

XXI • FERIA  
INTERNACIONAL  
**DE TURISMO  
ORNITOLÓGICO**

● EXTREMADURA BIRDWATCHING FAIR — SPAIN

27 FEB — 1 MAR

2026

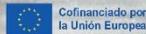
● **PARQUE  
NACIONAL DE  
MONFRAGÜE**  
VILLARREAL DE  
SAN CARLOS  
(Serradilla, Cáceres)

● [fioextremadura.es](http://fioextremadura.es)

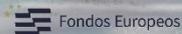
#FIO2026 @ f x



Tráfico de la obra FIO 2026 "Sobre plumas y agua" - Autora: Ana Fernández - S (votica)



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JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

INFORMATION PACK

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## **FIO 2026, in summary**

- Record number of exhibitors: 123
- Destinations, tourism companies, photography and optics manufacturers and distributors, conservation associations, specialist shops and nature artists are all present.
- Exhibitors from 13 Spanish Autonomous Communities (Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castile-La Mancha, Castile and León, Catalonia, Valencian Community, Extremadura, Galicia, Madrid, and the Basque Country) and 6 countries (Belgium, Costa Rica, France, Italy, Portugal, and Uganda).
- All three exhibitor areas are full: 86 in Travel and Tourism, 19 in Optics and Camera, and 18 in Art and Nature.
- Canary Islands, guest destination.
- La Serena, featured Natural Area of Extremadura.
- B2B Professional Meetings: between 550 and 600 meetings expected.
- 22 lectures and discussions on nature, tourism, and art.
- A performance of painting, poetry, and music.
- FOTOFIO: 13 lectures and discussions on nature photography and film.
- Screening of the documentary 'Sentinels of the Wind'.
- 15 specialised workshops.
- 6 book presentations.
- 3 nature photography exhibitions.
- Guided tours of Monfragüe: hiking, minibuses and 4x4.
- Children's and family activities (workshops, storytelling, etc.).
- Birdwatching observation points in the National Park.
- Photography competition: 7,254 images from 46 countries (the edition with the greatest international representation).
- Activities prior to FIO (February 21 and 22): ArteFIO Plasencia, ObservaFIO Trujillo and towns surrounding Monfragüe.

## **Record of 123 exhibitors and a wide programme of talks and activities**

Monfragüe National Park will host the Extremadura Birdwatching Fair (FIO) from February 27th to March 1st. In its 21-year history, this event, organized by the Regional Government of Extremadura, has become the most important in the sector in Spain and the second largest in Europe.

The village of Villarreal de San Carlos, in the municipality of Serradilla, will be transformed for three days into a meeting point for birders, tourism professionals, and nature artists from all over Spain and several other countries.

The 21st FIO boasts a record 123 exhibitors, surpassing the previous record (114 in 2015), and a comprehensive programme of conferences and activities for diverse audiences.

In the heart of Monfragüe, science, biology, and conservation projects will be discussed. Ecotourism, photography, and art will be debated. Meetings will be held between tourism companies to explore business and collaboration opportunities. Lesser-known birdwatching destinations will be showcased, some in Extremadura and others in locations across the Americas, Africa, and the Arctic. Travel books will be presented, and dozens of workshops and guided tours will be organized throughout the National Park.

The Canary Islands are the guest destination at FIO 2026, and, as a new feature, the designation of 'Extremadura's Leading Natural Area' has been created. This year, the honour goes to La Serena, a region renowned for its ecological and scenic richness. This recognition aims to raise awareness of the region's diverse landscapes and encourage the public to discover and visit the destination selected for each edition.

## **Official opening and unveiling of the sculpture**

The inauguration will take place on Friday, February 27th at 11:00, and will be attended by the Regional Minister of Culture, Tourism, Youth, and Sports, Victoria Bazaga.

During the official ceremony, the guest destination (Canary Islands) and the "Protagonist Natural Area of Extremadura" (La Serena) will be presented. Following this, a sculpture designed by the Extremaduran artist Luca García (ByLuka) will be unveiled. This installation, located in Villarreal de San Carlos, consists of large metal letters spelling FIO, upon which perched vultures crafted from scrap metal and recycled iron pieces, in a tribute to one of Monfragüe's most emblematic birds and a symbol of its rich natural heritage.

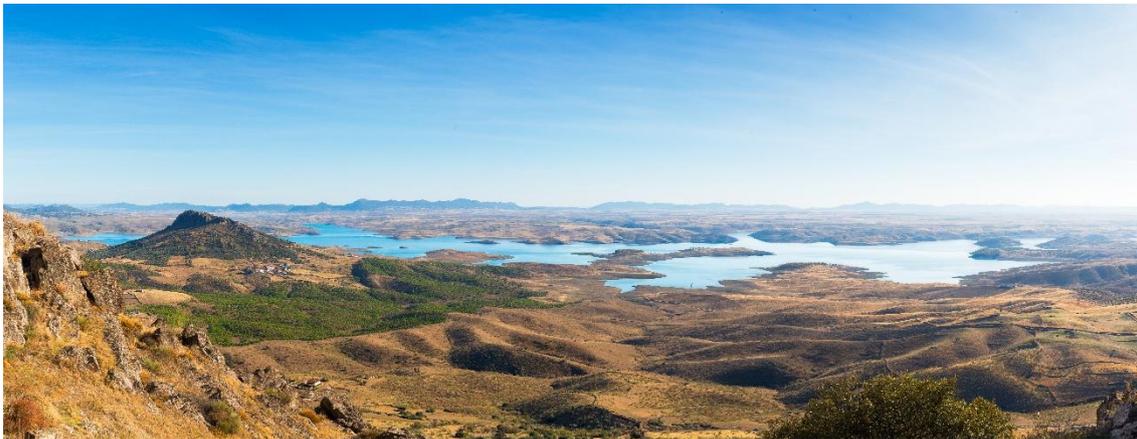
### **La Serena, 'Protagonist Natural Area of Extremadura'**

This year, FIO is highlighting the Extremadura region of La Serena to promote its natural and ornithological treasures. Located in the northeast of Badajoz, it forms part of the Badajoz plateau and borders the provinces of Córdoba and Ciudad Real.

Covering more than 154,000 hectares, it is a large Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA), home to steppe, aquatic, and cliff-dwelling species, and also includes the La Serena Reservoir SPA.

Furthermore, more than 148,000 hectares are recognized as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the Natura 2000 Network, making the 'La Serena and Peripheral Mountain Ranges' SPA the largest in Extremadura.

These resources make La Serena an ideal destination for nature and birdwatching, not to mention its other attractions such as heritage, culture, and gastronomy.



Among the numerous birds that can be seen there, steppe birds are among the most sought after. Great bustard, little bustard, pin-tailed sandgrouse, black-bellied sandgrouse and Montagu's harrier are all part of its extensive farmed plains.

According to the Regional Government of Extremadura, La Serena is considered the area of the Iberian Peninsula and Western Europe where natural grassland formations reach their greatest extent and continuity, demonstrating a high state of conservation of richness and diversity of bird communities. The Special Protection Area (SPA) 'La Serena and Peripheral Mountain Ranges' includes more than 50% of the best-preserved natural grasslands (priority habitat) in Extremadura, occupying a large, continuous area and harbouring important diverse elements.

These grasslands and the unique arable and livestock land use have fostered the establishment of a diverse fauna typical of open terrain, notably populations of steppe birds, which are of national and regional importance. In Extremadura, there is no other area with greater habitat value and associated species that can be conserved as a management unit.



But La Serena is not just a paradise for steppe birds. We also find birds in its mountains, dehesas, Mediterranean scrubland, centuries-old olive groves, reservoirs, rivers and livestock ponds, a great diversity of habitats that explains its high natural and ornithological interest... and its selection as 'Extremadura's Leading Natural Area' at FIO.

## **Travel representatives from Spain and seven other countries visit Extremadura**

In the days leading up to FIO, before participating in the Professional Meetings on 27<sup>th</sup> February, a group of fifteen national travel agents and tour operators and another group of nine international agents visited Extremadura to learn about its tourism opportunities, especially those related to nature and birdwatching. Among the international companies were representatives from Australia, Belgium, France, India, Italy, the Netherlands (2) and Sweden (2).

### **B2B Professional Meetings**

They will take place on 27<sup>th</sup> February 27th in the FOTOFIO Tent, from 09:00 to 14:30.

Its objective is to foster business opportunities for companies offering specialized birdwatching and nature tourism services.

The format consists of pre-arranged 15-minute meetings. Access as a salesperson is limited to members of the Birding in Extremadura Club, inbound travel agencies in Extremadura, and FIO exhibitors.



The list of confirmed buyers includes the agents and tour operators participating in the two familiarization trips. On one hand, there are 15 Spanish nationals from Andalusia, Aragon, Castile-La Mancha, Catalonia, Extremadura, Madrid, and Galicia, and on the other, nine international participants from the countries mentioned above.

Between 550 and 600 meetings are scheduled for the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> February.

## Conferences

- Sustainable tourism, conservation projects, environmental education, art... FIO organises presentations and discussions with specialists on a wide range of topics related to nature and birds.
- All conferences are held in the Main Stage Tent
- Live stream on the Extremadura Tourism YouTube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/turismoextremadura>

### Friday, 27th February

11:00 – 12:00	<b>Official Opening FIO 2026</b>
12:00 – 12:30	<b>‘Extremadura, a sound geography’</b> by Carlos de Hita
12:30 – 12:50	<b>‘Badajoz, city of birds’</b> by Ignacio Gragera Barrera and Rubén Galea Gil
13:00 – 13:30	<b>‘Construction and Destruction: The uncertain future of swifts’</b> by Juan José González Magro and Laura Muriel Cantarero
13:40 – 14:10	<b>Book Presentation: ‘The Light of Shadows’</b> by José-Elías Rodríguez
16:00 – 16:30	<b>‘Natural spaces of Extremadura and Tourism’</b> by Óscar Mateos and Germán Puebla
16:40 – 17:10	<b>‘Vertical work for the conservation of birds by environmental agents of the Regional Government of Extremadura’</b> by Carlos Dávila and Pedro Holgado
17:20 – 18:00	<b>‘Tagus River Observatory in Monfragüe, an open window to one of the most environmentally valuable areas of the Tagus River’</b> by Antonio Yáñez, Estefanía Chereguini and Alfonso García
18:10 – 18:40	<b>‘Avinsal, a project interconnecting birds and the traditional exploitation of salt flats and vineyards in Chiclana’</b> by José María Román

### Saturday, 28th February

10:00 – 10:40	<b>Book presentation: ‘Biometrics of an encounter’</b> by Carlos Lozano with Antonio Sandoval, Yanina Maggiotto and Javier G. Aoiz
10:50 – 11:20	<b>‘Birdwatching tourism in Extremadura: a personal retrospective’</b> by Martin Kelsey
11:30 – 12:00	<b>‘The incredible diversity of European habitats’</b> by Dale Forbes
12:10 – 12:40	<b>‘From the Atlantic to the equator: an ornithological journey through Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe’</b> by Hugo Sampaio and Lara Broom

12:50 – 13:50	<b>Workshop ‘Scientific illustration as a means of study and conservation’</b> by Ana Fernández with Antonio Sandoval (moderator)
14:00 – 14:30	<b>‘Birdwatching in Uganda: adventures focused on conservation’</b> by Magada Haily Miriam
16:00 – 16:30	<b>‘Wintering destination for birds and birders: L’Albufera de Valencia’</b> by Yanina Maggiotto
16:40 – 17:30	<b>Round Table ‘Bird reintroductions: necessity or fad?’</b> with Tim Mackrill, Rubén Moreno-Opo and Alfonso Godino
17:40 – 18:20	<b>‘The Mediterranean and the Sahara as laboratories for studying birds of prey migrations’</b> by Ugo Mellone

### Sunday, 1st March

10:00 – 10:30	<b>‘Project Pigargo: the return of Europe's largest eagle’</b> by Enrique Murciano
10:40 – 11:10	<b>‘Environmental psychology and birds: what they reveal about our relationship with nature’</b> by Loubé
11:20 – 11:50	<b>‘Ecotourism and volunteering to conserve the osprey in Santander Bay’</b> by Carlos Sainz
12:00 – 12:30	<b>‘New unpublished data on the use of DEMA's new lesser kestrel buildings’</b> by Pepe Antolín
12:40 – 13:10	<b>‘The black vulture in Mallorca’</b> by Pep Tapia
13:15 – 13:30	<b>‘Peñafalcón, the new route of Monfragüe National Park’</b> by Francisco Javier Sánchez Vega and Borja García Prieto
13:30 – 14:30	<b>‘The poetry of birds’</b> a show with Leticia Ruifernández and the Pedro Calero Trio

### Friday, 27th February

#### 11:00 Official Opening FIO 2026

Presentation of the guest destination (Canary Islands) and the featured Natural Space of Extremadura (La Serena).

Inauguration of the sculpture dedicated to the FIO, by the Extremaduran artist Luca García (ByLuka).

**12:00 – 12:30. ‘Extremadura, a sound geography’ Carlos de Hita**

Introducing the new Birding in Extremadura website, from the General Directorate of Tourism, through the voices of birds.

The website <https://birdinginextremadura.com/> compiles the region's ornithological resources and all the specialised tourism products. It provides information on the members of the Birding in Extremadura Club, the key bird species that can be seen in Extremadura, the ten most representative habitats, and twenty birdwatching routes with more than 150 observation points.

**12:30 – 12:50. ‘Badajoz, city of birds’ by Ignacio Gragera Barrera and Rubén Galea Gil**

The Badajoz City Council presents the ‘Badajoz, City of Birds’, highlighting the Azud del Guadiana urban Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA), with over 400 hectares and 147 species right in the city centre. An audiovisual presentation will showcase glossy ibis, peregrine falcon of the Puente Real (Royal Bridge), and rarities such as Baltic gulls and phalaropes. It will also include great crested grebe, whose elegant courtship dance and ritual provide one of the most unique natural spectacles in the wetland.



**13:00 – 13:30. ‘Construction and Destruction: The uncertain future of swifts’ by Juan José González Magro and Laura Muriel Cantarero**

This talk will analyse how urbanization and modern construction threaten swifts in our cities, especially through rehabilitation works without adequate planning or prior knowledge of the location of nesting colonies, which leads to the destruction of nests.

**13:40 – 14:10. Book Presentation: ‘The Light of Shadows’ by José-Elías Rodríguez**

In ‘The Light of Shadows’, published by the Caja Badajoz Foundation and with a foreword by photographer Mario Cea, the importance of shadow in photography is highlighted, with numerous comparisons to music. A teacher and nature photographer, José-Elías Rodríguez is a member of the Extremadura Collective of Nature Photographers (CEFNA) and the Spanish Association of Nature Photography (AEFONA). He has received fifty awards in national and international competitions, including the FIO award.



**16:00 – 16:30. ‘Natural spaces of Extremadura and Tourism’ by Óscar Mateos Director General of Tourism, Regional Government of Extremadura and Germán Puebla Director General of Sustainability, Regional Government of Extremadura.**

**16:40 – 17:10. ‘Vertical work for the conservation of birds by environmental agents of the Regional Government of Extremadura’ by Carlos Dávila and Pedro Holgado**

Environmental agents from the Regional Government of Extremadura present the work carried out by the vertical work teams, especially the different actions for the conservation of large protected birds (black stork, Bonelli's eagle, Iberian imperial eagle, red kite, etc.).

**17:20 – 18:00. ‘Tagus River Observatory in Monfragüe, an open window to one of the most environmentally valuable areas of the Tagus River’ by Antonio Yáñez, Estefania Chereguini and Alfonso García**

Presentation of the new Tagus River Observatory in Monfragüe, a live broadcast that allows viewers to see the evolution of this body of water and its associated biodiversity. The main objective of this camera is to document, for educational and scientific purposes, the state and evolution of the river as it passes through Monfragüe, with the collaboration and authorization of Monfragüe National Park. The broadcast allows viewers to see some of the most emblematic species of the Tagus.

**18:10 – 18:40. ‘Avinsal, a project interconnecting birds and the traditional exploitation of salt flats and vineyards in Chiclana’ by José María Román**

The Mayor of Chiclana will explain what Avinsal (Birds, Wine, and Salt) is, its values, and how the traditional exploitation of the salt marshes in the Bay of Cádiz Natural Park and the traditional grape varieties have become a hallmark and a means to conserve the natural landscapes. Avinsal will hold its first fair in 2026, during which the Chiclana de la Frontera Bird Guide will be presented.

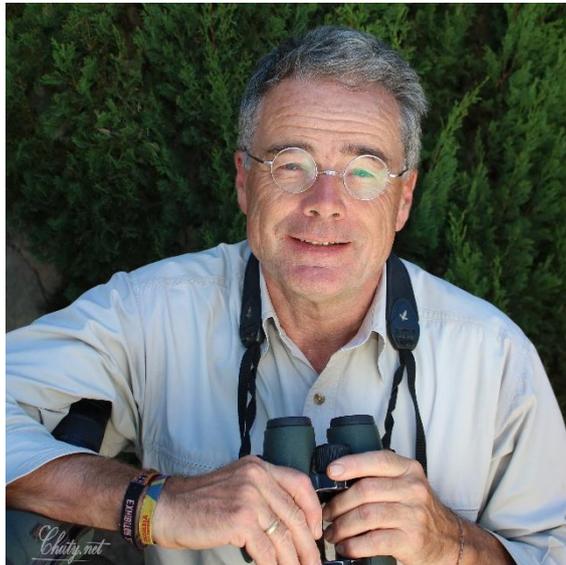
**Saturday, 28th February**

**10:00 – 10:40. Book presentation: ‘Biometrics of an encounter’ by Carlos Lozano with Antonio Sandoval, Yanina Maggiotto and Javier G. Aoiz**

‘Biometrics of an Encounter’ is neither a treatise on birds nor an identification guide. Its text comprises 31 stories, the result of 31 days spent by Carlos Lozano with forty birdwatchers in their natural habitat. These stories attempt to capture the essence that fuels the passion of birdwatchers and their unique way of understanding life.

**10:50 – 11:20. ‘Birdwatching tourism in Extremadura: a personal retrospective’ by Martin Kelsey**

After 21 years working in bird tourism in Extremadura, Martin Kelsey will retire in 2026. In this talk, he will share his reflections on the development and growth of the sector, lessons learned, his thoughts on trends, challenges, and opportunities, as well as some of his favourite anecdotes as a nature guide in Extremadura.



**11:30 – 12:00. ‘The incredible diversity of European habitats’ by Dale Forbes**

From the dehesas of Extremadura to the Arctic tundra and arid deserts, the book ‘*Habitats of Europe: A Field Guide for Birders, Naturalists and Ecologists*’ reveals how the landscape shapes the birds and wildlife we love.

The author invites you on a visually fascinating journey through Europe's most significant habitats—wetlands, forests, mountains, coasts, and plains—highlighting iconic species, seasonal displays, and key features to look for in the field.

**12:10 – 12:40. ‘From the Atlantic to the equator: an ornithological journey through Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe’ by Hugo Sampaio and Lara Broom**

From the arid Atlantic islands of Cape Verde to the lush equatorial rainforests of São Tomé and Príncipe, this talk explores the extraordinary birdlife of two Portuguese-speaking archipelagos.

Discover their unique endemic species, the striking contrasts between their habitats and cultures, and the growing opportunities for sustainable birdwatching tourism.

**12:50 – 13:50. Workshop ‘Scientific illustration as a means of study and conservation’ by Ana Fernández with Antonio Sandoval (moderator)**

Ana Fernández, artist of the FIO 2026 poster, will introduce the public to scientific illustration, focusing on the field of ornithology. The presentation will be conducted using digital techniques, demonstrating the methodology used to create the illustrations. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions about the creative process, the software interface, scientific illustration and its applications and her professional career.

**14:00 – 14:30. ‘Birdwatching in Uganda: adventures focused on conservation’ by Magada Haily Miriam**

Uganda is one of Africa's most spectacular destinations for birdwatching and wildlife viewing, home to over 1,000 bird species and exceptional biodiversity. From the Albertine Rift forests in Bwindi and Kibale to the Mabamba wetlands and the savannas of Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National Parks, birdwatching is perfectly combined with observing primates, large mammals, and spectacular landscapes.



**16:00 – 16:30. ‘Wintering destination for birds and birders: L’Albufera de Valencia’ by Yanina Maggiotto**

A comprehensive look at birdwatching during the winter in L’Albufera of Valencia. Highlights will include must-see spots, practical tips, and unique characteristics to help you make the most of this protected area. The evolution and changes of some of the most charismatic species during this time of year will also be analysed. The presentation will conclude with a reflection on the current situation of this ecosystem, from a birding guide's perspective.

**16:40 – 17:30. Round Table ‘Bird reintroductions: necessity or fad?’ with Tim Mackrill, Rubén Moreno-Opo and Alfonso Godino**

Given the increasing and rapid loss of biodiversity across the planet, wildlife reintroduction projects have proliferated in recent decades as a means of restoring many species. However, these projects must follow a series of guidelines to guarantee their usefulness and effectiveness. This round table discussion aims to present and discuss the advantages, usefulness, and controversies that these types of projects have sometimes generated.

**17:40 – 18:20. ‘The Mediterranean and the Sahara as laboratories for studying birds of prey migrations’ by Ugo Mellone**

The Mediterranean, with its complex geography and position between temperate and tropical biomes, is a key setting for studying bird migration. Alongside it, the Sahara constitutes the major ecological barrier that migratory birds of prey must cross on their way to their wintering grounds. The results of twenty years of research, based on field observations and satellite telemetry, will be presented on birds of prey such as the short-toed eagle or Eleonora's falcon.

**Sunday, 1st March**

**10:00 – 10:30. ‘Project Pigargo: the return of Europe's largest eagle’ by Enrique Murciano**

The hatching of the first white-tailed eagle chick after centuries of absence marks a turning point for Iberian fauna. It also marks one of the main milestones of GREFA's White-tailed Eagle Project, which released 25 birds on the eastern coast of Asturias as part of an experimental reintroduction between 2021 and 2022.

**10:40 – 11:10. ‘Environmental psychology and birds: what they reveal about our relationship with nature’ by Loubé**

Why do we feel more affinity for some species and reject others? How does this affect research, conservation, and awareness? Lourdes Berzas, known as Loubé, will discuss the social and environmental effects of these preferences and how we can transform them. Participants in this conference-workshop will be able to take part in an interactive activity: by drawing or writing, they will represent how they perceive these species, learning new ways to connect with nature.



**11:20 – 11:50. ‘Ecotourism and volunteering to conserve the osprey in Santander Bay’ by Carlos Sainz**

After more than 20 years of work by the Osprey Centre Collective, monitoring, restoring habitat, and providing perches and nesting platforms, the osprey began breeding in Santander Bay in 2022.

This first and only breeding pair in the entire northern Iberian Peninsula has raised 10 chicks to date, providing hope for the recolonization of the species on the Cantabrian coast and also fostering the development of local ecotourism initiatives.

**12:00 – 12:30. ‘New unpublished data on the use of DEMA's new lesser kestrel buildings’ by Pepe Antolín**

Pepe Antolín, founder and president of the Defence and Study of the Environment (DEMA), presents the results of the use, by wild lesser kestrels (*Falco naumani*), of the new kestrel shelters developed by this Extremadura-based NGO.

Internationally recognized for his exclusive dedication to the recovery of the lesser kestrel, Pepe Antolín has led pioneering projects for almost four decades to prevent the extinction of this small falcon in Europe.

**12:40 – 13:10. ‘The black vulture in Mallorca’ by Pep Tapia**

A journey from the 1980s to the present day about the status of the black vulture population in Mallorca, including the conservation measures that have been adopted and the threats it faces.

Pep Tapia, from the Mediterranean Wildlife Foundation (FVSM), is an ornithologist and naturalist specializing in birds of prey with over 20 years of experience in the conservation of scavenging birds. He also carries out conservation work with other threatened birds.

**13:15 – 13:30. ‘Peñafalcón, the new route of Monfragüe National Park’ by Francisco Javier Sánchez Vega and Borja García Prieto**

**13:30 – 14:30. ‘The poetry of birds’ a show with Leticia Ruifernández and the Pedro Calero Trio**

Birds are the basis of the texts written by poets from all latitudes and different times, creating the thread that weaves together ‘The Poetry of Birds’.

In this performance, painter and illustrator Leticia Ruifernández reads poems and paints large-format watercolour images that unfold in the background as the show progresses.

Pedro Calero's jazz trio (drums, piano and double bass) offers a concert of jazz classics inspired by birds, which, together with the poetry and painting, transport the audience to a forest.



## Conferences FOTOFIO

FIO organizes talks with nature photographers who share their experiences, projects, and travels with the public in an open and participatory format. Under the banner of FOTOFIO, these conferences attract both professional and amateur photographers. They also cover topics such as nature filmmaking and conservation projects.

- All conferences are held in the FOTOFIO Tent
- Live streaming on the Extremadura Tourism YouTube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/turismoextremadura>

### Friday, 27th February

16:30 - 16:35	<b>Presentation of FOTOFIO 2026</b> by Atanasio Fernández. General Directorate of Sustainability. Regional Government of Extremadura.
16:35 - 17:05	<b>'CEFNA: 30 years of natural light'</b> by Helios Dalmau

### Saturday, 28th February

10:20 - 10:50	<b>'What a bridge makes possible'</b> by Adelina Ortiz and Marta Pedreño, of Reveladas AEFONA
11:00 - 11:30	<b>'Arctic journey. Photographing nature in the Arctic Circle'</b> by José Luis Gómez de Francisco
11:40 - 12:10	<b>'1 km of biodiversity'</b> by Eduardo Blanco Mendizábal
12:20 - 12:50	<b>'Technology advances, the eye decides'</b> by Javier and Rafael Ramos
13:00 - 13:30	<b>'Private conversations with nature'</b> by Daniel Montero
13:40 - 14:10	<b>'Visual impact in bird photography'</b> by José Benito Ruiz
16:30 - 17:15	<b>'Raising awareness through quetzal photography, contributing to their habitat conservation'</b> by Erick Granados
18:30	<b>Awards ceremony for FIO 2026 nature photography contest</b> Presented by Rocío Cantero

### Sunday, 1st March

10:00 - 10:30	<b>'Between beards and brushes'</b> by José María Benítez Cidoncha
10:40 - 11:10	<b>'Falkland Islands, the penguin archipelago'</b> by Iñaki Relanzón
11:20 - 12:00	<b>'On the edge of the wind: birds of the end of the world'</b> by Adriana Sanz
12:10 - 12:30	<b>'At the edge of the habitable world, the wildest arctic with the CANON EOS R System'</b> by Merce R. Romero
12:30 - 12:50	<b>Discussion panel 'Challenges of filming <i>Sentinels of the wind</i>'</b> by Laura Gangoso, Luis Miguel R. Gordón, Pablo Valdivieso and Juan Luis Santos
13:10 - 14:10	<b>Screening of the documentary 'Sentinels of the wind' (Spain 2023)</b>
14:15	<b>Closure of FOTOFIO 2026</b>

### Friday, 27th February

**16:30 – 16:35. Presentation of FOTOFIO 2026 by Atanasio Fernández. General Directorate of Sustainability. Regional Government of Extremadura.**

#### **16:35 – 17:05. 'CEFNA: 30 years of natural light' by Helios Dalmau**

A group presentation by a large number of CEFNA members, who have each selected two images from their archives and will briefly explain the connection between them. In some cases, the photographs span decades of activity. In other cases, the focus will be on capturing the same subject or species, or on more realistic or abstract shots of a particular location.

### Saturday, 28th February

#### **10:20 – 10:50. 'What a bridge makes possible' by Adelina Ortiz and Marta Pedreño, of Reveladas AEFONA**

Reveladas AEFONA is a working group within the Spanish Association of Nature Photographers that seeks to give visibility and recognition to women nature photographers, whose work has historically been less visible. It fosters community, inspiration, and the dissemination of female talent through publications, interviews, exhibitions, and campaigns. With everyone's support, Reveladas acts as a bridge to a more diverse, inclusive, and enriching community, offering role models and opportunities for future generations.

#### **11:00 – 11:30. 'Arctic Journey. Photographing nature in the Arctic Circle' by José Luis Gómez de Francisco**

During the presentation of the book 'Arctic Journey,' the author will discuss some of the environmental problems facing the polar regions (which he has witnessed firsthand), how to

photograph nature in these areas, and stories and anecdotes from his experiences photographing beyond the Arctic Circle.



**11:40 – 12:10. ‘1 km of biodiversity’ by Eduardo Blanco Mendizábal**

‘1 km of biodiversity’ is a tribute to those anonymous places close to our homes. With the COVID-19 restrictions, Eduardo Blanco Mendizábal had to pause his work documenting the world with his camera and decided to explore the area closest to his garden.

He now had a mission again, a story to tell, and a reason to get up with energy every morning. This project aims to inspire other naturalists to study those forgotten places near our homes.

**12:20 – 12:50. ‘Technology advances, the eye decides’ by Javier and Rafael Ramos**

The Ramos brothers will share their photographic journey from the beginnings of mirrorless cameras to the present day, leaving behind their DSLRs. They will explain how technological advancements have influenced the evolution of nature photography, especially in predictive focus and wildlife tracking, and how new cameras offer increasing confidence.

This talk will combine experience, technique, and sensitivity, where patience continues to dictate the rhythm of the image and the decision to compose becomes the photographer's true responsibility.

**13:00 – 13:30. ‘Private conversations with nature’ by Daniel Montero**

Conference sponsored by Fujifilm.

Through a personal vision, moments of profound connection with nature are revealed. Each image emerges as a silent dialogue between the soul and the environment, where light, wind, water, and landscape intertwine with emotions. In this intimate encounter, the camera becomes a mediator of feelings, capturing not only forms, but also the invisible essence of the experience. It is an act of contemplation, surrender, and inner liberation.

**13:40 – 14:10. ‘Visual impact in bird photography’ by José Benito Ruiz.**

Using the knowledge of composition gained from the study of classical art, this presentation addresses the most relevant factors in achieving visual impact in our photographs. The concepts are accompanied by examples with birds taken by the author, a photographer with decades of experience as an educator and director of photography for documentaries and series, as well as a screenwriter and writer specializing in nature.

**16:30 – 17:15. ‘Raising awareness through quetzal photography, contributing to their habitat conservation’ by Erick Granados**

In Costa Rica, during the 1960s, the devastation of oak forests gave way to agriculture and livestock farming, leading to habitat loss and environmental degradation. Today, this scenario is being transformed through responsible tourism, which integrates environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Through photography and birdwatching, the project raises awareness and distributes economic benefits to farming families, key players in the conservation and protection of natural areas.



**18:30. Awards ceremony for FIO 2026 nature photography contest**

The 21st competition organized by FIO received 7,254 images from 46 countries. A total of 766 participants registered, 547 of whom are from Spain.

The competition features five categories (C1 Bird Portraits, C2 Birds in their Environment, C3 Birds in Action, C4 Artistic Vision of Birds, and C5 Young Photographers, for those under 18), as well as the special award for "Photographer from Extremadura."

The overall winning photograph for 2026, chosen from among the winners of C1, C2, C3, and C4, will be announced at a gala hosted by journalist Rocío Cantero.

**Sunday, 1st March**

**10:00 – 10:30. ‘Between beards and brushes’ by José María Benítez Cidoncha**

“Between Beards and Brushes” is a photographic journey about the Iberian lynx, presenting information on its biology (diet, reproduction, intra- and interspecific relationships, etc.) and revealing previously unseen aspects of its social behaviour.

All of this is accompanied by a photographic archive, the result of thousands of hours dedicated to this feline, illustrating a year in the life of this endangered animal.

**10:40 – 11:10. ‘Falkland Islands, the penguin archipelago’ by Iñaki Relanzón**

The Falkland Islands are one of the wildest places on the planet, with immense colonies of penguins, albatrosses, and elephant seals, and a landscape dominated by a raging ocean. This talk is a visual journey through the archipelago.

**11:20 – 12:00. ‘On the edge of the wind: birds of the end of the world’ by Adriana Sanz**

The project by Argentine photographer Adriana Sanz focuses on the colonies of Magellanic penguins, imperial cormorants, and southern giant petrels. These species breed on the islands of the Patagonia Azul Provincial Marine Park in Chubut, Argentina.

The project is associated with the research and conservation work of the Marine Top Predator Ecology Laboratory (Leptomar), a leading centre for studies of spatial ecology and animal movement.

**12:10 – 12:30. ‘At the edge of the habitable world, the wildest arctic with the CANON EOS R System’ by Merce R. Romero**

Conference sponsored by Canon.

A journey to the far north, from the boreal forest, across the Arctic tundra to the frozen archipelago of Svalbard. Species disappearing, habitats shrinking. For years, Merce R. Romero has documented these changes, observing the fragility and resilience of polar ecosystems.



**12:40 – 13:10. Discussion panel ‘Challenges of filming *Sentinels of the wind*’ by Laura Gangoso, Luis Miguel R. Gordón, Pablo Valdivieso and Juan Luis Santos**

Biologist Laura Gangoso analyses how the survival of Eleonora's falcon on the Canary Island of Alegranza depends closely on the trade winds. Along with cinematographers Luis Miguel R. Gordón and Pablo Valdivieso, and Juan Luis Santos, director of "*Sentinels of the Wind*," secrets of the filming of this documentary will be revealed. They will discuss interesting facts about Eleonora's falcons and the technical challenges of filming wildlife in extreme environments.

**13:10 – 14:10. Screening of the documentary ‘Sentinels of the wind’ (Spain 2023)**



**14:15. Closure of FOTOFIO 2026**

## Specialised Workshops

Painting and drawing in nature, bird song identification, tracks and feathers, nature sounds, astrotourism... Specialists from different fields come to FIO to help us appreciate the beauty of our surroundings.

These activities take place in various locations in Villarreal de San Carlos and at Monfragüe Castle.

### Friday, 27th February

#### 16:00 – 17:30. 'Hanging Totems' by Loubé.

Nature Information Centre

#### 17:30 – 19:00. Among The Cranes' Legs'. Surround Sound Installation by Carlos de Hita.

Villarreal de San Carlos Chapel



#### 20:00. Workshop 'Observing the sky from Monfragüe Castle' by José Pedro Madera.

Monfragüe Castle

### Saturday, 28th February

#### 10:00 – 14:00. 'Bird signs and footprints' by Luisa Abenza.

Centre for Naturalized Animals

#### 10:30 – 12:30. 'Ornithology beyond sight: bird recognition through sounds' by José Carlos Sires.

Villarreal de San Carlos Chapel

#### 11:00 – 13:00. 'Discover the botanical richness and landscapes of Monfragüe' with Natalia Pleite and Marina Cid (Nexonatura).

Outdoors

**15:00 – 19:00. 'Painting birds with watercolours' by José Antonio Sencianes.**

Nature Information Centre

**16:30 – 18:00. 'Among The Cranes' Legs'. Surround Sound Installation by Carlos de Hita.**

Villarreal de San Carlos Chapel

**16:30 – 18:30. Artistic printmaking workshop by Esther Charles.**

Centre for Naturalized Animals



**20:00. Workshop 'Observing the sky from Monfragüe Castle' by José Pedro Madera.**

Monfragüe Castle

### **Sunday, 1st March**

**10:00 – 11:30. 'Drawing birds in flight' by Nacho Sevilla.**

Centre for Naturalized Animals

**10:30 – 12:00. 'Ornithology beyond sight: bird recognition through sounds' by José Carlos Sires.**

Villarreal de San Carlos Chapel

**11:00 – 13:00. 'Discover the botanical richness and landscapes of Monfragüe' with Natalia Pleite and Marina Cid (Nexonatura).**

Outdoors

**12:00 – 14:00. Artistic printmaking workshop by Esther Charles.**

Centre for Naturalized Animals

**12:30 – 13:30. Children's workshop 'Get to know the birds by drawing their feathers' by Ainhoa Lekuona and Eva Carret.**

Nature Information Centre

## **Presentations**

The Chapel at Villarreal de San Carlos hosts presentations of projects related to birds, nature tourism and books.

### **Friday, 27th February**

**16:00 – 17:00. 'LIFE powerlines4birds: Iberian alliance to mitigate bird electrocution and collision' by Sara Cabezas**

### **Saturday, 28th February**

**12:30 – 13:00. Book presentation 'Field notebook of the mountains of Spain' by Eduardo Viñuales.**

**13:00 – 13:30. '9th Alange Swift Festival' by Julia González, Juan Diego Carmona, Sara Díaz and Carlos de Hita.**

**13:30 – 14:00. Book Presentation: 'The Little Kestrel' by Pedro J. Cordero.**

**18:00 – 18:30. Book Presentation: 'Unique Trees of Spain' by César-Javier Palacios and Nacho Sevilla.**

### **Sunday, 1st March**

**12:30 – 13:00. 'Recommendations for exploring the natural resources of the Zafra-Río Bodión region' by Adolfo García and José María Pérez.**

**13:30 – 14:00. 'The Ronda mountains, a paradise for bird lovers' by Alfredo Carrasco.**

## Exhibitions

### Nature Photography Competition 'Wild Birds'

#### FOTOFIO Tent

This exhibition presents the winning works, honourable mentions, and finalists of the 21st 'Wild Birds' Nature Photography Competition, organized by the General Directorate of Tourism of Extremadura as part of FIO 2026. Fifty images are on display, selected from 7,254 photographs submitted from 46 countries, reflecting the international nature of the competition.

The exhibition, sponsored by Fujifilm, is presented in high-quality format thanks to the production of Espacio Raw.



### 'European Wildlife Photographer of the Year' by GDT (Germany)

#### Multipurpose Centre Screening Room

The German Society of Nature Photographers (GDT) organizes one of the most important competitions in Europe. The 'European Wildlife Photographer of the Year' is the largest and most prestigious nature photography competition open to amateurs and professionals from all over Europe.

The exhibition features a selection of images from the finalists, winners, and award recipients of the 2025 competition. A display of spectacular photographs of fauna and flora from around the world.

### 'Los Barros and the Sierra - Nature and Landscape in the Regions of Tierra de Barros and Sierra Grande de Hornachos' by José-Elías Rodríguez

#### Conference Tent

The Tierra de Barros and Sierra Grande de Hornachos regions are in the heart of the province of Badajoz. Although they exhibit marked differences in geography and land use, they share a clear continuity between the plains of Barros and the quartzite mountains.

This geographical diversity allows for a rich ecological and scenic diversity, encompassing almost all the ecosystems found in Extremadura, with the exception of high mountain areas.

### Activities for children and families

- Guided excursions
  - ✓ Hiking
  - ✓ By bus to the viewpoints in Monfragüe
  - ✓ By car and 4x4



- Nature activities for children with several NGOs in Extremadura: bird footprint workshops, badge making, costumes, clay figures, walk along the Malvecino stream...
- Birding viewpoints at the Salto del Gitano, the Portilla del Tiétar, the Tajadilla and Monfragüe castle.
- Other children's activities: caricatures, drawing birds, pottery, storytelling, kite workshop...
- Animation shows



### **Award-winning images from the photography contest**

The 2026 'Wild Birds' photo contest received 7,254 photographs from 46 countries. A total of 766 participants registered, 547 of whom were from Spain. The list included photographers from countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the USA, France, India, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, the UK, and Singapore, among others.

These are the winners by category:

**C1 Bird Portraits:** Renato Granieri, with 'Frame'



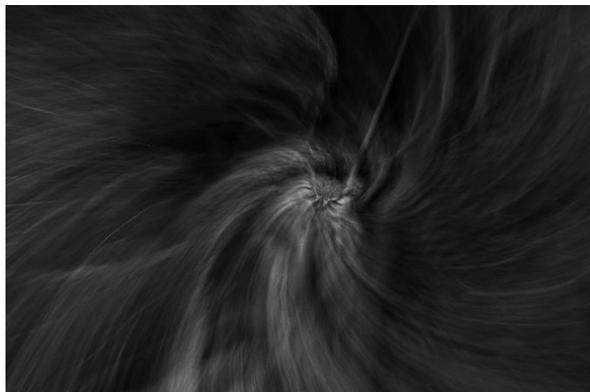
**C2 Birds in their Environment:** Fernando Prieto Garcia, with 'Mountain Partridge.'



**C3 Birds in Action:** Massimiliano Manuel Paolino, with 'Breaking point'.



**C4 Artistic Vision of Birds:** Serafín Robert Horst, with 'Abducted'



**C5 Young Photographers:** Marina Gavrikova, with 'Good day to fly'.



Javier Simón Gálvez has won the **Special Extremadura Photographer Award** with 'Dawn', selected from all participants born or registered in Extremadura.



In the category of **Nature Videos**, the winner is Awais Ali Sheikh, with 'Into the wild'.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3zL8xg9bGo>

The overall winner of the FIO 2026 competition, chosen from among the winners of categories C1, C2, C3, and C4, will be announced on February 28th, starting at 6:30 p.m., at an event hosted by journalist Rocío Cantero.

The total prize money amounts to €7,300.

This year's jury consisted of nature photographers Adriana Sanz, José Benito Ruiz, Marc Albiac, Merce R. Romero, Pablo Bou, and Ricardo Lourenço.

The 50 best photographs (winners, honourable mentions, and finalists) can be seen at FIO in a high-quality exhibition, sponsored by Fujifilm Spain, and are included in a catalogue published by the General Directorate of Tourism.

The sponsors of the competition are Skua Nature, Fujifilm, OM System, FotoTécnica Import, Canon, Academia de Fotógrafos.com, CEFNA, Namen Color and El Millarón.



## The Extremaduran illustrator, Ana Fernández, designer of the FIO 2026 poster

The great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*), a species that can be seen in reservoirs and ponds in Extremadura throughout the year, stars as the image of FIO 2026. An aquatic diving bird, the size of a duck and unmistakable for its long neck, it has a fan of long chestnut-coloured ear feathers on both sides of its face.

Its courtship is one of the most spectacular and complex among the birds of the Iberian Peninsula, a veritable dance on the water performed by the male and female. Another characteristic image of the species shows the chicks on their parents' backs as they glide across the water, a moment that inspired the Extremaduran artist Ana Fernández to illustrate the poster for the 21st FIO.



This artist from Badajoz, invited by the Regional Government of Extremadura to create the image for Spain's leading bird tourism fair, has chosen the great crested grebe not only for its elegance and beauty but also as a symbol of an urgent concern: the health of marshes, reservoirs and wetlands, and the critical situation facing Doñana National Park in Andalusia. Through her original and exclusive illustration for FIO, she aims to raise awareness about the need to protect these fragile and essential ecosystems.

Ana Fernández is a freelance illustrator. One of her earliest memories is spending afternoons drawing with her mother, as well as watching documentary marathons with her father. Enchanted by nature and the opportunity to represent it, she found her true passion by combining illustration and science in a single profession.

After deciding to pursue a career as an illustrator, she began training and gradually specializing in scientific illustration. Her work has been recognized with international awards, and she has worked for publishers such as Tundra and Lynx, as well as organizations like the Oceanographic of Valencia, the National Parks Autonomous Agency, Plumarium, various universities, and pharmaceutical companies, among others.

### Artists invited by FIO to design the official poster (most recent years)

- 2025: Ian Lewington (UK)
- 2024: Ben Woodhams (UK)
- 2023: Manuel Sosa (Extremadura, Spain)
- 2022: Killian Mullarney (Ireland)
- 2021: Andrea Romero Ardila (Colombia)
- 2020: Lars Jonsson (Sweden)

**Transport: free buses between Plasencia and Torrejón el Rubio**

FIO organizers are providing a free bus service for visitors. It will run from Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> February to Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> March.

- Plasencia - Villarreal de San Carlos
- Torrejón el Rubio - Villarreal de San Carlos
- Plasencia - Villarreal de San Carlos - Torrejón el Rubio

### **Activities prior to the FIO (21st and 22nd February)**

The weekend before FIO, Plasencia, Trujillo and several municipalities around Monfragüe celebrate activities organized by the General Directorate of Tourism.

#### **ARTEFIO PLASENCIA**

##### **Saturday, 21st February**

Family nature collage | 10:00

Birding from the water in kayaks | 11:00

Nature orienteering scavenger hunt at the Parque de los Pinos Nature Classroom | 11:30

Live broadcast of the Onda Cero radio programme 'Gente Viajera' from Plasencia | 12:00

Birdwatching with telescopes and interpretation in the historic centre | 13:00

Performance by the Las Vegas Trio | 14:00

Listening to the Wild Pulse (experiential workshop on percussion) | 17:00

##### **Sunday, 22nd February**

Plasencia in Flight: Discovering the city's birds as a family (walking) | 10:00

Hiking and birdwatching through the Valcorchero Protected Landscape | 10:00

#### **OBSERVAFIO TRUJILLO**

##### **Saturday, 21st February**

Listening to the Wild Pulse (experiential workshop on percussion) | 10:00

FIO's Virtual Reality Corner / VR Glasses / Virtual Game | 11:30

Orientation game and birds of Monfragüe: Search, Find, and Learn | 12:30

Birding in the San Lázaro Park | 17:00

The stars of Extremadura and nocturnal birds of prey | 20:00

#### **TORREJÓN EL RUBIO | Saturday, 21st February**

Rock paintings | 10:00

Exhibition of idols and tools from prehistory | 17:30

Visit to Solaris observation of stars | 19:00

#### **MALPARTIDA DE PLASENCIA | Saturday, 21st February**

Geocaching and bird watching in the El Roblejo communal dehesa | 10:00

#### **MIRABEL | Sunday, 22nd February**

Barbechoso, the mountain and dehesa of Mirabel | 10:00

#### **SERREJÓN - TORIL | Sunday, 22nd February**

Hidden Monfragüe: The route that is not visited (4x4 Route) | 10:00

#### **SERRADILLA | Sunday, 22nd February**

Serradilla-cascada-Serradilla: 7.4 km | 10:00

#### **ROMANGORDO | Sunday, 22nd February**

Casa de los Aromas-Ruta de los Ingleses-Trampantojos | 10:00