is a framework of reference that, in itself, doesn't have much informative weight. The opposite is true of the sites included in it. In fact, if the Network is important it's because of its content, not of its container.

In any case, in *Quercus* we have the habit of reminding the reader that this is a European network. To the point that we probably twist, consciously, its formal definition in order to emphasize such continental character. So, we don't normally talk about the Natura 2000 Network but about "the European network Natura 2000". It is this kind of nuance that we regard as important.



An alphabet soup

Much has been debated about the reasons why the European network Natura 2000 is not sufficiently well known among the citizenry. I think the underlying problem extends to the rest of the European Union programmes and institutions. The reader perceives the community fabric as an administrative labyrinth and doesn't bother trying to remember its nooks and crannies. The number of different legal statuses that have been created for designating a natural site as protected -at every level: from town councils to the EU or even the UN, including central governments and autonomous communities or regions- hast to do with that attitude. Also, due to the little fondness of our rulers for an economy of language, the names of such protection statuses are normally long, which inevitably leads to endless acronyms that don't help throwing any light on what lies behind them. In the middle of this "Alphabet soup" the average reader ends up not knowing which are the most important protection statuses, which is their hierarchy. Or even worse, underestimating the quality of the sites that make up the Network because they consider them second-rate.

Added to that is the problem of the general lack of interest for environmental issues, much as we may hear the opposite... Particularily because, if examined in-depth, they require an intellectual effort and a commitment that readers are currently not always ready for, bombarded as they are by constant information and lacking time to process complex messages.

Finally, to mental laziness we have to add blockages, prejudices, discouragement, disillusion and even some degree of clash against everyday reality: at the end of the day, what is the use of all this? Confronted with this scenario it is not easy at all to find fertile ground to make the Natura 2000 Network better known and appreciated.

Marine reserves

What, then, could be done to improve this diagnosis? Well, as psychologists and experienced publicists well know, emphasizing the positive aspects. It may seem a not very honest strategy, but it is very convenient in the current circumstances.

Among those positive aspects, those achievements, we should include the disasters that the mere fact of belonging to the Network has often prevented. There is no shortage of examples, in any country. A fact that is normally not underlined is that the Natura 2000 Network is the consequence of two very important European Directives for the conservation of nature: the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. Both instruments have proven their utility on many occasions.

Towards the end of 2013, when the workshop on communicating the Natura 2000 Network was held, even general interest media were voicing some of the Network's positive consequences, although maybe not attributing them to it completely. That was the case with the future marine reserves planned to be designated along the whole of the EU coasts, all of them in the framework of the Natura 2000 Network. It may be objected that in fact it is easier to designate conservation areas where private property does not present objections, plus the fact that marine protected sites are looked on more kindly than those on land, that are often perceived as a hindrance to development and private initiative.

The question is no nonsense. While the Natura 2000 Network protects 18 per cent of the European land territory, it will only do the same with 4 per cent of its territorial waters, which points at a clear asymmetry. In Spain, we should bear in mind, the land currently under the umbrella of the Natura 2000 Network amounts to 30 per cent of the country's territory.

“The reader perceives the fabric of the EU community as an administrative labyrinth and does not bother trying to remember its nooks and crannies”

The giant squid as bait

Since we are on the task of underlining the positive, we could take a leaf out of other disciplines' books. Paleontology, for instance, seems to me a case that can throw some light on this. In itself, Paleontology is a hard and difficult to communicate science. It demands a lot of compared anatomy, complex dating techniques, a good amount of geology and, to make matters worse, attractive conclusions are not that frequent. A usual task consist in studying closely under the magnifying glass hundreds of the diminute teeth of micromammals, crucial for establishing changes in scenario and fauna.



However, Paleontology has in its hand two good cards of enormous attractive for all audiences, including children. One of them is, obviously, our fascination with dinosaurs. The other is human evolution in general and Neanderthals in particular. Why precisely dinosaurs and Neanderthals? What is wrong with the trilobites? Pages and pages have been written about these preferences, but analyzing them now would divert us from our subject.

As a conclusion, a possible informative tactic to increase interest in the Natura 2000 Network would be to emphasize its many positive aspects and embody them in such attractive icons as those of the Paleontology of vertebrates. We should look for and exploit the “dinosaurs and Neanderthals” of the Natura 2000 Network. Could that be some marine reserve, like that of *Cachucho* in *Asturias*, where the very attractive and newsworthy giant squid lives?



BLOCK
03 THE DEBATE





The workshop on communicating the Natura 2000 Network that took place in December 2013 allowed us to detect the weaknesses and strengths that hinder or foster the popularization of this network of European conservation areas. They are presented below, maintaining the type of language and the expressions proper to journalism in which they were worded.

WEAKNESSES

Little institutional dissemination of information. There is scarce support on the part of public administrations in publicizing the good aspects of the Network and so giving prestige to the Natura 2000 Network brand.

No political commitment. Few political parties take a risk and make a clear stand for the environmental values that the Natura 2000 Network champions. On a local level, few politicians believe in them and, in front of their neighbours they usually buttress arguments against the Natura 2000 Network.

Too many protection statuses. In our country the catalogue of protection statuses is large and diverse (Natural Park, National Park, Biosphere Reserve, Ramsar Wetland, SPAs, SCIs, etc.) and that indirectly transforms them in something unspecific. This salad of acronyms and terms ends up by blurring the Network boundaries among a sea of names. Among non-expert audiences there is even some confusion as regards the regulatory and normative implications derived from the different categories of protection.

Unfair competition in relation to other, very well established, protection statuses. This weakness is closely related to the previous one. What happens is that people identify as protected natural areas mainly those with iconic protection statuses like National Park or Biosphere Reserve. The Natura 2000 Network and other figures regarded as minor by public opinion, like Protected Landscape or Natural Monument, can hardly be a match, considering the lure effect of the more established ones on audiences.

A complex and confusing concept. The Natura 2000 Network encompasses terms like SCIs, SPAs, and SACs and besides it doesn't always overlap completely with the other protection statuses recognized by national or regional laws. This overlapping of sites and protection figures leads most citizens to "switch off". The acronyms' (SCI, SPA, SAC) wordiness doesn't help much either.

Old fashioned name. Making any reference to the year 2000 is now totally passé. We are in 2014 and something related to 2000 sounds old. Back in 1992, calling something "2000" made it sound like a novelty. Now it just sounds obsolete.

Uncertain benefits. The environmental and socioeconomic benefits of belonging to the Natura 2000 Network are not sufficiently shown. The opportunities it brings for the territory do not seem clear.

Lack of communication with the rural inhabitants. The rural world and its population appear to be just spectators for the rich display of a network they don't feel as their own.

Lack of interest on the part of the media. The media have some problems in spotting "key ideas", attractive headlines in relation with the Network, that can act as a lure for their readers. In a way, the Natura 2000 Network is everywhere. It covers nearly 30 per cent of the territory and because it is so large and common it's difficult to turn into news.



A traditional lack of interest in environmental matters. It doesn't help, either, that for the average citizen the environment, specially during a crisis, is not a priority.

The Natura 2000 Network is perceived as a hindrance to development. The conservation versus socioeconomic development debate is still very current.

A network that is not very functional. Some think that, despite its name, the group of conservation areas that belong to the network are actually not being managed as a European network of natural sites of interest.

An excessively bureaucratized network. The Natura 2000 Network sounds of a lot of bureaucracy, whether due to the complexity of the processes followed for the drafting of the management plans (still pending in many autonomous communities) or to the extra requirements it creates when processing project files from an environmental point of view (environmental assessments, environmental impact statements, etc.)

Lack of management plans. Strictly speaking, the network is declared but not implemented, as the process of setting it up is completed only with the designation of SACs and the drafting of the corresponding management plans, still pending in many autonomous communities.

Lack of funding. It is discouraging that no single specific financial instrument has been allotted to Natura 2000 sites. Indirectly, the message received by society sounds more of restrictions than of the promotion of socioeconomic development compatible with conservation.

Bad start. Although the massive amount of technical and scientific work carried out to shape the proposal that gave birth to this network is well acknowledged, the general perception is that the whole process was removed from civil society and from the territories directly affected. The feeling that it is just an imposed environmental policy has been a source of conflict since its beginnings. That is why the positive aspects of the Network are, repeatedly and not very successfully, explained and justified.

An invisible network. Many of the sites that are part of the Natura 2000 Network exist only in the cartography attached to the corresponding file. On the field they are invisible and, if they don't coincide with any of the iconic protection statuses (Natural Park, National Park...), sites are not even signposted. In many cases, so, one doesn't know if one is within the Natura 2000 Network.

Unexploited touristic resource. If the publicizing of the benefits of belonging to the Natura 2000 Network -from a quality of life and landscape point of view- were reinforced, there would be a chance of better exploiting the touristic potential of the network. These days, information about just a few recent experiences related to rural development programmes can only be found.



STRENGTHS

A new tool of land management. If well implemented (with its management plans, involving all the stakeholders, guaranteeing a minimum funding, etc.) the Natura 2000 Network can be a new tool of land management at a local level.

Natural asset and economic wealth. The Natura 2000 Network sites are a unique source of biodiversity that, if correctly managed, can be at the same time an exceptional source of economic wealth that respects environmental sustainability.

A large and diverse network that covers a third of the country's territory. The Natura 2000 Network takes up practically 30 per cent of the territory. So it becomes inevitable to manage the territory taking into account that a very significant part of it is included in the network as well to plan land use bearing in mind its environmental value.

Directly related to many people. Although in principle the Network has been established in those territories with lowest population density, as it covers 30 per cent of the territory, it affects a significant amount of population directly. This means an important challenge in terms of communication efficiency on the part of environmental journalists.

Benefits for the environment. Without being a supermotivating factor among the general public, it is obvious that the Network comes with the warranty of very rigorous scientific and technical work behind. That work lends visibility to potential environmental services associated to the continuity of the Network.

Benefits for the people. The services rendered by a well maintained environment like that of the Natura 2000 Network sites, in the long term, mean benefits for the people as regards health, contact with nature, employment opportunities and economic sustainability, among others. In this sense, there is a clear communication challenge: that of quantifying and researching the real impact of all these benefits on people.

An emotional factor. The Natura 2000 Network can connect very well with people. It appeals to the emotional side of audiences - the one that may eventually lead them to a change of attitude. Although it seems less tangible, this could be a dimension of the Network worth exploiting to communication and news generation purposes.



Of interest for nature conservation organizations. There is no doubt about it: conservation organizations are those great allies that can contribute to publicizing the positive effects of the Network and, at the same time, monitor its effective functioning according to the demands and deadlines set out by the EU.

A legal basis for the defence of nature. To be within the Natura 2000 Network implies respecting a basic set of norms on authorization, monitoring and control of any action that may put at risk those areas considered environmentally sensitive. Hence, under the umbrella of the current body of laws (European, national and regional, as well as its operational level tools like the management plans), belonging to the Natura 2000 Network should guarantee that the development of certain high-impact projects is forbidden.

A destination for European Commission funds. Even though the Natura 2000 Network doesn't enjoy a specific financing tool, there are several of those tools associated to the the implementation of the Network.

An interesting source of information for environmental journalists. There is a good amount of environmental and nature information available via the Natura 2000 Network that communication professionals specialized in the matter can avail of.

A European dimension. The European character of the Network lends extra value and visibility at an international level to the efforts each country is making for the conservation of its natural assets. Besides, the management of the Network can be nurtured with a wide variety of experiences (also in the realm of communication) from the different member states of the EU. The challenges are similar and the lessons learnt are probably applicable if we adapt them to our circumstances.

The largest network of conservation areas in the world. Taking into account the total of EU territory included in the Natura 2000 Network, we are looking at the largest of this type of networks anywhere in the world. This should be something to be proud of and a flagship for environmental journalists.

TRUCO 2

TRUCO 3

TRUCO

Identificar los
cos, los canales,
mensajes,

Ponerle cara
a la Red
Natura

Explicitar
beneficios
las personas
(Evaluación Ecosist)

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Experiencias de
líderes de opinión

Experiencias e
historias cotidianas

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TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING BETTER THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

After the initial presentations and the workgroup meetings, attendants to the workshop on how to communicate the Natura 2000 Network debated in a plenary session the different contributions made during the working day. The result is a compilation of pieces of advice that can help communication professionals putting across more easily the importance and value of this network of conservation areas. This road map has 13 key points.

ROAD MAP FOR POPULARIZING THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

- 1 USING MARKETING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK
- 2 CREATING A COMMUNICATION PLAN TO MAKE THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK FASHIONABLE
- 3 *PUTTING A FACE* TO THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK
- 4 EXPLAINING THE BENEFITS THAT THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK BRINGS TO PEOPLE
- 5 COMMUNICATING ALSO THE MORE PLEASANT AND LIVELY SIDE OF THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK
- 6 MAKING THE MOST OF NEWS RELATED TO CONFLICT OR DISAGREEMENTS TO PUBLICIZE THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK
- 7 MAKING AN IMPRESSION ON MEDIA MIDDLE AND TOP MANAGEMENT
- 8 *SELLING* STORIES RELATED TO THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK AS A SCOOP
- 9 GETTING SECTORIAL MEDIA INVOLVED
- 10 DRAFTING A PLAN OR DECALOGUE ON THE ESSENCE OF THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK
- 11 ORGANIZING TRAINING EVENTS IN UNIVERSITIES TO DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE ON ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM
- 12 MAKING THE MOST OF THE MEDIATIC HOOK THE MARINE NATURA 2000 NETWORK IS
- 13 GETTING THE RURAL WORLD INVOLVED IN PUBLICIZING THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

1 USING MARKETING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

Basis for the proposal:

It is a question of focusing on selling specific stories, not abstract concepts. Although it may seem surprising, it would be a case of rethinking the Natura 2000 Network in a similar way to gin and tonic - which, in the last few years, has managed to become absolutely fashionable, stealing the place of other spirits.

Keys for its implementation:

We are talking, for example, about:

- Script writing. Telling stories, not just giving information. In a way, we should get inspiration from the type of reality show we see on television, in order to call people's attention.
- Linking up the Natura 2000 Network to other economic areas, like tourism or agriculture. The natural value in itself is not enough to serve as a lure for a wider, non-specialized, audience. *Approaching* Natura 2000 through a revalorization of economic activities in synchrony with conservation and/or recreational activities, is expected to have a bigger impact.
- Going for the information peaks. We must generate news with a "pull" effect and plan for recurrently generating attractive news related to Natura 2000 Network.
- Associating it to a brand. We should reflect calmly about which could be the key ideas associated to that Natura 2000 Network brand. Some think that the fact that it is a European network is already a good label that sells well: a SEA (Special European Area). Many agree on the need to drop as soon as possible the reference to the year 2000, as they see it as obsolete.
- Using graphic material. The Natura 2000 Network has the advantage of having spectacular images of natural beauty to offer that could have a lot of impact when it comes to communicating. That potential should be made the most of.





2 CREATING A COMMUNICATION PLAN TO MAKE THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK FASHIONABLE

Basis for the proposal:

Target audience must be segmented, messages transmitted according to their destination audience and optimal communication channels chosen in each case.

Keys for its implementation:

Por ejemplo estaríamos hablando de:

- It is a proposal complementary to the previous and it stems from the idea that identifying the network with general concepts is no good. We must tell specific stories, adapted to each segment of audience. colectivos.

3 PUTTING A FACE TO THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

Basis for the proposal:

Until now communication efforts have focused mainly on publicizing the natural value and beauty of the environment from a landscape and scenic point of view. It would be a question of putting across more clearly the pragmatic and practical implications for people who live within the Natura 2000 Network.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Telling everyday experiences and stories. Record real positive experiences of the ordinary people who live within the Natura 2000 Network to convince the public opinion, through a message of proximity, that the Natura 2000 Network is not an obstacle or a problem.
- Availing of the experiences of opinion leaders. If the message of the virtues of the Natura 2000 Network reaches people via someone who is well known, we will achieve a much higher impact.
- Underlining what makes each site really special and unique. In this case, too, publicizing the specific will contribute to giving publicity to the general.

4 EXPLAINING THE BENEFITS THAT THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK BRINGS TO PEOPLE

Basis for the proposal:

Using the example of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and linking this case to Natura 2000 Network. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has shown that the economic, social, cultural and political development of the present and future generations depends on the correct functioning of ecosystems.

The invisibility of the monetary value of ecosystem services (direct and indirect contributions to human welfare) has fostered an inefficient use of nature that ignores that its conservation is key to the maintenance of our economic system.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Including content regarding the environmental services that a well maintained biodiversity renders, when informing.



5 COMMUNICATING ALSO THE MORE PLEASANT AND LIVELY SIDE OF THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

Basis for the proposal:

To lighten up the tone and reduce the amount of social conflict associated to the Natura 2000 Network and so leave without arguments those who try to present it as a restrictive initiative, incompatible with the normal development of socioeconomic activities.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Informing from a positive angle. Although a priori it may seem to “sell” less, it is essential to approach the Natura 2000 Network with an amicable socioaffective style that can tie up with the positive feelings that normally lead most people to act on something.
- Recording pleasant and emotional information, along the same lines of the previous proposal. It would be a good idea to strive to tell sweet stories, stories with no conflict. Some people propose recovering the sentimentality of beautiful things, that can touch more people than mere confrontation.
- Putting across the message that the Network is alive and dynamic. There is often the general feeling that everything finishes with the simple designation of an area as protected. The message should be that the Network is not static and that updates are foreseen - always through a dialogue with all the parties involved.



6 MAKING THE MOST OF NEWS RELATED TO CONFLICTS OR DISAGREEMENTS (TERRITORIAL, POLITICAL, ETC.) TO PUBLICIZE THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

Basis for the proposal:

An opportunistic strategy that could complement the previous one. However, it has the added problem that it could cause the Natura 2000 Network to be identified always with conflict situations.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Using the judoka trick. Redirecting the force of a disagreement or political dispute to get the Network talked about in media that are eminently political.
- Using the tick trick. Using news or isolated current affairs that take place in a Natura 2000 Network area as an excuse to talk about the Network.
- Identifying which informative scenarios can leave scope to bring the Natura 2000 Network into the picture. Some recurrent events year after year, like forest fires, floods or the risk of disappearance of some species can present an opportunity to explain what is the Natura 2000 Network.





7 MAKING AN IMPRESSION ON MEDIA MIDDLE AND TOP MANAGEMENT

Basis for the proposal:

In the current format the Natura 2000 Network does not “sell” well, in spite of significant efforts to make it become news on the part of some of the environmental journalists that know the subject. However, there is no similar degree of motivation among many middle and top managers in the media.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Winning over media middle and top managers so that the Natura 2000 Network becomes news. It would be a case of creating a more direct relationship with the editors and middle managers to ensure the publishing of those pieces that deal with matters related to the Natura 2000 Network.
- Ensuring “selling” headlines. Very closely related to some of the previous proposals, one of the keys is finding headlines that attract attention and encourage to go on reading through a singular approach.

BLOCK 04 THE CONCLUSIONS

8 SELLING STORIES RELATED TO THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK AS A SCOOP

Basis for the proposal:

Resort to exclusive stories to lend more uniqueness and impact to the news related to the Natura 2000 Network.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking, for example, about:

- Selling some stories to media as exclusives. The possibility of some news being sold as a scoop could be explored, if that were to be an added factor in favour of its publication by some media. It could be done in some cases, without any harassment involved.

9 GETTING SECTORIAL MEDIA INVOLVED

Basis for the proposal:

To foster synergies with other economic sectors (like farming, fishing and forestry, etc.) in order to inform jointly about the Natura 2000 Network.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking, for example, about:

- Publishing in media dedicated to the agro-farming, forestry, fisheries, etc. sectors. The usual channels of communication of these socio-economic agents (bulletins, magazines, circulars, etc.) could be used to publicize the Natura 2000 Network in a clearer language, more accessible and understandable for them.
- Promoting the relationship between NGOs and professional sectors. Very related to the previous proposal, this collaboration between NGOs and the respective sectors could go in both directions.





10 DRAFTING A PLAN OR DECALOGUE ON THE ESSENCE OF THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

Basis for the proposal:

Establishing the basic references, the minimal explanatory contents necessary for approaching with rigour anything related to the Natura 2000 Network. It could be similar in form to what is normally known as FAQs.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking, for example, about:

- Making a list of frequent questions. With a view to anticipating a number of typical doubts that are recurrent in many Natura 2000 Network sites, the idea would be to draft in plain language a document with reasoned answers to those doubts. In relation to this, SEO/BirdLife is working on a document on the Natura 2000 Network that has local authorities and bodies as its target audience.
- Writing a guide of information resources on the Natura 2000 Network. The result would be a guide of resources that can serve as a documentation source for environmental journalists.

BLOCK 04 THE CONCLUSIONS

11 ORGANIZING TRAINING EVENTS IN UNIVERSITIES TO DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE ON ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM

Basis for the proposal:

Publicizing the potential of our professional specialization in journalism schools.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Giving talks in journalism schools. Giving presentations on environmental journalism as a specialization, with the support of the network of existent communication professionals and teachers. This action could be extended to other schools and specializations.

12 MAKING THE MOST OF THE MEDIATIC HOOK THE MARINE NATURE 2000 NETWORK IS

Basis for the proposal:

The marine areas are very attractive for audiences in general. They are more striking than the land network and they could serve as a hook for communicating the Network.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Benefiting from the publicity of the marine Natura 2000 Network for making the whole network known. This could be a criterion to be applied in many communication actions: starting a conversation with the audience with that they are more intrigued by.





13 GETTING THE RURAL WORLD, THE LOCALS, INVOLVED IN PUBLICIZING THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

Basis for the proposal:

Working jointly with local bodies and administrations can be one of the keys to success when communicating.

Keys for its implementation:

We would be talking about, for example:

- Getting the local press, educational sector and town councils involved. They could all be allies and contribute to publicizing the Network by giving practical advice on how to connect the information content with local reality.

These 13 measures include and compile a good part of the ideas heard during the workshop on communicating the Natura 2000 Network, but they don't go as far as integrating the very many contributions made. In order to give a more general view, some complementary thoughts that were exposed during the working day are detailed below:

- To generate networked actions on the field so that they serve as tangible proof that can contribute to the citizenry valuing and recognizing Natura 2000 Network.
- Simplifying the terminology.
- Resort more to the intangible heritage of the sites.
- To give access to a detailed cartography of the Natura 2000 Network in order to know precisely where the boundaries of the areas are.
- To widen the range of media that are addressed (blogs, Internet, international press, social networks, etc).
- To include the cartography of the Natura 2000 Network in road maps.







STORIES WORTH BEING TOLD

By Arturo Larena, Director of EFEverde

Arturo Larena is a scientist and environmental journalist. He is the Director of EFEverde the Science and Future area of the Agencia EFE, the world's foremost Spanish-language news agency. He has been delegate of EFE in Extremadura, Madrid and Galicia. He teaches at the Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano foundation of the Nobel Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez and is a member of the advisory council of the international network Escritores por la Tierra. He has been a patron of EFE foundation, where he actually fostered the programme for specialization in environmental journalism. He has been awarded the National Prize for the Environment, the Fundacion BBVA Prize for the Conservation of Biodiversity and the Golden Panda Prize of WWF as one of the Spanish nationals who has contributed more to creating a culture of conservation of the environment from the mass media.

In order to know where we want to get, it is important to know where we come from. In the case of how to communicate the Natura 2000 Network this principle also applies. There lies the importance of the workshop on Communicating the Natura 2000 Network. We aimed at ascertaining what we can improve so that information on the Natura 2000 Network is better perceived by both professionals and citizens and we also aimed at defining some key issues and creating a useful tool for every professional who approaches the area of environmental information. We know that it is not a simple task because the whole sector of environmental information and the journalists dedicated to it are still striving for it to be acknowledged and given more space in the mass media. When we look at the dissemination of information on the Natura 2000 Network, we are talking about a superspecialization as well. The result is that it is not always well understood or valued in general issues media, who do not necessarily have environmental journalists on staff. It must be borne in mind that those are essential to reach the general public, to go beyond audiences that are already environmentally aware.



A first step: getting the Natura 2000 Network talked about

In the first place, the Natura 2000 Network has to be talked and written about. In our case, EFE and EFEverde have been making a stake for environmental journalism for a while - hence it is a success story, if you allow me to say so, or at least an experience worth being known because it can serve as a benchmark for others. We are one of the few media to boast an specialized team that, for over two decades, has been working with these matters in all sorts of channels and formats, from teletype to social media. Now we also have Natura 2000 Network experts on board.

I will explain this. As regards informing on the Natura 2000 Network, we have been doing so from before the creation of the Network itself. In fact, if we do a search in EFE database (a virtual memory of all our information production) we come across the first reference to the future network in a teletype message dated 28 April 1998 where we talked about the future Natural Habitats Directive. The news piece, issued in Madrid, was titled “Eight autonomous communities are in favour of

Spain supporting the Habitats Directive” (I will just mention an anecdote: in those first years different possible names for the network are still to be found in texts). From those days up to today, we, the journalists of the different information services of EFE have written and transmitted over 7.000 pieces of news where the Natura 2000 Network is more or less extensively mentioned. Out of those, 1.319 were issued by the National and International services. There may be some repetitions (transmissions by different regional services) and it may seem a high number, but it is tiny if compared to other areas of information (politics, football, culture...) In any case, there is one unquestionable fact: EFE is the medium in Spanish language who has devoted more space to the Natura 2000 Network.

A further example: only in the year 2012 we transmitted through the totality of our services (17 autonomous communities, national, international, local...) 844 news pieces, which amounts to nearly three a day, that talked about the Network. Out of that number, 267 passed through the national or international services to newspapers, radio and television stations, magazines... That is why part of the success in making the Natura 2000 Network known could well be attributed to EFE. I have no doubt that we could have done better but I also am sure that without our unassuming work, today the Natura 2000 Network would be less known.

With this underlying premise we plan on taking another step and, in cooperation with SEO/Birdlife, making the Natura 2000 Network popular and making us all feel proud of what means to have a network of sites under the umbrella of this European hallmark. With that objective in mind and after a year of intense work, we assembled the Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with to which the workshop on communicating the Natura 2000 Network took place. In mid 2012 we heard it was one of the selected Life+ projects in the section of Information and Communication. Jose Antonio Vera, EFE's president, underlined in his presentation the efforts that the agency, via EFEverde and its professionals, was already making to disseminate knowledge not only on conservation opportunities but also on the opportunities for sustainable development that stem from these sites. A network of sites that amounts to 30% of the national territory (1.448 SCIs and nearly 600 SPAs).

“Greening” those who are responsible for the editors

In hardly one year we have increased the amount of news pieces produced and also, most importantly, the depth of treatment of these matters. We have told many stories worth being told that otherwise would have fallen out of the information agenda of the day. Stories of biodiversity, of species that have been successfully conserved thanks to the Network but also examples of how ecotourism or sustainable land farming have benefited from the existence of the Natura 2000 Network. Besides, we are doing so in multimedia formats: text, photo, video, audio for radio, publications on the web, dynamization or viralization on social media... We use all the channels and all the formats to amplify the information on the opportunities that the Network affords. Plus we do so from a journalistic point of view: we lend a voice to all the agents, including those who are critical, because that is what journalism is about. It's about creating awareness not only outside, but within the sector. There has also been a shift within EFE, an improvement in the perception and knowledge of these matters on the part of our colleagues, editors and those responsible for them. If those who decide which themes enter the information agenda have a deeper knowledge of what the Network is, there are more chances of approaching these issues. That has already happened within EFE. In the (several a day) decision making meetings on which are the most important matters, how we are to treat them and on which formats the news pieces will be produced, there is hardly one day without a proposal from EFEverde of a chronicle, interview, reportage or audio piece on the Natura 2000 Network. This may seem unimportant but it shows the Network is no longer an alien term for the journalists of other areas (politics, economy, justice, sports...), who have actually accepted it as a familiar term associated to interesting content, to stories worth being told.

The first step is convincing the managers - within your own organization in the first place and then in others (written press, radio, television, multimedia...) - that the Natura 2000 Network is an information opportunity. If we manage to achieve that in all the media, the next step will be easier. Today is already easier even though the diversity of protection statuses like National Park, Natural Park, SPA, SCI, Reserve of the Biosphere, Natura Network or even the name Natura 2000 Network, questioned by certain sectors, has always been seen as a hindrance to communicating.

This publication is a example of such improvement. Years ago, those of us who decided to specialize had to do it the hard way, now we have the first signposted routes as well as publications like this guide. The first step has already been taken - now we have to tell about it.







RESOURCES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK ON THE WEB

EUROPE

European Commission

ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

Life+ Connecting people with Biodiversity

www.activarednatura2000.org

European Day of the Natura 2000 Network

www.natura2000day.eu

Natura 2000 Network Viewer

natura2000.eea.europa.eu

Natura 2000 Network Barometer

ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/barometer/index_en.htm

Natura 2000 Networking programme

www.natura.org

BirdLife International and Natura 2000 Network

www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia

SPAIN

Ministry for Agriculture, Food and the Environment:

www.magrama.gob.es/es/biodiversidad/temas/espacios-prottegidos/red-natura-2000

SEO/BirdLife

www.seo.org

Europarc

www.redeuroparc.org

WWF España

wwf.es/que_hacemos/especies/huestras_soluciones/red_natura_2000

Global Nature Foundation

www.fundacionglobalnature.org

Information website on the Natura 2000 Network

www.rednatura2000.info

Commercial website for the sale of foodstuffs produced in protected sites and in the Natura 2000 Network.

www.webrednatura.org

Natura 2000 Network Products

www.natura2000products.eu





SEO/BirdLife is the representative organization of BirdLife International in Spain, a global Partnership of independent organization working together as one for nature and people. It is the largest global organization of conservation of birds and nature, which has representatives in more than 120 countries and mobilizes approximately 13 million members and supporters worldwide. All the countries in the European Union have a partner of BirdLife International.

These are the members present in the European Union:



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LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the EU. Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed some 4.171 projects, contributing approximately €3.4 billion euros to the protection of the environment and climate.

Information about all these projects is available at: www.ec.europa.eu/environment/life



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