



Life+ *Natura 2000*

**Connecting people
with biodiversity**

LAYMAN'S REPORT
LIFE 11 INF/ES/665



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1 *The Starting Point*

The Natura 2000 Network, and ipso facto its seminal European Directives, make up an important part of SEO/BirdLife's history. The NGO has studied and staunchly defended the Natura 2000 Network, helping to bring it to wider notice by means of many varied projects and awareness-raising campaigns. These include the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) scheme, the inventory of which serves as the basis for the declaration of any spot as a SPA (Special Protection Area) in Spain.

Until all too recently, for all its importance as Europe's biggest biodiversity-defending initiative, the Natura 2000 Network was largely an unknown quantity. In 2013, together with the EFE Agency, SEO/BirdLife took on the challenge of turning this

situation around. According to a survey conducted by the NGO at the beginning of the project, even though 30% of Spain's territory belongs to the Natura 2000 Network, 90% of Spain's population had never heard of this European protected-site network and knew nothing about its intrinsic worth.

And there was a lot to tell: the Natura 2000 Network is the world's biggest coordinated protected-site network. It was born from the Habitats Directive, which was passed back in 1992 with the remit of guaranteeing the conservation of Europe's most valuable and threatened habitats and species. It also includes the sites declared under the Birds Directive of 1979.



Lammergeier, one of the birds protected by the Natura 2000 Network.

It comprises over 27,000 sites throughout the whole of Europe to protect our most valuable natural heritage. The Natura 2000 Network's overarching idea is that Europe's landscape as seen today is fruit of time-honoured cultural and historical interaction between humankind and nature down the ages. The aim, therefore, is not to create natural sanctuaries where humankind may not tread. Within the network the conservation of nature goes hand in hand with wellbeing and benefits for humankind and the economy as a whole. Far from being a barrier to socioeconomic development, the Natura 2000 Network offers new opportunities for carrying out traditional productive, recreational and tourism activities.

It stands to reason that these sites need to be kept in a sound state. The European Commission points out that Natura 2000 sites provide Europe's population with vital services such as carbon sequestration, maintenance of water quality and protection from spates and droughts; as such its worth is reckoned to be between 200 and 300 billion euros a year.

The working hypothesis of the **Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity** project is simple: no one will care about conserving something if they don't even know it exists. It therefore set itself the aim of helping to preserve the Natura 2000 Network by raising its profile among the public at large. From September 2012 to March 2017 the scenario for this action was mainly Spain, though it also spilled into other EU countries. **SEO/BirdLife** is the project's coordinating beneficiary and the **Agencia EFE** is its associate beneficiary. It has worked with a 2.1 million euro budget, half of this funded by the European Commission.

The other half came from the beneficiaries plus the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery, Food and the Environment (*Ministerio de Agricultura y Pesca, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente*); the foundation called *Fundación Biodiversidad*; the electricity supply company *Red Eléctrica de España* and the following Spanish regional authorities: *Junta de Andalucía*; *Junta de Castilla y León*; *Gobierno Vasco*; *Gobierno de Navarra*; *Govern Balear*; *Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha*; *Comunidad de Madrid* and *Gobierno de Cantabria*.



2 The Method

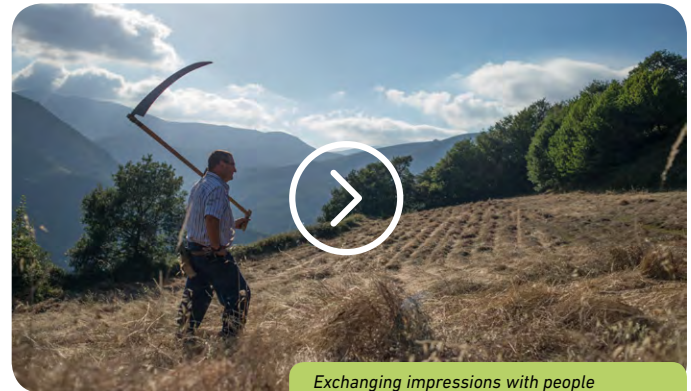
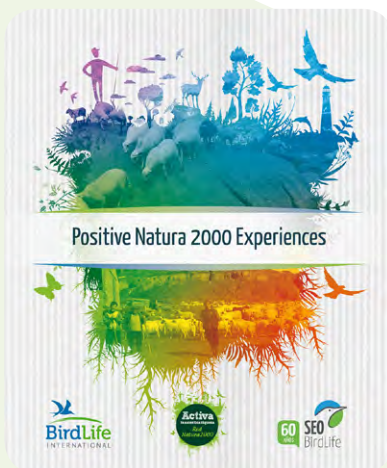
The Natura 2000 Network has been activated by involving all its conservation stakeholders across the board, thereby ensuring that people in a position of taking positive action do so with the utmost interest and effectiveness. Conversely, another, parallel guiding idea was to change the mindset of everyone who harboured a negative perception by showcasing the importance of the Natura 2000 Network and the real development opportunities it offers.

2.1. Connecting with people of the Natura 2000 territory The productive Sectors

The productive Sectors

Communication campaigns and various acts of liaison have been carried out with people who actually live and work in Natura 2000 territory as our main allies in this endeavour and, in many cases, direct agents in the conservation of the Natura 2000 Network.

Inventories have been drawn up of products, services and experiences showing that development and conservation within the Natura 2000 Network are compatible. The most interesting experiences have been set down in the publication *Positive Natura 2000 Experiences* distributed throughout the whole of Europe, also published in *Spanish*.



*Exchanging impressions with people
Of the territory has been key in the project.*

A total of 37 participative workshops with crop- and animal-farmers and seafarers have been held throughout practically the whole national territory with the aim of debunking the false myths about the network and bringing home its true value. These training and debating workshops have raised the profile of the Natura 2000 Network within the particular territory in each case while also recording local concerns and phasing them into future proposals to work towards a management of Natura 2000 Network that is conducive to opportunities for one and all. The workshops served as a forum for the productive sectors to express their opinions and needs directly and also ensured that people whose daily work helps to care for and conserve Natura 2000 sites feel heeded and appreciated.



*Finding out the actual situation of the productive sectors
has been one of the overriding objectives of the workshops.*

The crop- and animal-farming sector, involved in 80% of Natura 2000 sites, is one of the main pillars of network management. Specific **material** has therefore been drawn up for this sector and widely distributed through the farming offices of Spain's sub-provincial administrative divisions called "Comarcas" and farming trade unions.



Stakeholders in the defence of the Natura 2000 Network

A crucial factor in keeping Natura 2000 sites in a favourable state of conservation was to work together with all stakeholders responsible for managing the network and watching out for its conservation.



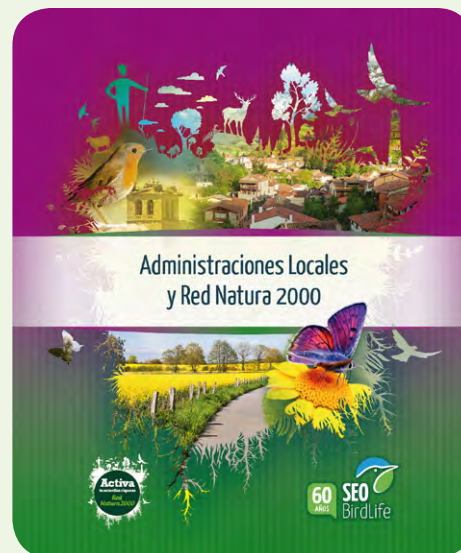
Participants in the workshop Local Authorities and the Natura 2000 Network, held in Madrid on 4 July 2013.

Local Authorities

Sixty percent of Spain's local authorities have at least one Natura 2000 site within their territory. When the project kicked off only 33% of local environment councillors knew what it was.

The publication called **Administraciones Locales y Red Natura 2000** (Local Authorities and the Natura 2000 Network), distributed with the collaboration of The Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (*Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias*: FEMP) to all local authorities with some Natura 2000 territory, managed to lever up this proportion by 18 percentage points to 55.6%.

The manual has been drawn up in a participative process in which environment officers, councillors, mayors, lawyers and local associations from all corners of Spain have collaborated with Life project technicians, this whole process kicking off with a workshop that laid down the bases of the publication.

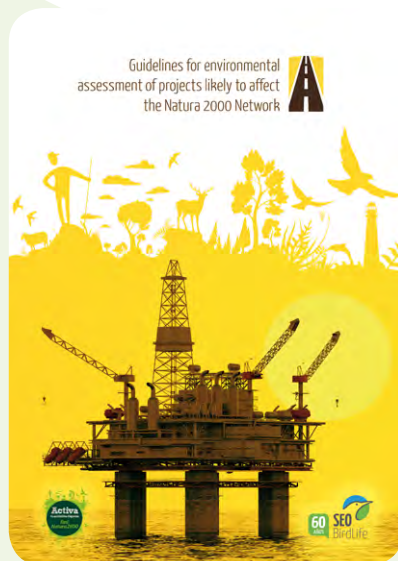


Environmental Impact Assessment Officers

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) is a nature-conservation procedure designed to forestall any human-caused adverse environmental effects or mitigate them to acceptable levels before the project actually goes ahead.

With the aim of providing EIA professionals with a practical tool, a book was brought out called *Guidelines for environmental assessment of projects likely to affect the Natura 2000 Network* (also published in *Spanish*). This publication was likewise the fruit of a participative process involving over 50 government officers, environmental consultants, environmental organizations and developers. Two workshops and an online survey were held to pinpoint those aspects that the publication had to deal with and the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment procedure.

With a hands-on approach, the publication aims to shed light on those concepts and criteria that currently pose an obstacle to assessments or throw up conflicting interpretations. It has been warmly received and widely taken up by EIA officers.

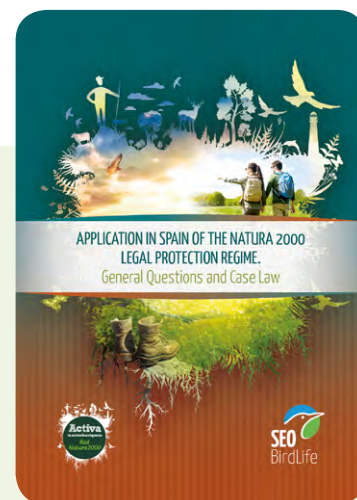


Legal Practitioners

Legal practitioners in general (courts, members of the public prosecutor's office and lawyers) are the last-ditch guarantors of meeting the European Union's species and habitat conservation objectives, as laid down in the Natura 2000 Network itself and other instruments. For this very reason a publication targeted at the legal fraternity was published under this project, "The Natura 2000 Network in Spain: Legal Regime and Case-law Analysis" (*La Red Natura 2000 en España: Régimen jurídico y análisis jurisprudencial*). This looked in depth at how Spain's court decisions are enforcing the Natura 2000 protection legislation, quoting also the most important case law of the European Court of Justice, together with jurisprudential references and rulings on enforcement of European Union law on this matter. The publication also comes in useful for government authorities and any other important legal stakeholders, such as environment-defence and -protection organizations.

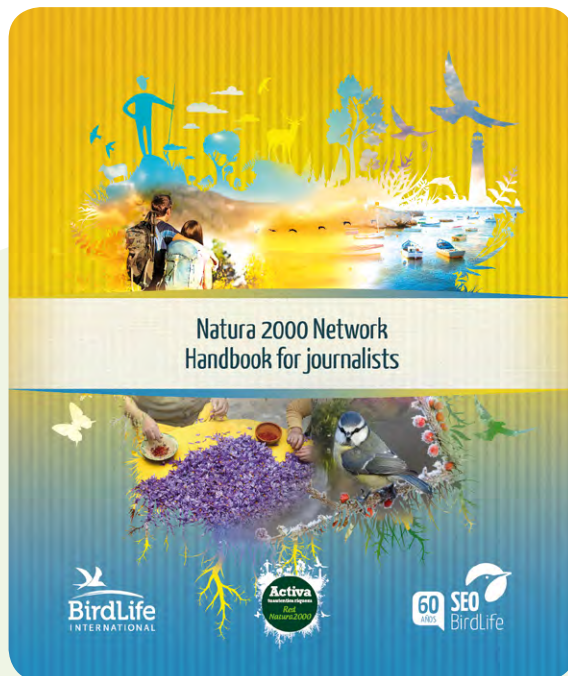
The publication was sent out to all magistrates of Spain's judicial review procedure and to lawyers and legal libraries. This soon bore fruit in the form of more complete judgments drawing directly on the publication's text.

A summary and updated adaptation has also been brought out in *English* for use in other EU countries.



2.2 The media, essential allies

A workshop was held with media professionals to find out at first hand the current situation in the media and introduce journalists to the Natura 2000 Network. From this encounter, and from a survey conducted on 70 media professionals, a publication was drawn up called *Natura 2000 Network. Handbook for Journalist*. This publication looks at how this protection scheme is being portrayed in the media and sets out a roadmap with tips on how best to bring home its importance to the public at large. It has also been brought out in [Spanish](#).



Moments from the workshop held with media professionals in collaboration with the Association of Environmental-Information Journalists (Asociación de Periodistas de Información Ambiental: APIA).



The importance of the media's role in the communication of this project is brought out by the participation of the *Agencia EFE* as associate beneficiary. Throughout the project EFEverde has produced a total of **161 news reports** based on themes or sectors, 61 of them in large format including not only written text and web format but also an audiovisual and graphic report. There have also been 37 radio micro-slots and 22 interviews including individual and group declarations from people actually earning a living in Natura 2000 sites plus government experts and representatives. All these products have been distributed by EFE to over 2600 media outlets, as well as being broadcast on the project's own channels.

The fine results accruing from the SEO/BirdLife-Agencia EFE alliance are seen not only in the number of Natura 2000 news items but also the synergies and greater clout given to all project actions, increasing their influence and knock-on capacity for new collaboration and support from elsewhere.



EFEverde team has covered all project actions.



SEO/BirdLife's press office has sent out over 90 **press releases** and 30 calls throughout the project. The main Life+ communication activities have brought together the media in press conferences or field excursions. Pride of place here goes to the media events related to European Natura 2000 Day and the broadcasting of the television series "Natura 2000 Network, living in Spain's protected sites" (*Red Natura 2000, la vida en los espacios protegidos de España*).

The four-year project generated over 8000 media hits, reaching a potential audience of over one billion and reckoned to be worth over 13 million euros. But there has also been a notable increase in Natura 2000 media mentions even in new items bearing no direct relationship with the project. The project itself can therefore be viewed as a springboard towards greater media appreciation of the importance of the Natura 2000 Network.



Media presentation of the television series.



Event with journalists to explain the Natura 2000 Day.



Press conference about the Natura 2000 Awards.



Tasting the Natura 2000 Network with journalists.

2.3 The future of the Natura 2000 Network

The future of the Natura 2000 Network

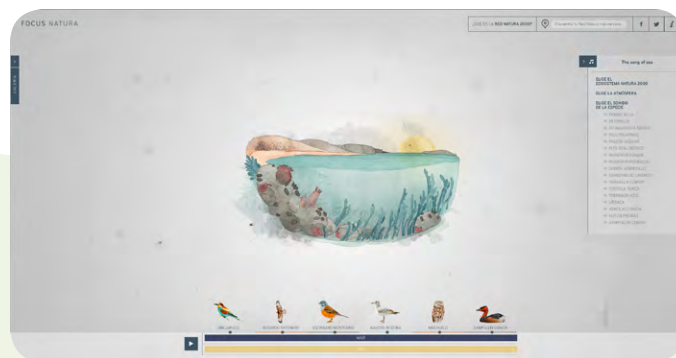
Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity has produced for schools the website [Educanaturalmente](http://www.educanaturalmente.org). This is designed to help teachers show their pupils the worth of the Natura 2000 Network in an insightful, fun-based and practical way.

The web offers games, group dynamics, workshops and a whole host of other activities, rounded out with backup material to help teachers grasp the objectives of each activity and set it going. There are also pupil factfiles plus additional material. Twenty seven on-the-spot classroom activities have also been carried out.



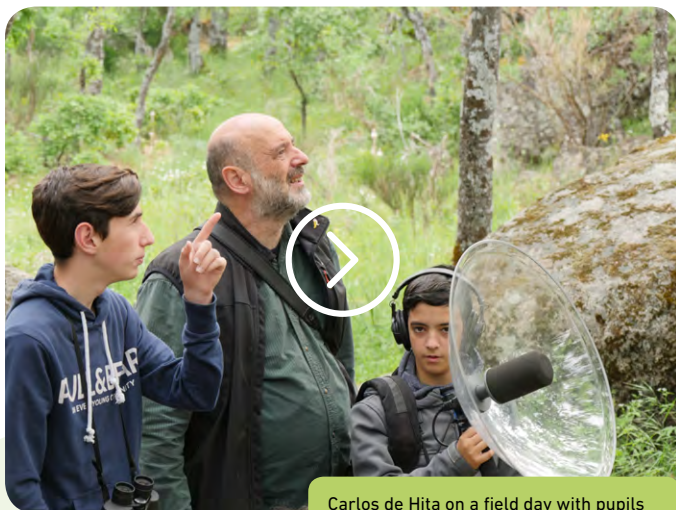
www.educanatura2000.org: A window onto the nearby world of nature so that both teachers and pupils can learn all about this vast network of protected sites and enjoy its benefits together.

A web called **Focus Natura** has also been set up to make the Natura 2000 Network better known among youngsters and show how direct contact with the network's birds and nature can boost their concentration capacity. The web enables users to blend different ecosystems, atmospheres and birdsongs to create bespoke sound landscapes in which they can relax, concentrate their minds and enjoy nature without leaving home. They can then share their creations on social media and download them to their computer to create playlists. The web also tells users the nearest Natura 2000 sites and some of the birds that can be seen or heard there.



Focus Natura creates audiovisual pieces inspired on the Natura 2000 Network

The idea is based on several scientific studies that have concluded that *contact with nature and listening to birdsong helps youngsters suffering from the Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) to relax and improve their concentration levels*. To bring this action to wider notice a *promotional video* was recorded during a day out in the woodland known as Bosque de La Herrería, when a group of ADHD sufferers from the secondary school IES Altair carried out various activities designed to encourage them to listen to and perceive the sounds of nature.



Carlos de Hita on a field day with pupils from the secondary school IES Altair.

Focus Natura has by now reached over 140,000 people on social networking sites, most of them youngsters in the 18-24 age bracket. Surveys show that youngsters' knowledge of the Natura 2000 Network has doubled over this four-year period (from 8.9% to 16.7%).

But it has also aroused a keen interest in the media and among influencers in the worlds of maternity, education, psychology and social action. This looks set to be the germ of a much wider-ranging project to show the benefits of contact with nature to a much broader audience in today's society.

Producer-consumer connection

An *information campaign* has also been launched in 50 hypermarkets in 14 of Spain's regions (*comunidades autónomas*) to raise consumer awareness of the Natura 2000 Network and drive an appellation-of-origin scheme giving market preference to its products.

Eight SEO/BirdLife promoter teams were on hand for 300 days in the Alcampo hypermarkets to explain to shoppers why products from protected sites are worth more. More than 140 products from Natura 2000 sites were also labelled as such on the shop shelves.

Surveys show that the number of people declaring a knowledge of the Natura 2000 Network increased by over three percentage points (from 20.6 to 24%) after six awareness-raising days in each shop. Bearing in mind that 70% of Spain's population visits a shop of this type at least once every 15 days, actions of this type could be highly effective while also raising the awareness of the shop bosses themselves.



Consumer information on the benefits of the Natura 2000 Network has been very positive.

The network online and on social media

The project website www.activarednatura2000.org has served as the virtual window on all the contents, materials and actions built up around the Life+ project. Over 71,000 visits and more than 140,000 page views vouch for this site as an excellent meeting point. Special social-media profiles have also been created for the project to increase its visibility; it has by now clocked up 2691 Facebook followers and 10,300 Twitter followers. Social networking sites have been crucial in bringing the project to wider

notice and helping it to achieve its goals. The 8300 tweets sent in this four-year period since the project profile was set up are worth between €300,000 and €400,000 in publicity terms.

Social-media action always peaks on European Natura 2000 Day. With the hashtag **#Natura2000Day** an online campaign has been driven every year (mainly on Twitter and Facebook) reaching a real scope of over 3 million accounts each year.



www.activarednatura2000.org has clocked up over 71,000 visits and more than 140,000 page views.

Natura 2000 Day

Without a shadow of a doubt the **European Natura 2000 Day** has become the hallmark of this Life+ project. It is the first time ever in Europe that a bottom-up initiative of this type has been made an official day. This resounding success guarantees that every 21 May, the European network of protected sites is spoken about and its state of conservation is discussed.

Europe Natura 2000 Day, set up by SEO/BirdLife with the support of Agencia EFE and BirdLife Europe, is the first communication campaign for this protection scheme carried out in the European Union. Under the slogan *The simple flap of a butterfly's wing could change the world* it invites the public to make a gesture for this European network of protected sites. Since the first Day back in 2013 it has chalked up 100,000 gestures, 15,000 participants in nearly 500 activities, 20,000 schoolchildren from over 160 schools and has been held in 24 countries. In 2015, moreover, it was the first initiative of its type to win the Commission's European Citizens' Prize.





The third European Natura 2000 Day won the European Commission's European Citizens' Prize. From a shortlist of 23 finalist projects from 14 EU countries, it won most votes from Europe's citizens.

The Natura 2000 Network makes its debut as a television series

March 2016 saw the premiere of the television series *Red Natura 2000, la vida en los espacios protegidos de España* (The Natura 2000 Network: living in Spain's protected sites) on channel 2 (La 2) of the Spanish broadcasting organisation, TVE. Running through 28 chapters, the series brings out the true worth of this great network of protected sites. As well as the TV programmes, 28 Sunday radio micro-slots also went out to the nation on Radio 5 of Spain's national radio network, RNE. Each TV programme featured a Natura 2000 stakeholder and investigated his or her livelihood within the territory. These programmes were watched by nearly five million people while over 800,000 listeners tuned in to the radio slots. The upshot was a much greater appreciation of the natural, social and cultural worth of the **29 Natura 2000 sites**.

The website natura2000.seo.org pools the whole content of the series with text, photos and videos, broken down into chapters, stories, featured personages and sites, with additional practical information about each Natura 2000 site. The website rtve.es has also set up a page on the series with all the information and videos (www.rtve.es/rednatura2000), guaranteeing the broadest possible reach for the whole content.

1st Day



2nd Day



3rd Day



Natura 2000 Song



2.4 Impact and benefits of Life+ Natura 2000 Network: Connecting people with biodiversity

Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity has carried out the first global communication campaign on the Natura 2000 Network in Spain. Throughout four years SEO/BirdLife and Agencia EFE worked together to raise the profile of the Natura 2000 Network among Spain's society, carrying out innovative actions that have involved all stakeholders in the world's biggest coordinated network of protected sites.



Participants in the presentation of the results (March 2017).

Back in 2013, when the project kicked off, 90% of Spain's population had never heard of the network and knew nothing about it. Fast forward four years and, after the project's unflagging awareness-raising campaign, this percentage has dropped to 78.9%. **According to the final project survey** Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity, knowledge of the EU's protected site network has increased by 11 percentage points. Over eight million people in Spain, accounting for 21.1% of the population, knew about the Natura 2000 Network by the end of the project.

The survey results show that this increasing knowledge has gone hand in hand with user interaction with the Natura 2000 Network. In 2013 75.7% of those who knew about it had visited at least one of the sites. Four years later this figure is approaching 90%.

By the end of the project most people in Spain viewed inclusion in the Natura 2000 Network positively, this figure rising to 87.8% of respondents, eight points up on the 2013 survey (79.9%).

Bringing the network's worth to much wider notice has also had a knock-on effect on consumer appreciation of Natura 2000 products. The survey shows that, at the same price, two out of three consumers (67.9%) would choose a product made in one of these sites. Under similar quality conditions but with a higher-priced Natura 2000 product, 43.8% would still opt for the latter. The media profile of the Natura 2000 concept has increased not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. Any link with Natura 2000 is now viewed as a bonus. Producers or companies trading in any Natura 2000 site are now noting this value-added effect after featuring in broadcasting events such as the series Natura 2000: la vida en los espacios protegidos de España.



European Natura 2000 Day will continue to groom and improve these figures year after year. The television series will be rebroadcast and will feature permanently on the website. The media and working journalists are now aware of the network and see it as a worthy news item. Government authorities have now cottoned on to the fact that the Natura 2000 Network does not have to be viewed and reported as a bone of contention or source of problems but rather of added value and positive knock-on effects. This also means that protection of the Natura 2000 Network will improve, not only because the public now know more about it and appreciate it better but also because environment officers, councillors, judges, etc, have more expertise and better tools to protect it. Furthermore, thanks to the collaboration with companies, advertising agencies, opinion leaders, representatives of productive sectors, federations or mass media, Natura 2000 is now much better known and appreciated, and is being phased into the agendas of many of the strategic stakeholders.

Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity has shown it is possible to make headway in the tricky task of getting the Natura 2000 Network across to the general public, upping its profile and debunking the hackneyed myths of troublesomeness, irrelevance to daily life and bureaucratic complications. And it has done so by making the utmost of available resources, using formulae that could now be applied in any other country. The results of the latest Eurobarometer show that the Natura 2000 Network is little known throughout the whole European Union; there is hence a need for extending communication campaigns of this type to other countries. This project has laid down the foundations upon which to build the common European house.



3 *Life+ in figures*

5 practical publications for finding out about and conserving the Natura 2000 Network

Identification of 1600 products from Natura 2000 sites

More than 1200 Natura 2000 court judgements analysed

An audience of over 5 million for the series Natura 2000 Network, la vida en los espacios protegidos de España on La 2 of TVE

Over 800,000 tuned in to the Natura 2000 programme on Radio 5 of RNE

100,000 butterfly-making hand gestures in support of the scheme

15,000 participants in the European Natura 2000 Day, 500 activities within the territory and 24 countries brought together in celebration

Over 20,000 schoolchildren told about the network

Over 13,000 visits and 200 teachers registered on www.educanatura2000.org

Over 90 press releases and 160 reports by the agencia EFE

Over 8000 media hits

Information campaign in 50 hypermarkets with over 140 products identified under a Natura 2000 appellation-of-origin scheme

37 hands-on workshops with farmers and fishermen

Over 70,000 visits to the project website www.activarednatura2000.org

10,000 followers on Twitter and over 2000 on Facebook

4 *Beyond the Life+ Natura 2000 Network: Connecting people with biodiversity*

The path opened up by this project, chiming in as it does with other Natura 2000-communicating Life projects, represents a turning point in Spain. The scheme is now much better known and there is no going back. The future of protected sites in both Spain and Europe as a whole depends on the public first knowing about, appreciating and watching out for the crucial services nature gives us.

The fruits of Life+ Natura 2000: Connecting people with biodiversity will be reaped for a long time to come.



European Natura 2000 Day will be an official celebration throughout the whole of the European Union. This guarantees that, every time 21 May comes round each year, Natura-2000 media interest will be kindled anew, giving the government, public and private organisations and citizens themselves the chance to carry out promotional acts and Natura 2000-related activities.

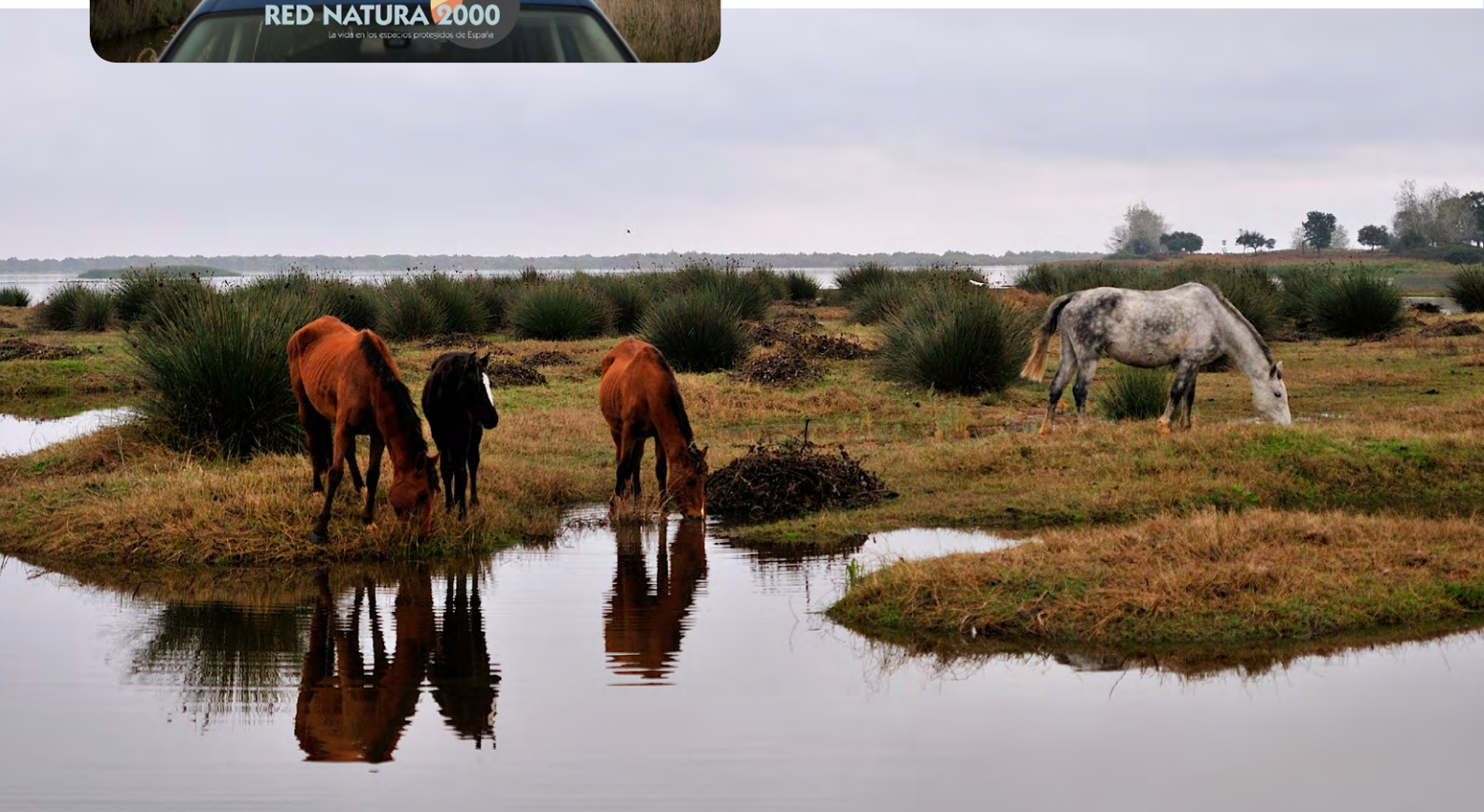


The television series *Red Natura 2000. La vida en los espacios protegidos de España*, will be rebroadcast on the TVE's La 2 channel while the internet content will be kept indefinitely at www.rtve.es/television/red-natura-2000/ and at natura2000.seo.org.



Getting Natura 2000 Network across to children and youngsters will continue to be one of SEO/BirdLife's main concerns. The education portal www.educanatura2000.org for teachers will be kept up and fleshed out with other education campaigns. The [proyecto FOCUS](#) website will also be kept online indefinitely.

The website activarednatura2000.org will be kept online for at least 5 years and will continue to publicise Natura 2000 through beneficiaries' social-media profiles. All publications and awareness-raising material drawn up within the project will remain available on the website. SEO/BirdLife and EFEVerde will continue to broadcast and publicise the Natura 2000 Network unflaggingly, since it has now been hard wired into the very identity of both organizations.



5 *Travel mates*

As well as partners and co-funders, several other key collaborators have put their shoulders to the wheel, helping to make the Natura 2000 Network better known.

Alcampo

Ayuntamiento de Torrelodones
(Town Council of Torrelodones)

Asociación de Periodistas de Información Ambiental
(Environmental Journalists Association)

ASDE Scouts España

Asociación Española de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental
(Spanish Environmental Impact Assessment Association)

BirdLife Europe

Carlos de Hita

Colegio de Abogados de Madrid **(Madrid Lawyers' Association)**

Colegio Educrea

Editorial Santillana

Europarc España

Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias
(Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces)

Fundación Oso Pardo

Radiotelevisión Española

José Antonio Corraliza

Juan Ramón Lucas

Life+ Iberlince

Life+ Infonatur

Rural-it

Mara Torres

Natura HD Films

Sra. Rushmore

The Fly Hunter

Unión de Pequeños Agricultores
(Trade Union of Small Farmers)



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Natura 2000

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