

## MANIFESTO IN DEFENSE OF CAÑIZAR LAKE

VIII European Crane Conference 2014

Cañizar Lake used to be a freshwater wetland located in the North-West of the Iberian Peninsula. Until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century it had a flooded area of 1200 ha and a maximum depth of over 2.5 m. There are antique documents which show the importance of this lake. Between 1729 and 1732, drainage works were carried out which meant that the lake was completely dried out and its bed used for farming.

After an intense work to raise awareness of its importance, the restoration works of the old wetland began in 2006. These actions started to bear fruit at the end of 2008 with the partial inundation of the former lake. From 2009 to 2012, the new Cañizar had a flooded area of 360 ha, to which it had to be added 40 more ha of non-inundated neighbouring grassland. Its dimensions made the Cañizar the second biggest inland freshwater wetland of the Iberian Peninsula, only surpassed by the National Park of Tablas de Daimiel. More than 200 species of birds were inventoried. Among them, it stood out the Squacco Heron, (*Ardeola ralloides*) or the Great Bittern, (*Botaurus stellaris*) both endangered species. Other emblematic bird in the Cañizar was the crane (*Grus grus*). Just a few months after the lake started to recover its waters, the presence of up to 4.200 specimens was observed during the post-nuptial migration. A year after, the number of them kept constant at about 10.000 specimens.

Since 2012, due to local political interests, with the complicity of the Ebro Hydrographical Confederation (CHE) and backed up by the opposition of part of the local population to give a protection figure to this place, the lock-gate which held the water in the lake has been open. Therefore, this significant European wetland, important refuge for the migration of cranes, is utterly dry again and its ecosystem in serious danger.

From the European scientific community, we demand an urgent solution on the face of the serious environmental disaster taking place in Cañizar Lake. The political class must take decisions which can make compatible the existence of the lake and the human development around it. This path has to be walked, not only for the benefit of biodiversity, but for human beings' own selves.

**PETITION IN DEFENCE OF THE LAGUNA DE CAÑIZAR, SPAIN**  
 British Trust for Ornithology Conference, December 2014

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British Trust for Ornithology Conference, December 2014

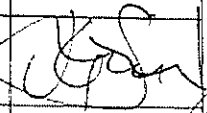

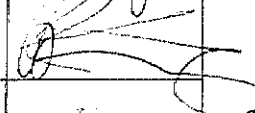
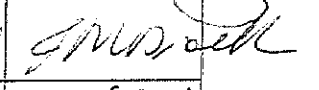
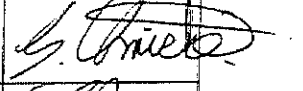
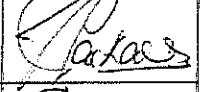
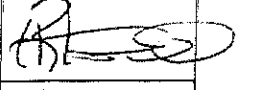

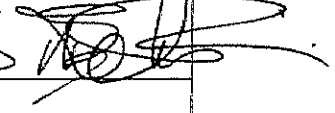
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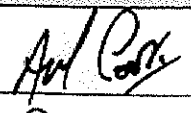

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