



MEMORIA 2011

PROYECTS AND CAMPAINGS

«Pastando Biodiversidad»

On completion of the first year of a ground-breaking conservation project, AMUS is happy to conclude that this new idea has been a great success. We have brought together farmers and livestock owners to discuss how we can work together and there are now more than sixty-five farms, situated within the Natura 2000 network in Badajoz province, whose proprietors are prepared to collaborate with AMUS initiatives to aid conservation in the area. Reaching this goal is, in itself, a huge step forward. Whilst all of this work got underway in the countryside (construction of hackings, land surveys, signage at the entrance to participating farms etc.) another key part of the programme was completed within the hospital itself. The objective was to create a technical document which described in detail twenty-five of the patients treated, whose problems were relevant to the project. Of these selected animals, seventeen were released back into the wild



A variety of images of the Lesser Kestrel hacking facility.



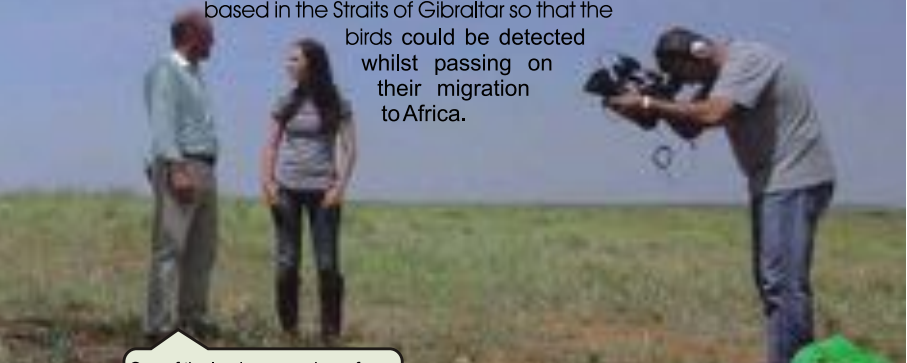
The twenty-five individuals chosen for the project had suffered orthopaedic and soft tissue injuries. Seventeen were returned to their natural habitat.



The Eagle Owl hacking, showing the chicks and the adult male who acted as both tutor and father.

In terms of the hackings a special mention goes to that of the Lesser Kestrel, from which a total of almost forty young, including one individual who was radio-marked, were liberated. Their fidelity to the area was noted as was their pre-migration behaviour before they made their way south. Five Eagle Owl chicks were reintroduced via hacking in Hornachos, which is situated in the quartz-based sierras of central Badajoz. They were all raised in an exceptional installation right on the slopes, by an adult male who is unsuitable for release.

A total of six birds have been radio-marked as part of the project. The latter three are trans-Saharan migrants hence we asked for the co-operation of the organisations who are based in the Straits of Gibraltar so that the birds could be detected whilst passing on their migration to Africa.



One of the landowners whose farms are within the Natura 2000 network, who has signed up for the project.

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 Apdo de correos, 6
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Montagu's Harrier Campaign

Soon we will have reached the milestone of twenty years of work with the Montagu's Harrier, the bird which set our organisation in motion. This year the economic support of the regional government has allowed us to complete another season of the campaign throughout Extremadura. We have been able to carry out population censuses, prevent nest destruction during harvesting operations, incubate eggs and provide paediatric attention for chicks admitted to the Centre.

By way of thanks to Patri who was with us for a few months, working on the conservation project and with the incubation/breeding team. Her work was of key importance during what was an extremely busy period for AMUS.

Increasing the awareness of farmers with regard to conservation, and reaching agreements for future collaboration, are the two prime objectives of our project, which provides a model for the rest of Spain. It has been financed and coordinated by the Environmental Department of the Government of Extremadura (DGMN) Extremadura.

Iván is in charge of the incubation and breeding area within AMUS and he makes a great job of it.

Specialised wildlife collection service

This year we reached an important agreement with the Environmental Department of the Government of Extremadura (DGMN) regarding the collection and roadside assistance programme for injured or sick wildlife. This has allowed us to maximise our response to the growing number of calls to the Centre requesting help for animals in distress. In fact, this year we have had more patients than ever before, with almost 800 admissions to the hospital. AMUS has attended all the call-outs received in Badajoz province, providing service 7 days a week during all year.

The collection of injured wild animals requires qualified personnel plus the necessary equipment for capture, provision of immediate medical assistance if necessary and transportation to the AMUS facility. Birds, reptiles, mammals and amphibians can all be catered for.

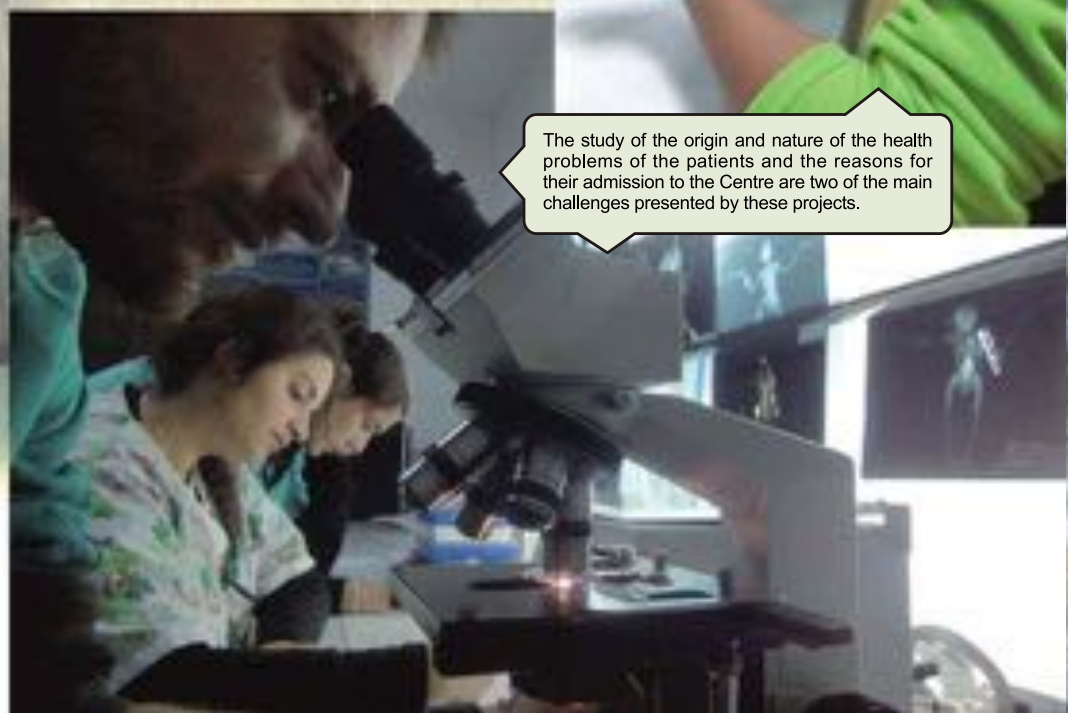


Medicine as an aid to conservation

We are continuing with our spatial epidemiological studies and the analysis of disease-causing factors in wild populations, as in the case of the Montagu's Harrier. We began a specific study of this species in 2010, in which we count on the cooperation of CISA-INIA (a specialised centre for the investigation of animal health) for the processing and analysis of all the samples taken from wild colonies. Additionally, at the end of this year, we also gained approval for a parallel study, in which we will georeference the causes for admission to the AMUS hospital. We would like to thank Fernando Esperón and Irene Iglesias for these new lines of investigation.



The study of the origin and nature of the health problems of the patients and the reasons for their admission to the Centre are two of the main challenges presented by these projects.



Vultures for the Balkans

Collaboration at a European level is becoming a key factor in the success of projects concerned with the conservation of endangered species. This is the reason why AMUS has become involved with a programme for the reintroduction of scavenger species in the Balkan mountains of Bulgaria. Ten of the griffon vultures which have been treated in the AMUS hospital have been donated to Green Balkans, a Bulgarian organisation dedicated to nature conservation. Their intention is to reintroduce the Griffon Vulture followed, in future years, by the Black Vulture and Lammergeier.



Griffon Vultures at AMUS, a few days before undertaking their long journey to the Bulgarian mountains.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROJECTS

The Nature Classroom

This is one of the longest-running educational projects at AMUS, located in Villafraanca de los Barros, in conjunction with the Town Hall and the Casa de la Cultura. The nature classroom is a permanent fixture, hence we have been able to employ a part-time educator and offer a high-quality, varied programme to the municipal schoolchildren.

Workshops, camping expeditions, day trips, and practical work at AMUS are just some of the activities which we have provided over the course of the year.

Our colleague Alicia has, once again, been in charge of the Nature Classroom this year. She has energised what is one of the most important AMUS projects, in terms of education and public awareness, very effectively.



Sponsor a wild animal

This campaign is a permanent fixture in our annual calendar. Before spring gets underway it is re-launched, in order to find sponsors for the baby birds and animals which will arrive during the season. The group of public companies in Extremadura (GPEX) launched a campaign to find new sponsors for our hospital patients amongst their employees. They also helped to finance the production of last year's annual report. In return, we here at AMUS provided them with an interesting training course..

Sponsorships are not only important in terms of fund-raising but also provide us with a unique way of raising public awareness with regards to our work.



Volunteer programme



The volunteer programme at AMUS is nothing less than exemplary. This is proven by the testimonies of the hundreds of volunteers who take part in our various projects annually. The feedback received from the volunteers and from the staff they work with points to something more valuable than a standard volunteer programme. We would like to take the opportunity here to congratulate them and also say a very sincere thank-you to everyone involved.



TRAINING AND INVESTIGATION



The necessity to keep our own training up-to-date has motivated us to incorporate this as part of our work. Each year, via the GMC, a group working in the field of medicine as an aid to conservation, we organise a number of seminars aimed at keeping abreast with the latest techniques across a variety of disciplines.

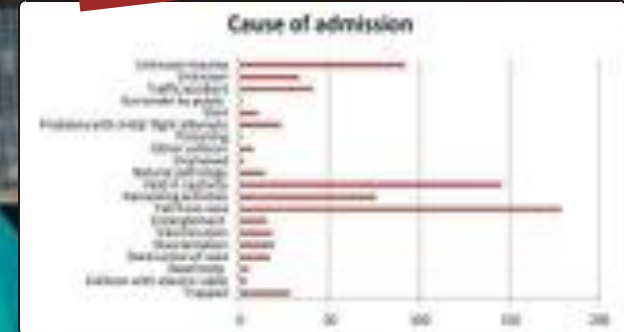
Training and investigation have grown to become important aspects of the work done by AMUS. We have exceeded our initial goals in these areas and nowadays the seminars, conferences and courses we offer are a reference point for hundreds of professionals, both at a national and a European level. The number of agreements we have with universities continues to grow, not only in the case of undergraduates but also for post-graduate scholarship holders and students studying for a Master's degree.

The commitment of AMUS to volunteer programmes has grown to become an important training platform. Of particular note this year has been the work done by Antonio, a volunteer vet, who has created a detailed document on traumatology. AMUS would like to thank him and draw attention to his hard work and total commitment to the project.

The specialised courses offered by AMUS have attracted a lot of interest from many types of student and also from professionals in the biomedical sector both here in Spain and across Europe.



HOSPITAL STATISTICS



Species	Count	Species	Count
Magpie	10	Short-eared Owl	3
Great Crested Grebe	1	Toucan Owl	20
Whoby Stork	104	European Magpie	10
Little Bittern	1	Common Swift	21
Cattle Egret	8	European Roller	1
Little Egret	1	Common Kingfisher	2
Violet Heron	1	European Bee-eater	4
Black-winged Kite	1	Southern Gray Shrike	5
Black Kite	6	Woodhoop Shrike	1
Red Kite	1	Common Magpie	2
Griffon Vulture	28	Jackdaw	1
Short-toed Snake Eagle	4	Common Raven	1
Spanish Imperial Eagle	2	House Martin	18
Golden Eagle	1	Bank Swallow	1
Booted Eagle	15	Owl & Warbler	1
Common Buzzard	21	Southern Starling	1
Northern Goshawk	1	House Sparrow	1
European Sparrowhawk	3	None	1
Montagu's Parrot	10	Goldfinch	100
Lesser Kestrel	11	Greenfinch	5
Common Kestrel	22	Lark	22
Martin	1	Mediterranean Pond Turtle	1
Great Bustard	1	Lattice & Wren	1
Little Bustard	1	Montagu's Sparrow	1
Purple Swallowtail	1	Spanish Sparrow	1
Common Crane	1	Mediterranean Whiff Sparrow	1
Scops Owl	2	Chamfron	1
Gull sp.	1	Geat	2
Great Spotted Cuckoo	1	European Redstart	1
Robin Owl	18	European Hedgehog	1
Eagle Owl	28	Red Fox	1
Little Owl	28	European Mink	1
Long-eared Owl	4	Red Deer	1
Scops Owl	4	Common Otter	1

OUTCOME	
Dead body	49
Transferred elsewhere	6
Euthanasia	125
Died	111
Infertile egg	6
Unsuitable for release	11
Released	394
Undergoing treatment	30

A YEAR IN PICTURES



During 2011 almost four hundred animals, more than 50% of our admissions, have been reintroduced into the wild after being attended to at the AMUS hospital.



We have lost count of the number of television reports we have filmed with our colleagues from the programme Extrenatura. It's always a pleasure to work with them.



The preamble to another session in the operating theatre. On some days there can be up to three surgical operations or 25 new admissions. On these occasions we have to be extremely well organised, in addition to everything else.



An eye examination on an Eagle Owl, in a year which has presented us with many eye injuries in nocturnal raptors, due to collisions.



We have been able to make major advances in the treatment of our patients thanks to improvements in surgical technique and in the post-operative physiotherapy phase.



Radio-tracking of the birds released during "Pastando Biodiversidad", one of our key projects in 2011

Two Spanish Imperial Eagles were rescued and brought to the AMUS hospital. Later they were sent to the "Los Hornos" Centre. They were the first examples of this species in the history of our organisation.

The case of this Eagle Owl alarmed and upset a large number of the public. It was admitted with 18 shotgun pellets in its body, having been fired at by a hunter. The bird was operated on twice to repair five fractures. Illegal hunting is one of the main threats faced by wild species.

An image from the spectacular video of thanks to the volunteers of 2011, created by our colleague Iván.

The unconventional lives of the founders of AMUS were the subject of the television programme "Nada corriente" (out of the ordinary). This is a shot from the final recording.



Tenderness is sometimes a fundamental part of a high quality and sacrificial job. More than fifty martins and swifts, and more than one hundred fringillids, assisted and controlled by our colleague Sonia, who is in charge of this part of the service.

Here we have something out of the ordinary. It's a Lastaste's Viper, the first one ever admitted to AMUS.

On the long list of our supporters we cannot forget one of our great ambassadors, Sara from Andalucía, who has helped us with publicity work, creating new links with a number of different organisations and finding us another source of volunteers amongst people attached to wildlife parks.

This is not a dance, although it may look like one. It is part of the rehabilitation programme in open country, carried out by volunteers. We have achieved a notable increase in the chances of successful reintroduction using this technique.

Incubators handed over by a human hospital for use in the intensive care unit at AMUS. Increasingly we are receiving assistance with equipment and other materials from laboratories, hospitals and similar organisations. We would like to thank Jasmina for her role in organising this.



News of the work carried out at AMUS has spread. This is evidenced by the many requests we are constantly receiving to attend the release of animals back into the wild, to take part in the volunteer programme, to come on our courses or to collaborate with us in some way, and also in the growing number of calls asking us to collect injured or sick fauna.



One of the toughest challenges which we have met and which has required a huge effort on our part, is the provision of a permanent medical rescue service, available every day of the year. It is one of the greatest responsibilities that we have ever taken on and we are very proud of the service.



We receive visits at AMUS from groups and organisations based in other parts of Europe, who contribute to our work by sending donations. We would like to thank Naturschutzverein and Orpheusverein for their help and support and especially our great friend Manuela Sheifer who is always by our side despite the distance.

Almost without realising it our work comes to the attention of thousands of people, and not via online social networks. Our daily work in the area, year after year, is having an impact on the people living in the rural populations of our region and this is one of our prime objectives.



The SEPRONA division of the Guardia Civil (Spanish National Police) is one of the organisations which, in conjunction with the Government's environmental officers, is of key importance in contacting us about injured animals. They also deal with any instances of law breaking in relation to fauna and flora.



Provision of a service specialised in mammals is becoming of increasing importance and we strive to provide the equipment, installations and technically qualified teams necessary to enable us to meet this need.



We would like to give a huge vote of thanks to Vane and Marina for their help.





AMUS

Acción por el mundo salvaje

www.amus.org.es

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