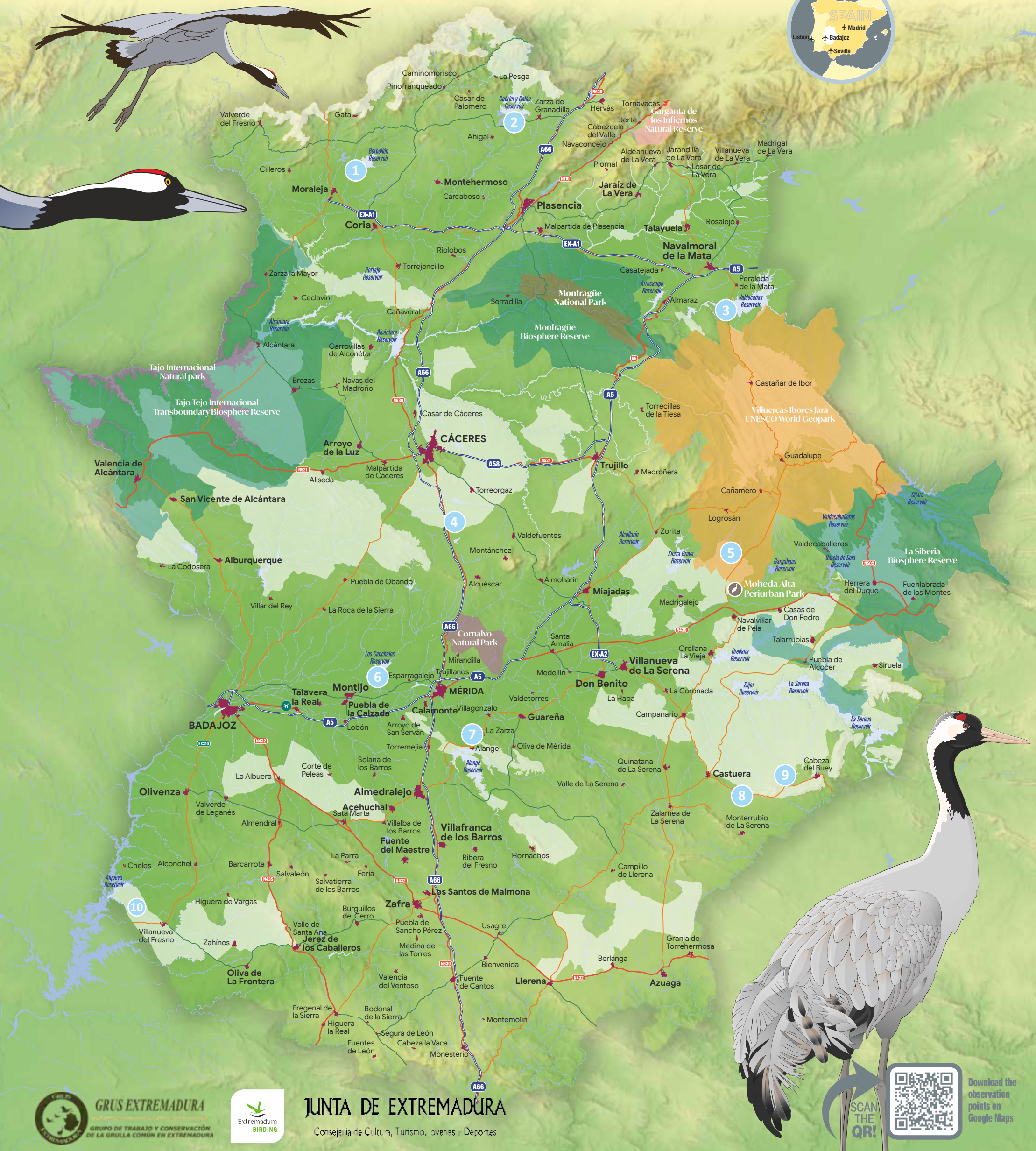


Cranes in Extremadura

The sight and sound of common cranes are one of the most characteristic features of the dehesas and cultivated areas of Extremadura in winter. Between 120,000 and 130,000 visit the region. This map, produced in collaboration with Grus Extremadura, shows some of the best places to see wintering common cranes.

Location Map



JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

Consejería de Cultura, Turismo, Juventud y Deportes



Download the observation points on Google Maps

Principle natural areas in Extremadura with crane observation points

Legend

- National Park
- UNESCO Geopark

- Biosphere Reserve
- Natural Park
- Natural Reserve

- Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA)
- Crane Observation Point

www.birdinginextremadura.com

Cranes in Extremadura



Extremadura is the main wintering area for Common Cranes in the Iberian Peninsula, hosting between 51-54% of the total population. The first study of the species in the region (Pérez Chisconi & Fernández Cruz, 1971) had already shown the importance of this population in Iberia, when it was highly dependent on the dehesas and cereal crops. The favourable climate, the presence of dehesas and safe roosting areas were key for this population up to the mid-20th century. There was then a large transformation in farming with the loss of thousands of hectares of cereals and dehesas with conversion to irrigated crops and resultant changes in land use. This change, through time, increased the area dedicated to maize and rice, which was beneficial to cranes, giving them opportunities to feed on the stubble fields, and changing the distribution of the species in the region.

The areas dramatically transformed were the floodplains of the Gadiana River. The central area of the region lies at the boundary of the two provinces. As the area for tomatoes, rice and maize increased, so the cranes were able to find abundant food easily, with the dehesas still offering foraging areas in the second half of winter. The acorns there offer a high calorie diet, which is important as preparation for the northward migration. Generally, December census counts show figures that are higher in the irrigated areas, with lower numbers there in January as birds move into the dehesas.

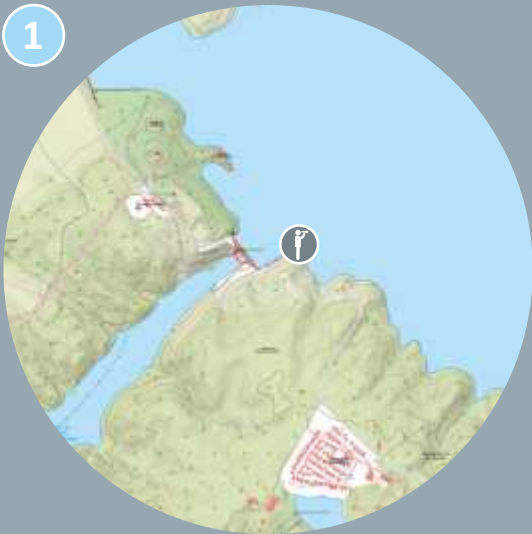
The cranes in Extremadura are distributed across the region and all of the nuclei are interconnected. Outlying areas are shared with adjacent regions such as Ciudad Real, Cordoba and Toledo, as well as Portugal. 65% of the Iberian cranes occur in the south-west of the peninsula, with numbers around 160,000, with Extremadura as the heart of this great nucleus.

The importance of cranes in the region has given rise to various events linked to these birds, such as the annual Crane Festival, in the periurban park of Moheda Alta, in Navalvillar de Pela (Badajoz); Moraleja Vuela, in the place by the same name in the Sierra de Gata (Cáceres) and the Day of the Cranes, with a welcome to the cranes organized by ADENEX each year in different wintering sites in the region.

Distribution of Common Cranes in Extremadura



Observation points for cranes



Borbollón Reservoir



El Anillo (Gabriel and Galán Reservoir)



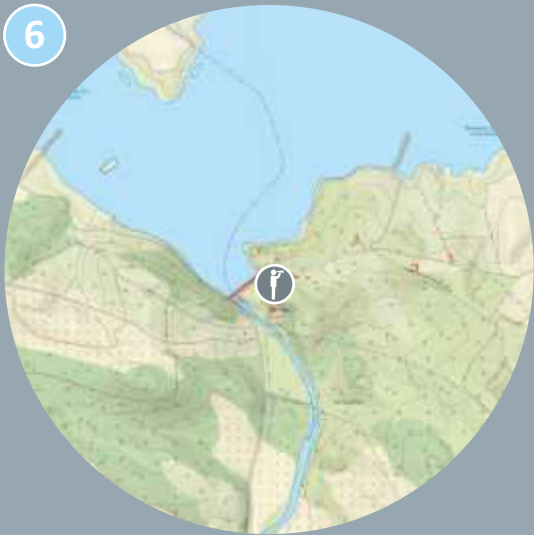
Los Mármoles (Valdecañas Reservoir)



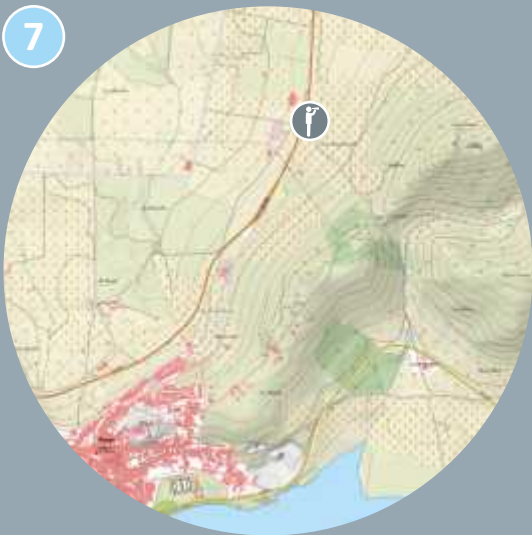
Garabatos Castle (Aldea del Cano)



Cubilar Reservoir



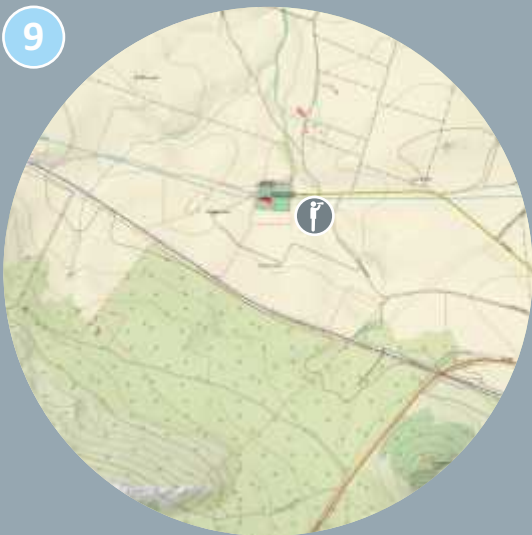
Los Canchales Reservoir



Alange – La Zarza road (EX - 105)



Puerto Mejoral viewpoint



Belén Chapel (Cabeza del Buey)



Cuncos Reservoir