

PROGRAMA DE VOLUNTARIADO DEL PROYECTO LIFE 15 NAT/ES/000734 SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN SPAs OF CASTILLA-LA MANCHA FOR STEPPE BIRDS CONSERVATION

I. Identificación del responsable del Proyecto

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II. Fines y Objetivos

The main objective of LIFE STEPPE FARMING is to halt the population decline of steppe birds included in the Annex I of the Birds Directive, and classified as threatened, declining endangered or depleted in the latest Article 12 assessment of conservation status. The project aims to increase the population of some of these species in specific locations and to reduce threats to steppe birds derived from the changes in farming

III. Actividades

1. To implement more sustainable and competitive models for crops and livestock. To preserve the territory's mosaic structure and its value as habitat for steppe birds without losing productivity;
2. To reduce the use of pesticides and modify the techniques of pest control and use of agrichemical products;
3. To remove threats and obstacles facing birds and recover the territory's ecological infrastructure, such as small ponds or breeding facilities, which are important elements for steppe bird conservation;
4. To win the trust of farmers, sheep breeders and hunters and to increase the local community's awareness of the positive social and economic benefits of species conservation and the traditional landscape structure;
5. To improve knowledge of the status of and threats to steppe bird populations;
6. To implement the most important conservation measures of the EU Species Action Plans for the little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), great bustard (*Otis tarda*) and lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), three species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive; and
7. To produce a regional plan for steppe bird conservation. Expected results: The main expected results are:
Halting the population decline of the most threatened steppe bird populations and increasing by 10-15% the presence of species such as the little bustard, stone-curlew (*Burhinus oediconemus*), pin-tailed sandgrouse (*Pterocles alchata*), black-bellied sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) and Dupont's lark (*Chersophilus duponti*);
8. Increasing the breeding population of the lesser kestrel to at least 100 pairs;
9. Enlarging by 25 000 ha the El Hito Natura 2000 SPA site;
10. Increased ecological connectivity, vegetation coverage and plant diversity in the project areas: 20 km of hedges in boundaries and 5 000 ha of wasteland pastures;
11. Including 50 farmers (1 500 ha) in a land stewardship network, achieving a decrease in nitrogen and pesticide active matter by 25%, and an increase of fallow and legume rotations by 20%. The participating farmers will sign collaboration agreements to continue implementing after the project at least three of the nine sustainable agronomic measures implemented during the project. It is expected that participating farmers will increase the profitability of their holdings by over 15%. Cereal, vegetable

oil, legumes and almonds from these farmers will be marketed to consumers as being produced in a way that is sustainable and good for biodiversity;

12. Application of a 'sustainable sourcing guide for cereal and legume production for the conservation of steppe birds';

13. Development and implementation of a 'regional plan for the conservation of steppe birds' and a proposal for new agri-environmental schemes under the EU Rural Development Programme to be implemented in 2020;

14. Collaboration with hunting societies in steppe bird protection, with the participation of 500 hunters directly or indirectly in the project. This is expected to reduce the accidental shooting of protected species by 20%;

15. The project expects to have reach 100 000 people in the region with its communication activities and to inform 300 000 viewers and listeners through TV and radio coverage; and 16. It will support the delivery of Article 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services).

IV. Ámbito Territorial

Toledo, Cuenca y Ciudad Real. Castilla-La Mancha (España).

V. Duración

40 meses a partir de Octubre de 2016.

VI. Nº de Voluntarios estimados, perfil de cometidos a desarrollar y cualificación o formación elegible.

VII. Otros criterios determinantes del perfil del destinatario Voluntario.

VIII. Medios y recursos para el Programa de Voluntariado

IX. Mecanismos de control, seguimiento y evaluación

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