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By Maura Maxwell

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Ailimpo shines spotlight on biodiversity



Interprofessional teams up with ANSE on new project to protect the endangered long-fingered bat

Ailimpo has joined forces with conservation group ANSE to promote and strengthen biodiversity efforts on lemon and grapefruit crops.

The two parties have agreed to fund the creation of a conservation area for the long-fingered bat in South Eastern Spain and to evaluate the conservation status of an endangered species.

Ailimpo chairman Antonio Moreno and ANSE director 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 two agreements, signed with the ANSE Foundation, supports the creation of the first private bat reserve in the Iberian Southeast, established by the environmental organisation 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 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 organisations 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.

Ailimpo will co-finance 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.

Ailimpo and ANSE said the initiatives were "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

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activity with the collaboration of a leading environmental association such as ANSE.

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