

Jesus Garzón

Jesus Garzón is one of the world's leading experts on environmental conservation and the protection of threatened species. In 1992, he established Trashumancia y Naturaleza to bring transhumance back to Spain. Transhumance (the seasonal migration of sheep and cattle from the plains in winter to higher pastures in summer) is vital not just for historical and cultural but also for environmental reasons. If cattle are forced to remain in the same place over the summer they create immense pressure on the land due to trampling and excessive grazing. Garzón has trained shepherds to revive this tradition, including the communal celebrations in villages along the transhumance trails. The sheep act as carriers of seed from one environment to another and thus help create the ideal habitat for other species. Trashumancia y Naturaleza provides help to any livestock owner who wishes to move sheep and cattle along the traditional cañadas by supplying advice and practical hands-on support in the form of specialized shepherds, trained dogs and tame leading animals.

The revival of transhumance is playing an important role in restoring plants and animals to the Spanish mountains, but also in reawakening 'ghost villages'. Such places now live indirectly off transhumance in so far as the association rents grazing land from them, and the shepherds buy provisions there. Last but not least, it has renewed the inhabitants' feeling of belonging to their mountains.

Garzón won a Slow Food Award in 2002.

-----Original Message-----

From: Cinzia Scaffidi [<mailto:c.scaffidi@slowfood.it>]

Sent: Monday, April 19, 2010 9:39 AM

To: Valerio Borgianelli Spina

Cc: Raymond, Ruth (Bioiversity)

Subject: Re: Guardian of Diversity

What about Jesus Garzon? he's Spanish, and he re-founded the long distance transhumance in Spain. He did and is still doing a great job. He won in 2000 our Slow Food Award for the Defence of Biodiversity and since then he kept organizing association of sheperds of all over the world. Now his association is called "Asociación Transumancia i Naturaleza", they meet once a year.

Have a look here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=of2PIgWTc2c>

He speaks several languages (excluding italian), so you can contact him easily at:

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You can also read his history in the Slow Food Award page:

[http://www.slowfood.it/associazione\\_ita/ita/sf\\_premio/PREMIO/vincitori2000/pagine\\_it/garzon.htm](http://www.slowfood.it/associazione_ita/ita/sf_premio/PREMIO/vincitori2000/pagine_it/garzon.htm)

Best Regards

Cinzia

Jesus Garzón

At the age of 16, Garzón left school and dedicated his life to safeguarding species at risk of extinction, a problem facing Spain at the time due to rapid industrialization. Garzon began his career working at a magazine about hunting- the only one he could find that dealt with animals-and he used the money he saved to explore the mountains in his native Spain. His first interest was birds, vultures in particular. In 1967, with other Spanish scientist, he founded a zoology lab to produce and disseminate scientific information on vertebrates. In 1972, he developed techniques for decreasing the death rates of baby bald eagles. In 1974, he proposed to the Spanish government the protection of Monfragüe to conserve about 200 species at risk of extinction. The zone was declared a national park in 1979 and today is the largest protected area in the country (18 000 hectares). In 1984, Garzon became the Director General for the Environment in Giunta dell'Estremadura, a position he held until 1988.

One of the great Spanish field naturalists of our time, Garzon has worked tirelessly towards a better understanding and conservation of Iberian wildlife. Much of his life has been dedicated to studying and protecting such typically Spanish species as the Spanish lynx, Imperial eagle, Black vulture, Iberian wolf, Brown bear, capercaillie, Black stork, cranes and the Great bustard. His influence has also been critical in the creation of national parks such as Monfragüe and Cabañeros.

Largely abandoned over the past century with the growth of train transport, transhumance (the seasonal migration of sheep and cattle from the plains in winter to higher pastures in summer) in Spain was, for millennia, a stronghold of rural life. Transhumance is vital not just for historical and cultural but also for environmental reasons. As transhumance disappears young oak saplings are devoured by the cattle during the summer months. If the cattle are forced to remain in the same place over the summer they create immense pressure on the land due to trampling and excessive grazing - there are well documented local bird extinctions this century, such as the Andalusian hemipode or the Demoiselle crane, brought about by this cause. In arguably his most ambitious project, Jesus Garzón established Trashumancia y Naturaleza in 1992 to bring transhumance back to Spain.

Garzón revived the transhumance traditions of northern Spain. He has trained shepherds – and equipped them with mobile phones so that they need not feel so isolated – to continue this tradition, including the communal celebrations in villages along the transhumance trails. The sheep themselves act as carriers of seed from one environment to another and thus help create the ideal habitat for other species. Further, this revaluing of mountain environments has drawn attention to the mountains and saved them from abandonment. Trashumancia y Naturaleza is currently the only organisation in Spain devoted entirely to keeping transhumance alive. It provides help to any livestock owner who wishes to move cattle along the traditional cañadas by supplying advice and practical hands-on support in the form of specialised shepherds, trained dogs and tame leading animals.

He won a Slow Food Award in 2002.