

Post-tour Spain: A living landscape of conservation and innovation

Following the General Assembly in Cáceres, members continued their journey through Spain with a post-tour devoted to land stewardship, biodiversity, and rural innovation.



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The programme began at **Dehesa de Valdecasillas**, managed by Germán GAMAZO. Having received the 2026 Belleuropa Award during the General Assembly, the estate offered a practical example of how agriculture, livestock, hunting, and biodiversity conservation are brought together through long-term stewardship.

The group then moved to **La Ronca** near Escalona, Toledo, owned by Andrea MARAZZI. La Ronca manages agriculture, forestry, hunting, and wildlife observation as a connected system. Evening birdwatching and early-morning wildlife sessions allowed participants to experience how everyday management incorporates active conservation.

Finca Hualdo: From farming to the finished product

A highlight of the tour was **Finca Hualdo**, recipient of the 2026 Wildlife Estates Label. Managing Director José Antonio PECHE introduced a model uniting olive groves, pistachios, Manchega sheep, artisanal cheese, and organic horticulture.

By processing raw materials on site, Finca Hualdo maintains a complete production chain, ensuring quality and traceability. Participants sampled its extra virgin olive oils and cheeses, as well as an innovative olive oil created specifically for children. The visit demonstrated how traditional agriculture can innovate by building on existing knowledge and strengthening connections with consumers.

A masterclass in practical conservation

At La Ronca, Dr. Carlos OTERO (Estate Manager and President of Wildlife Estates Spain) led a masterclass explaining how production and habitat management form a unified long-term strategy.

Using the Wildlife Estates methodology, La Ronca uses “Islands of Biodiversity” and Habitat Capacity Improvement Units (UMECAs) to create refuge and feeding zones across the landscape. These targeted interventions support species such as the Spanish Imperial Eagle, Golden Eagle, Eagle Owl, Wildcat, Otter, and several bat species.



Dr. Carlos OTERO and Hubert ANDRE-DUMONT visiting Dehesa de Valdecasillas



View from La Ronca in Toledo

Measuring the value of nature

The masterclass continued with presentations by María del Rocío LUIS JARA and Blanca MONTORO on the La Ronca pilot project (in cooperation with Wild Square and Territorium), which explores how biodiversity can be measured as a tangible source of value.

Using ecological assessments, remote sensing, GIS monitoring, camera traps, and bioacoustics, the project establishes ecological baselines to help guide management decisions. These tools provide reliable data to demonstrate environmental results, laying the groundwork for emerging mechanisms like Nature Credits that aim to reward verified biodiversity improvements.

Productive, resilient, and alive

The post-tour demonstrated that conservation and productive management can go hand in hand:

- **Valdecasillas** showed long-established estate stewardship
- **Finca Hualdo** illustrated agricultural diversification and high-value production
- **La Ronca** combined practical conservation with scientific monitoring and new environmental market concepts

Together, they highlighted the vital role of private landowners in addressing biodiversity loss and climate change.



Speech by Andrea MARAZZI at La Ronca

Dear Friends,

I am very happy to welcome you to La Ronca. I would like to begin with a famous line from *The Leopard* by Giuseppe TOMASI DI LAMPEDUSA, spoken by Tancredi: **“If we want everything to stay as it is, everything must change.”** For me, these words capture exactly the moment La Ronca is going through. I quote it because it captures very well the moment La Ronca is going through.

The property has belonged to my family since 1960. For many years, it was dedicated to red legged partridge shooting and welcomed guests from across Europe. This sporting tradition shaped the way La Ronca was protected, managed, and cared for, with close attention to game, wildlife, and natural habitats.

Agriculture always remained marginal, allowing the estate to preserve a special balance and a remarkable richness of species.

After the 1990s, as shooting and active land management gradually declined, biodiversity also began to suffer. In 2014, we therefore decided to restore a more structured approach to the estate, with the same spirit of care that had guided it in the past.

A further and decisive impulse came through Carlos OTERO and Wildlife Estates, whose experience helped us adopt a more scientific approach to biodiversity regeneration, leading to concrete measures to improve habitats and strengthen the ecological balance of La Ronca.

Today, society and institutions are beginning to recognize the value of ecosystem restoration, biodiversity, and sustainable land management. This is encouraging, but it is not enough. We need to turn these efforts into a virtuous system that creates environmental, economic, and patrimonial value.

In this vision, shooting is not separate from biodiversity management. At La Ronca, it has always been part of the estate's identity and of a wider cycle of habitat care, wildlife balance, and long term stewardship.

This brings us back to Tancredi's words. If we want La Ronca to remain what it is — a living place, rich in nature, history, wildlife, and sporting identity — we must allow it to evolve. We must change the tools, the language, and the management model, without betraying the original spirit of the estate.

For this reason, I would like to introduce Alicia PALACIOS, Professor of Agriculture at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid y Rocío Luis JARA, Master Student, Carlos OTERO MUERZA, President of Wildlife Estates España, Blanca MONTORO and Daniel SUÁREZ, and the Territorium Team, whose technical and scientific contribution is proving essential in mapping, measuring, and assessing La Ronca's potential in terms of nature credits.

Our goal is to build a model that enhances biodiversity, recognizes natural capital, and gives a concrete future to estates such as La Ronca.

Andrea MARAZZI

