

2015 - 2016

SKUA Nature

INTERNATIONAL NATURE ESTATES NETWORK

8000 Hectares of Exclusive Estates

304 Birds to Observe

182 Species to Photograph

A new way to enjoy nature



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OUR VISION



A famous slogan of the more active and rooted conservancy world of our times goes like this: "Conservation without money is only conversation", which for me is a real invitation to test myself in a tough task and without major reference points to act as guiding light. Making nature an economic value, able to support and develop large territories, in order to create, even in the common people, the awareness that a flowering meadow full of butterflies and orchids may have a much higher value than a parking lot or an industrial warehouse, or that a wetland or a quality agricultural land may have a much higher value than the exploitation of timber or intensive agriculture.

When Skua was launched in 2008 I would have never thought to create, in a matter of a few years, a really unique project. We haven't discovered anything new actually; there are dozens of reserve networks run by institutions or associations, but so far no one had really created a common denominator which could link even extremely different areas, which differ in terms of management and strategic targets. Landowners, conservation associations, public institutions, large protected areas and local companies, all working together for the creation of a new concept of nature tourism.

The road we've made so far and the road ahead, is all but easy; different visions and priorities, different countries with varied cultures and habits, are only a few of the challenges we have to face on a daily basis, in order to keep the control of the project and guarantee that every area is run and developed with the same technical and quality standards. But the results obtained in only three years suggest us that we have found the right key.

The network we present here is the first step of global scale project, whose aim is to prove that with the right technical skills, business vision, knowledge, passion and a special team, it is possible to create or restore natural areas for nature tourism, able to sustain themselves, to produce positive economic impact in the local territories and to support conservation actions.

All of this without of course cause even a minimal disturbance to habitats and species...A utopia? Come visit one or more of our reserves and you will find yourself immersed in an extremely real world, tailor made for you, where to relax and indulge in your passion. Each new client is for us a precious detail in order to prove that the natural richness, if well managed, can become a resource and be preserved for the future.

Massimiliano Biasioli

SKUA Nature Group Managing Director



F. B. B. B.

PARTNERS



We met SKUA in 2014 and from the very beginning both of us have been conscious of the possibility to achieve together common aims. For Foundation a partner like SKUA can concretely reach the target of using nature resources as an opportunity of new employments and local economy development. On the other hand SKUA found in the Foundation a precious operational arm for habitats and species conservation. Our collaboration started with the Campanarios de Azaba Reserve, where in a few months a plan for the development of nature tourism has been made and several photographic hides have been built or renovated; facilities that now give an additional value to that wonderful place.

In SKUA we have found a very dynamic team, willing to reach concrete results and for the future we are already planning big and ambitious projects in Spain, Europe and.. not only there!

Therefore we have started a collaboration with SKUA Nature Group to develop a network of european private reserves that, in order to contribute to nature preservation, creates a sustainable territorial development through economical activities related to conservation.

Carlos Sanchez
FNYH President



Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre was created in 1994 with the aim to propose a balanced development between man and nature. FNYH works in the Cantabrian area and in Western Iberia, as well as in international projects. Since it was founded, FNYH has carried out several conservation, cooperation, research projects and awareness campaign. In addition to that, FNYH wrote many books and collaborated in the realization of many nature documentaries. So far lots of successful collaborations with public and private entities have been set.



In collaboration with:



To give the LIPU reserves an additional chance, combining their extraordinary nature moments with new tools to live and photograph their nature; this is the reason why LIPU has decided to start the adventure with SKUA Nature, being aware of the skills of Max Biasioli's team. The new SKUA hides have already produced their first results in the LIPU reserve of Ostia's CHM: wonderful pictures of herons, egrets, little bitterns. All of this with the point of reference of an ethical photography to guarantee nature conservation and the protection of its well-being.

Danilo Selvaggi - Lipu General Director – BirdLife Italy



In 2010 the Park started the collaboration with SKUA; Our nature areas have been the first reserves to be developed and included in their international Network. In a very short time we could see the development of different initiatives, reaching the aim to give new life and revitalise areas of great value that before were affected by lack of attention and a general state of abandon. Thanks to this project we have become aware of a particular value of our reserves that are now destinations for photographers coming from all the Italian Peninsula and abroad. New projects are planned for the next future, conservation actions dedicated to the reserves but also to the surrounding areas and the whole Park.

Dario Zocco - Po and Orba River Natural Park - General Director



The first time I reached Ultima Frontiera I was captured by a beautiful feeling of isolation, I felt like a pioneer. Unintentionally, I started to daydream and make plans considering the unlimited opportunities which that paradise offers. Our dream led us, through many problems and not always knowing very well what to do, to what Ultima Frontiera today is, but nothing of all that would have been possible without the passion and the work of my friends Sorin and Javi, the professionalism of Max and his company; that saw as we did the potentialities of that place. I want then to thank all the team at Ultima Frontiera, the SKUA team, my associates of Gelmin and all those people that during these years helped us to realise our dream.

Eduardo Zorrilla - Ultima Frontiera's Owner



We have worked with Skua Nature as our ground operators since 2011 and they have organised highly successful tours for us to Italy, with a variety of different itineraries and themes, including Birds & Wine. We have also started to use there venues where they have installed photographic hides and we have had tours to Ultima Frontiera in Romania and have made plans for one to Spain. Ornitholidays has been impressed with the high level of detail and quality they manage to obtain in each of the tours where we have worked with them. We thoroughly endorse their style and can recommend them for any tour you may be planning at the facilities they use.

Nigel Jones - Ornitholidays Director



THE NETWORK

SKUA Nature Group has created and manages the first project of Nature Reserves entirely developed for and dedicated to Nature Tourism and Nature Photography.

A new kind of offer, different from a simple itinerary in a destination or a photographic session in a hide, it's a world entirely conceived and organised for nature lovers.

Our team also works in different countries in the creation of nature itineraries for territorial enhancement, independently or in collaboration with local agencies and authorities, to provide great birding and photographic expeditions in remote and evocative places with the support of the most experienced group in Europe in this field.

From North to South, from East to West, the Network aims to include the best and exclusive nature areas of all Europe and more, to gather them and strengthen their preservation.

A large Network, made to photograph and observe all the target species of the different countries and to have the opportunity to develop useful and concrete conservation and research actions to preserve these beautiful but fragile areas.

-  Countries where we work directly
-  Countries with active projects and partners

ROMANIA

-  ULTIMA FRONTIERA - p. 12
Dobrogea - Danube Delta

ITALY

-  PO RIVER & RICEFIELDS - p. 70
Piedmont - Vercelli's Province
-  CASCINA SPINOLA - p. 106
Piedmont - Vercelli's Province
-  VALLI DI ARGENTA - p. 78
Emilia Romagna - Po Delta area
-  FRASSASI GORGE - p. 108
Marche - Appennino Marchigiano
-  CHM LIPU OSTIA - p. 96
Lazio - Ostia, Roma
-  WILD LUCANIA - p. 86
Basilicata - Lucanian Appennines
-  VALLE CAVANATA - p. 116
Friuli Venezia Giulia - Grado

SPAIN

-  LOS CAMPANARIOS - p. 34
Castilla y Leon - Campo de Azaba
-  FINCA LA PARRILLA - p. 56
Extremadura - Monfrague N.P.
-  DONA CATALINA - p. 110
Extremadura - Monroy's steppes
-  CENTRAL SPAIN - p. 112
Castilla y Leon - Avila area
-  MARISMAS DEL ALTAY - p. 117
Cantabria - Santander

LATVIA

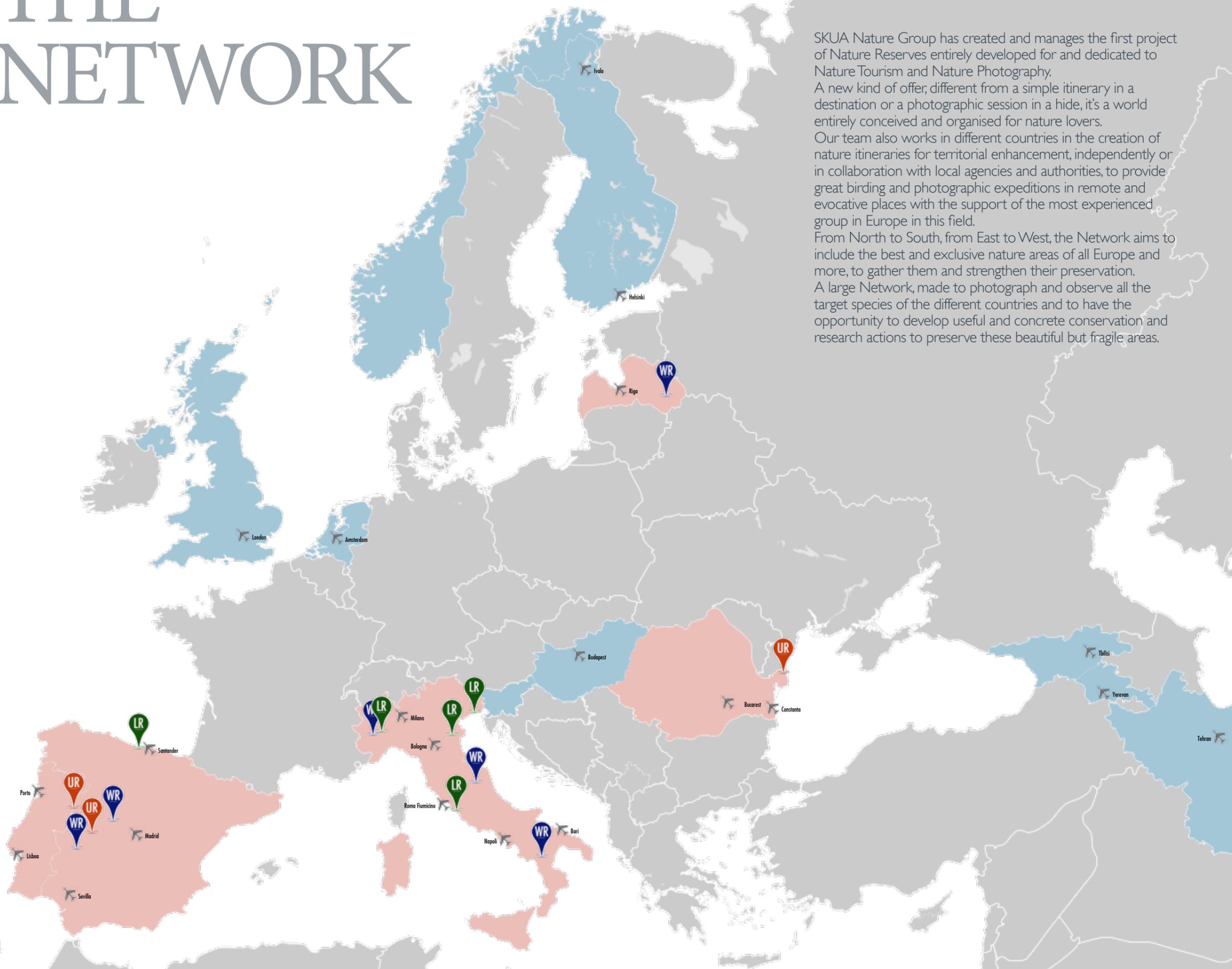
-  WILD LATVIA - p. 114
Latgale - Latvia

NEW FRONTIERS

- Armenia - p. 122
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OUR SUGGESTIONS

Get the best out of our Network- p. 140

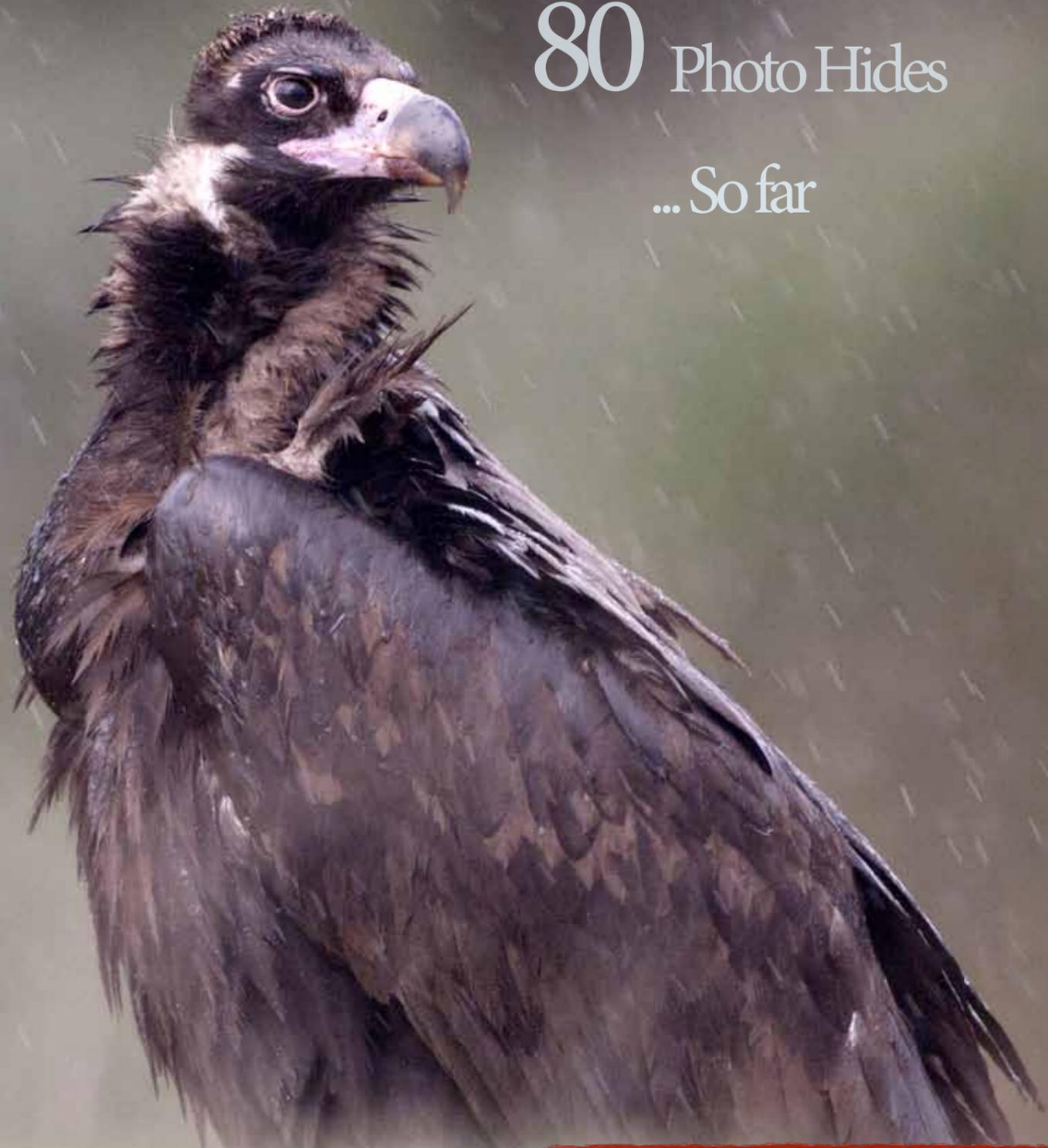


14 Nature Reserves

8000 Hectares where we work every day

80 Photo Hides

... So far



MORE THAN ...

150 Photographers using our hides each month

15000 People reached each year

182 Species to photograph

An incredible number of species to photograph in comfortable new generation hides. In every reserve, thanks to expert guides, you can find information and advices to take amazing pictures of target species, as well as to photograph less required but still very interesting and particular species. Depending on the season, you can plan your experience and enjoy close encounters with your favourite species.

304 Bird species to observe

All our reserves are real nature paradises where every visitor is attended and supported with professionalism and courtesy. Even if nature photography is a very important feature in our work, in all our areas we do also organize high level birdwatching and wildwatching tours. Our reserves offer the opportunity to easily observe rare species or species that are otherwise difficult to find in the Western Palearctic, such as Pallas's Gull, Paddyfield Warbler, Booted Warbler, Red-necked Nightjar or Black-winged Kite.



OUR NATURE RESERVES

Our Reserves are exclusive and unique places rich in wildlife, developed to offer all what a nature lover looks for and to make him/her enjoying a special experience in yet lesser known biodiversity hot-spots. The Network includes reserves in several countries and that helps you to observe or photograph the main target species of the area where these are located. The freedom that such places offer allows people to explore wild lands on their own with relaxing walkings or by electric cars, or accompanied by our expert guides searching for not only birds and mammals but also butterflies, dragonflies, amphibians, reptiles, plants, etc.

In addition to **top birding and wildlife experiences**, a special feature of our reserves is the **new concept of hide photography**: not only a mere daily use of a hide, but an entire world developed for photographers, where to find vehicles ad hoc modified (as boat hides or buggy hides), expeditions outside the reserve to enrich even more the portfolio and observations of species and go deeply into the atmosphere of the location; accommodation inside the reserve, to share with a limited number of people and only with people that share the same passion, and specially trained guides to make the experience memorable... And of course an high number of photographic hides to meet every photographer's requirement (from towers to partially buried hides, from floating hides to the ones at the level of the tree canopy, and much more...)





S. Stigman

In order to make a distinction and gather the reserves that present similarities, we have divided them into 3 macro-groups to differentiate usability, logistics and organization. However, each reserve has its own features that practically lead to the fact that every project is different from the others and unique; it's our team's job to develop these areas in a way that guarantees and provides the same high qualitative and ethical standards, be it for hides or nature guiding or accommodation services. The 3 macro-groups show the main features of each kind of reserve; from the most exclusive one to the local little jewels passing through projects that help not only nature but also the development of a local economy. The Reserves Network represents a new and secret world to discover and new photographic opportunities not to be missed!



C. Galliani

3 WAYS TO EXPLORE NATURE IN TOTAL FREEDOM



ULTIMATE RESERVES

Public or private large reserves (more than 500 hectares) where it's possible to stay in exclusive lodges or hotels in the middle of nature, entirely organized for nature photography and nature tourism. Main features:

- Accommodation inside the estate open only to nature tourism groups
- Total freedom to move inside the reserve and choose among a high number of different photographic hides, all included in the experience
- Minimum number of 15 new generation photographic hides for several target species
- A number of facilities and paths inside the reserve and excursions in the surrounding areas to get the best of a full 8-days expedition.
- International clientele



WIDESPREAD RESERVES

Reserves that are widespread in a vast territory with the collaboration of different public or private entities or companies. These areas can include and gather single hides as well as small nature reserves or private areas. Main features:

- Overnight stay close to the reserve in affiliated accommodation
- Minimum number of 5 new generation photographic hides
- Open to international groups or individuals for long week-ends or daily visits
- This kind of reserve is the one that is most indicated for the development of a local economy as it involves agreements with local professionals, authorities and accommodation facilities



LOCAL RESERVES

Small reserves, sometimes included inside public or private areas, that reach a mainly local fruition, even if they can also be included in itineraries of photographic and nature expeditions. Main features:

- Minimum number of 3 new generation photographic hides
- Open to individuals or small groups for daily visits or 2-days visits
- Some of these reserves have affiliated accommodation in nearby town or in the surroundings
- Mainly for a local clientele but a good opportunity also for tourists and international photographers visiting the area.