

LOS COMIENZOS DE LA PROTECCIÓN DE LAS AVES EN ESPAÑA (1879-1936): GRAELLS, EL MARQUÉS DE CUSANO Y LAS SOCIEDADES PROTECTORAS DE ANIMALES

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Resumen

La historia de la protección legal de la aves en España durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX es muy conocida, destacando como hechos relevantes la fundación de la Sociedad Española de Ornitología (1954), la contribución de reputados científicos (sobre todo José Antonio Valverde y Francisco Bernis), y el impacto mediático de un carismático personaje, Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente. En cambio, existían pocos trabajos que abordaran esta cuestión en épocas más antiguas. Sin embargo, recientes estudios, que aquí se sintetizan, han desvelado que anteriores esfuerzos por proteger a una parte de la avifauna, considerada útil a la agricultura, fueron más intensos y complejos de lo que se creía previamente. Se desarrollaron durante el último cuarto del siglo XIX y primer tercio del XX, en consonancia con similares iniciativas internacionales. Participaron activamente políticos y cazadores como Felipe Juez-Sarmiento (marqués de Cusano), técnicos y científicos, entre los que sobresalió el prestigioso zoólogo Mariano de la Paz Graells (1809-1898), y sociedades protectoras de animales. Pero no se actuó de forma coordinada ni se crearon estructuras institucionales específicas. Y aunque se consiguieron algunos resultados memorables que favorecieron la conservación de determinadas especies de aves, el impulso protector acabó desdibujándose bajo la presión de una poderosa facción del sector cinegético.

Abstract

The history of the legal protection of birds in Spain during the second half of the twentieth century is well known, highlighting as relevant facts the foundation of the Spanish Ornithological Society (1954), the contribution of renowned scientists (especially José Antonio Valverde and Francisco Bernis), and the media impact of a charismatic character, Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente. But there were few works that addressed this issue in older times. However, recent studies, which are synthesized here, have revealed that previous efforts to protect a part of the avifauna, considered useful to agriculture, were more intense and complex than what was previously believed. They developed during the last quarter of the XIX century and the first third of the XX century, in consonance with similar international initiatives. Politicians and hunters such as Felipe Juez-Sarmiento (Marquess of Cusano), technicians and scientists, among whom stood out the prestigious zoologist Mariano de la Paz Graells (1809-1898), and animal protection societies. But no coordinated action was taken nor specific institutional structures were created. And although some memorable results were achieved that favored the conservation of certain species of birds, the protective impulse ended up being blurred under the pressure of a powerful faction of the hunting sector.

Recibido el 3 de mayo de 2019 — Aceptado el 10 de octubre de 2019

<https://doi.org/10.47101/llull.2020.43.87.07ferrero>

led that previous efforts to protect an array of birds, considered useful to agriculture, were more intense and complex than previously believed. They were developed during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first third of the 20th, in line with similar international initiatives. Politicians and hunters such as Felipe Juez-Sarmiento (Marquis of Cusano), technicians and scientists, especially the prestigious zoologist Mariano de la Paz Graells (1809-1898), and animal protection societies participated in this process. Nevertheless, there was no coordinated action and no specific institutional structures were created. Finally, although some memorable results were achieved favouring the conservation of certain species, the protective impulse ended up blurred under the pressure of a powerful faction of the hunting sector.

Palabras claves: Agricultura, Archivos, Ciencia y sociedad, España, Fauna útil, Mariano de la Paz Graells, Ornitología, Protección de especies, Siglos XIX-XX.

Key words: Agriculture, Archives, Mariano de la Paz Graells, Ornithology, Protection of species, Science and society, Spain, Useful fauna, XIX-XX centuries.

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