

Ailimpo works for bat conservation for pest control



[AILIMPO](#) and the naturalistic association [ANSE](#) work for the conservation of the Bigeye bat, very beneficial for the natural control of pests.

[AILIMPO](#) and ANSE signed yesterday two agreements to advance in the conservation of the biodiversity in the environment of lemon and grapefruit crops. The agreements support economically both the creation of the cave reserve of La Yesera and the evaluation of the conservation status of an endangered bat.

The Chairman of [AILIMPO](#) (Antonio Moreno) and the Director of [ANSE](#) (Pedro García Moreno) highlighted the importance of this joint venture aimed at establishing a framework of collaboration for the conservation of biodiversity in the environment of lemon and grapefruit crops.

The first of the agreements, signed with the ANSE Foundation, supports the creation of the first private bat reserve in the Iberian Southeast, established by the environmental organization through the purchase of the Cueva de las Yeseras (in the town of Santomera, one of the main lemon orchards area in Murcia-Spain). This cave was purchased by the Foundation in July 2019 for

25,000 euros and has been financed exclusively by private contributions through crowdfunding. Buying land in order to protect biodiversity is a practice that is becoming more common in many countries. It is another way of increasing the conservation effort to protect and recover wildlife, ecosystems, and ecosystem services.

In addition, both organizations have agreed to collaborate in the conservation of the LONG-FINGERED BAT (*Myotis capaccinii*), which is one of the most valuable species in the cave of Las Yeseras, since it is the only bat officially catalogued as "Endangered" in Spain. This collaboration will be materialized through the co-financing by Ailimpo of the project "*Evaluation of the conservation status of the big buzzard bat (Myotis capaccinii) in the Southeast of Iberia*" developed by ANSE and supported by the Spanish Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, through the Biodiversity Foundation. Bats are one of the most diverse and important groups within the mammal world. They develop important ecosystem services such as pest control.

Both organizations consider that these initiatives will be an important starting point to integrate biodiversity in lemon and grapefruit production, as demanded by society and consumers. In addition, ANSE and AILIMPO highlight that the EU Green Deal - European Green Pact - establishes the preservation of biodiversity as one of its key axes, following the line of the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) number 15 of the United Nations. In this context, the Spanish lemon and grapefruit sector is a pioneer in coordinating a working strategy for the future that integrates biodiversity into its activity with the collaboration of a leading environmental association such as ANSE.

The Long-Fingered Bat, an unusual bat

- Long-Fingered Bat is a very unique bat and is globally threatened with the category of Vulnerable according to the IUCN (The International Union for Conservation of Nature) . In Spain it is listed as Endangered, sharing the category with the Iberian Lynx or the Imperial Eagle.
- The main threats are loss of water resources and disturbance of their refuges (caves and mines).
- This is a Mediterranean species, especially present on the northern shore, although it does reach the Persian Gulf.
- In the Iberian Peninsula it has a distribution restricted to the Mediterranean coast.
- The Long-Fingered Bat generally lives in small groups of individuals and also tends to take refuge in caves which makes it difficult to locate and count.
- It is closely linked to water reservoirs, being able to feed on fish as well as insects, hunting in low flights over water.
- In the Region of Murcia there are about 20 known colonies ranging from less than 10 to 600 individuals. An optimistic estimate would point to a thousand specimens in the Region,

- although there are no complete estimates (this is one of the objectives of the project).
- We all have a great responsibility in the conservation of the specie as it plays a key role as natural pest control in lemon and grapefruit orchards.

[1]
<https://www.asociacionanse.org/anse-protege-poblaciones-de-murcielagos-mediante-la-compra-de-una-zona-de-especial-conservacion-en-la-region-de-murcia/20190605/>

[2]
<https://www.asociacionanse.org/anse-inicia-un-proyecto-para-la-conservacion-del-murcielago-patudo-en-el-sureste-iberico/20200306/>