

# The extinct Pyrenean Ibex



The last Bucardo is exhibited in the **Museo Bucardo Torla**, within the Visitors Centre of the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park.

[www.bucardo.es](http://www.bucardo.es) is a website about the first global extinction in the 21st century, the Pyrenean Ibex or Bucardo. The book *El Bucardo de los Pirineos* tells the complete history of this animal what was a Pyrenean endemic.

During centuries the Pyrenean Ibex lost area by hunting of locals for its flesh, horns and skin on both French and Spanish sides. During the 19th Century, due to its impressive horns and the wild and challenging habitat where the last individuals survived, the Bucardo became a favoured trophy for European hunters. In 1880 a small population survived in the Ordesa valley. It finally received some protection in the form of a hunting ban in 1913 and the establishment of the Ordesa National Park in 1918. But this was not enough. The upland plateaux, where most of its summer pastures were, wasn't part of the 2,000 ha. National Park though (that was extended in 1984). Already before the Spanish Civil War numbers were reduced to not more than a dozen animals (and maybe less).

The Ordesa valley, with its harsh winter climate, in which the sun never reaches the bottom, never was a favourable place that provided food and became overgrown as a result of the new Park regulations which forebode tree cutting. Sadly, the Bucardo was being preserved in the one place it couldn't survive. Additional feeding started in 1969 but at the end of the 20th Century, after more than a hundred years of inbreeding, there were only between ten and twenty animals alive.

Shortly after Spain joined the European Union, an active Bucardo conservation plan was launched. At the start in 1993, there were three females left, but no males (the last male died in 1991). The plan was to crossbreed the Pyrenean females with males from an other subspecies, the Iberian Ibex, as a last attempt to save something. But to no avail. One female died after nine months in captivity, another female just disappeared and the last was found dead under a tree the 6th of January 2000. Many predicted it for mankind, but it became reality for the Bucardo, the turn of the Millennium was indeed the end of the world.

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