



2023

Annual Report

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Who we are

The Associação Transumância Natureza (ATN) is an Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation (ONGA) created in 2000. We were pioneers in recognising the **Faia Brava Reserve as Portugal's first Private Protected Area**. We create spaces for nature and our main mission is **nature conservation and ecological restoration in support of sustainable development**.



Governing Bodies

MANAGEMENT

Henk Smit
PRESIDENT

Ana Berliner
VICE-PRESIDENT

Kas Burger
TREASURER

Ana Cristina Perpétuo
SECRETARY

José Vieira Branco
MEMBER

José Esperança
MEMBER

Carlos Sanchez
MEMBER

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sandra Monique Beato Pereira
PRESIDENT

João Carvalho
VOWEL

Marco Ferraz
MEMBER

SUPERVISORY BOARD

Jan Herman Meijer
PRESIDENT

Rita Cristóvão
MEMBER

Jorge Proença
MEMBER

Our Vision

The valleys of the Côa, Águeda and Douro rivers benefit from **sustainable management policies** that ensure the **protection of biodiversity** and enhance the maintenance of traditional landscapes that are resilient to climate change.

Our Mission

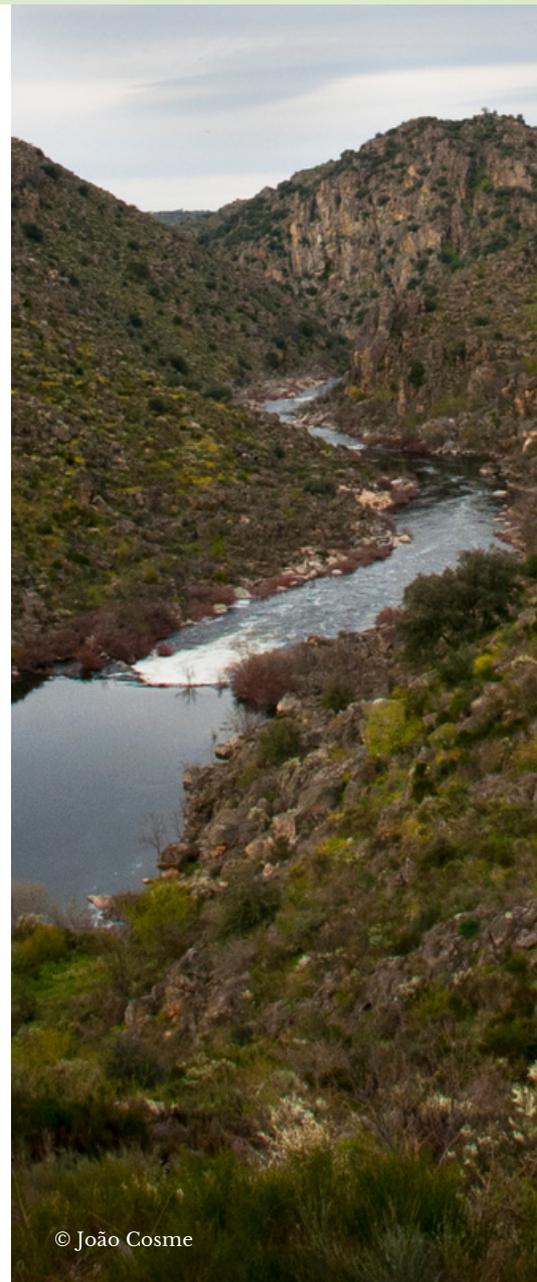
Identify and promote **sustainable, scientifically-based territorial management models** that warrant **nature conservation** and **social progress**.

“CREATING SPACES FOR NATURE”

Our values and principles

RIGOUR · ADAPTABILITY
· PERSEVERANCE

ATNatureza/Faia Brava's main values are **respect for life, the environment** and **gender equality**. We are meticulous and diligent, we fight hard for our goals and accept challenges with optimism. We are committed to **youth** and **innovation**, with a sense of opportunity and the ability to adapt to changing contexts. We **respect the values and traditions that favour the conservation of biodiversity** and assume our mission towards society in a responsible manner. We **value the traditional and technical-scientific knowledge available** to support our decisions and thus achieve positive and lasting impacts.



President and Executive Director's Message



Henk Smith, President ; António Araújo, Executive Director

Dear supporters, friends, partners and members of ATN

Another year passed and we're back with our annual report to let you know what we've been doing to create space for nature in the Côa river valley with your precious support.

As always the team was busy running the properties, creating new links with local stakeholders, promoting environmental education, increasing the forested area, and monitoring the wild populations of prey and predators. We're happy to announce that the numbers of partridges and rabbits are increasing. Their distribution seems well attached to the existence of the ponds we've been installing and managing. The population of deer seems to increase as well, and our camera traps have detected a good number of other mammals, foxes, badgers and mongoose, for instance. Unfortunately, the wolf and the lynx seem to be still away but we hope they'll soon come to visit Faia Brava. Our herd of "Garrano" horses produced 13 new foals, and the cliff breeding raptors prospered.

The Egyptian vultures came back from the Sahel, and Golden and Bonelli's eagles bred, as well as the resident peregrine couple.

The population of Griffons keeps flourishing and you're all welcome to pay a visit and meet them in loco.

Unfortunately, not all are good news! In March the board was confronted with serious management issues. Confronted with the situation, the director resigned from her position. After an investigation by our Treasurer and an external accountancy office, the irregularities were cleared, and the problem was solved. A new director was hired and we are again fully operational with a small motivated team.

We received a lot of support from friends and partners that we acknowledge and we were even able to replace our old tractor, an indispensable tool to keep the properties thriving. Despite all odds our small team with volunteer support managed to plant some 3.000 trees and sowing 8.000 acorns of oaks. During the olive harvesting campaign over 11 tons were collected and our bio-olive oil will be better and tastier than ever!

On behalf of the whole team, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support and hope to see you soon. May our journey be filled with growth and inspiration for the sake of Faia Brava.

Henk Smit & António Araújo

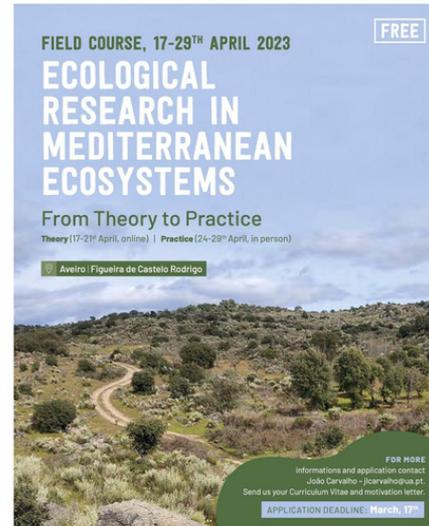
2023 Highlights



In February, ATNatureza organised a **National Meeting of NGOs** with the theme "**Environment and Climate Change. What Future?**", an event that brought together a few dozens of environmental non-governmental organisations.

For two days there were presentations, discussions on the challenge of climate change and the promotion of co-operation between organisations to tackle this scenario. In addition, a memorandum was jointly drafted that addressed the prospects for national action to combat, operate and mitigate the effects of climate change on the environment.

In addition to the NGOs, the event was also attended by Geert Bukkems and Matthew Pye, from the Climate Change Academy, as well as the Regional Director of the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF), architect Sandra Sarmiento. The meeting was covered on television by RTP2, Portugal's national channel, in the BIOSFERA programme.



In April, the Wildlife Unit of the University of Aveiro's Centre for Environmental and Marine Studies, in partnership with ATNatureza, organised the theoretical-practical course "**Ecological Research in Mediterranean Ecosystems - From Theory to Practise**" at Faia Brava.

Twenty-one students of different nationalities attended online training sessions presented by various researchers, including one given by one of ATNatureza's biologists. The course ended with a practical component, where they applied scientific sampling techniques in the Faia Brava.

PRIMEIRA CIRCULAR



XIV Reunião de Ungulados Silvestres Ibéricos

"Ungulates in the Anthropocene: Adapting to New Challenges"

Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, 29 e 30 setembro de 2023

A 14ª edição da Reunião de Ungulados Silvestre Ibéricos terá lugar em Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, nos dias 29 e 30 de setembro. Esta edição, subordinada ao tema "Ungulates Rewilding: Challenges and Opportunities", contará com um conjunto de sessões plenárias seguidas de apresentações orais em formato *pitch* e de apresentações em painel (posters).

Convidamos todos a participar ativamente na RUSI XIV, e a apresentarem os seus trabalhos em formato *pitch* e/ou poster! Em breve será disponibilizada mais informação.

Programa preliminar

Dia 29/09 – Sessões plenárias + apresentações *pitch* + posters

Dia 30/09 – Saída de campo à Reserva da Faia Brava (Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, Guarda)

Esperamos por vocês!!

Para mais informações: reuniao.ungulados@gmail.com



ATNatureza took part in the organisation of the **14th edition of the Meeting on Iberian Wild Ungulates (RUSI)**, which took place in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo in September, with the theme **"Ungulates in the Anthropocene: Adapting to New Challenges"**.

The event brought together various experts and agents involved in the study of wild ungulate populations in the Iberian Peninsula to present the results of their latest research and discuss the topic.

The meeting included a visit to Faia Brava, a favourable location for studies of ungulates and their relationship with the ecosystem.

ATNatureza was present on the third day of the visit by the participants of the **ERASMUS+ project (Let's Connect Youth)** organised by "Territórios do Côa ADR", in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo.

In his speech, biologist Eduardo Alves from ATNatureza/Faia Brava referred to our values and the actions we take to achieve our goals. He also presented one of the most important projects we are developing, LIFE Aegyptius Return, covering its objectives, actions and some of this year's results. This project's goal is the reinforcement of the wild populations of Black Vulture.



As part of the **Côa - Arts Corridor**, a piece of art was built in the Faia Brava Reserve.

The work was developed by the artist Antony Lyons, with the participation of the local population. It was made using natural materials and represents the changing cycles of life in a structure inspired by a traditional dovecote. The work can be visited and is close to Faia Brava's south gate.



The **Faia Brava Reserve Photographic Exhibition** was inaugurated in June at the **Côa Museum** in Vila Nova de Foz Côa. The opening was attended by several friends, partners and members of ATNatureza, including Isabel Freitas (ICNF).

This exhibition aims to show the richness of biodiversity and the beauty of the landscapes of the Côa Valley and the Faia Brava. It will be on display for years to come.



The **Ordinary General Meeting of ATNatureza members** was held in May. At this event, the association's new governing bodies were elected for the 2023-2026 triennium.

Vulture Conservation

LIFE AEGYPIUS RETURN PROJECT

ATNatureza is a partner in the **LIFE Aegyptius Return** project, which is part of the **LIFE** programme co-funded by the European Commission with the overall aim of increasing and consolidating the Portuguese population of the cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*).

This year ATNatureza has been active in the field as part of this project.

- **PROSPECTING** - We surveyed areas with potential for the presence of new/unknown colonies of this species in the Águeda Valley, Côa Valley and south of the Douro International.
- **MARKING CHICKS** - Four cinereous vulture juveniles were marked with metal rings and GPS transmitters at the Serra da Malcata colony. The aim of these markings is to obtain data on the dispersal movements of these juveniles when they begin to fly, and thus understand their feeding and roosting sites and potential future settlement sites. We also take biological samples to evaluate the state of health of the juveniles and thus detect in advance possible factors that could affect their future development.
- **NEST REPAIR** - A cinereous vulture nest in danger of collapse was repaired in the Serra da Malcata. This intervention is crucial to warrant the safety of future juveniles and increase the number of nests available for this species' breeding population.



VULTURE FEEDERS (CAANS)

This year we continued our work in the management of the vulture feeders (CAANs), with the aim of providing supplementary food for these birds during the breeding season, especially the egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and the cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*).

This year we decided internally to stop the activity of the CAAN in Almofala due to its proximity to the breeding colonies of griffons, which could affect egyptian vulture's use of the feeder. The CAANs were active between March and September, a period in which the egyptian vulture is in our region.

RESCUING GRIFFONS

This year, ATNatureza technicians have responded to the public's requests for help and rescued three griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo and Escalhão.

The animals were found not flying and allowing themselves to be approached by people, so they were safely captured by our technicians and handed over to SEPNA and ICNF to be transported to a wildlife recovery centre. The griffon vultures were juveniles, which is why they often appear weakened during their first dispersal flights.



Traditional agriculture and the restoration of native forests

REFORESTATION IN FAIA BRAVA

Thanks to the help of our partners, in particular the Dutch organisation Trees for All and Viridia Foundation, between the months of October and December 2023, we carried out several reforestation actions in Faia Brava, with the aim of supporting the regeneration of degraded areas with poor soils. The ATNatureza team, with the support of students from Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo and Dutch and Portuguese volunteers, planted 2060 trees and shrubs and sowed around 8500 acorns on a total of 4 hectares in our reserve.

Our reforestation strategy, in which we tried to minimize soil mobilization, was divided into different strategies:

- Plantation of trees (oaks, holm oaks, cork oaks, lodons, among others) in shrubby areas, in order to accelerate ecological succession and extend pre-existing woodlands;
- Planting willow and dog rose cuttings in and around watercourses, in order to increase biodiversity and integrity of riparian areas;
- Direct sowing of acorns (cerquinho oak, cork oak and holm oak) in degraded areas in the reserve.

SEEDING

This year we continued our effort to implement extensive fields at Faia Brava. These traditional crops are essential for maintaining populations of species such as the wild rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), the hare (*Lepus granatensis*) and the red partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), essential prey to support birds of prey.

OLIVE HARVEST

As usual, this autumn we carried out the traditional olive harvest in the BIO olive groves of our reserve. Thanks to the efforts of our field team, this year we beat our previous record. The 2023 harvest exceeded 11 tonnes of olives for the production of Faia Brava organic olive oil. During this campaign we had the helpful collaboration of a group of students from the vocational courses at Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo Secondary School.

Faia Brava Reserve daily management

This year we continued our monitoring efforts targetting emblematic species at Faia Brava. Essential prey such as the wild rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and the red partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), both increased compared to last year. In the case of rupicolous birds, Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), kept breeding and the number of griffon vulture pairs (*Gyps fulvus*) was stable. The Garranos represent one of the three breeds of horse (*Eqqus caballus*) native to Portugal. Currently, in Portugal, this breed has around 1700 individuals, with the Transumância e Natureza association being one of the 617 Portuguese breeders.

In the Faia Brava Reserve, there are 27 horses divided into 3 herds. Each herd is made up of a stallion and four adult females plus offspring born in 2023. This year, 12 offspring were born in the Faia Brava Reserve, 6 males and 6 females. These numbers reveal a 100% success in the reproduction of our horses this year. Horses play a central role as ecosystem engineers in our reserve. These animals function as a crucial tool in managing the reserve's vegetation, thus helping to prevent forest fires.

Following interventions in some ponds last year, in 2023 we carried out new efforts to renaturalize our ponds. These are not only extremely important for fauna to be able to drink, but also for animals such as amphibians and insects to complete their life cycles.





Education for sustainable development

This year ATNatureza organised and took part in a number of educational activities for sustainable development and to enhance our region's cultural and natural heritage, particularly with the support of our partners, the Belmiro de Azevedo Foundation and Fundo Ambiental.

We organised various extracurricular activities in schools in our region, both in classrooms and outside. We organised visits to Faia Brava with students from different age groups and took part in the summer sports festival in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo.

Internships and volunteers

This year, ATNatureza relied on the practical and scientific contribution of 6 trainees and volunteers, 4 of them from the Netherlands and 2 from Portugal. In addition to helping with daily tasks and some project actions, they worked on topics such as the strategic fire prevention plan, the success of certain reforestation strategies, environmental education, mammal monitoring, forest fire surveillance and ATNatureza's social management.

With the support of the Environmental Fund, at the beginning of November 2023 we organised a volunteer camp with students from the vocational courses at Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo Secondary School. In this context, the young people took part in reforestation actions in Faia Brava but were also involved in olive harvesting and other activities.

Research applied to conservation

The support of the Belmiro de Azevedo Foundation has enabled ATNatureza to develop partnerships and take part in various research projects, with the Faia Brava Reserve as a living laboratory.



University of Aveiro

Collaboration on research into (i) the impact of ungulates on vegetation and biodiversity (ii) the effect of garranos on seed dispersal (iii) arachnid biodiversity.

Researchers from the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB)

At the end of June 2023, the IPB team took soil samples from planted areas within Faia Brava and also characterised the flora in and around these areas. This work was carried out as part of a reforestation project focusing on climate change mitigation, funded under the REACT-EU - Resilience of Territories to Risk measure.

Van Hall Larenstein, University of Applied Sciences

We welcomed several students who carried out small investigations into the ecosystems of the Faia Brava Reserve over the course of two weeks.

Landcraft

Collaboration in the investigation of the archaeological values of Faia Brava, in particular the cave paintings.

Learning Lab

Our Learning Lab, funded by the Belmiro de Azevedo Foundation, was very active during 2023. With accommodation and an equipped laboratory, we welcomed several teams of researchers and students to carry out work in Faia Brava and the region.

Events

Events where ATNatureza/Faia Brava was present/participated throughout 2023



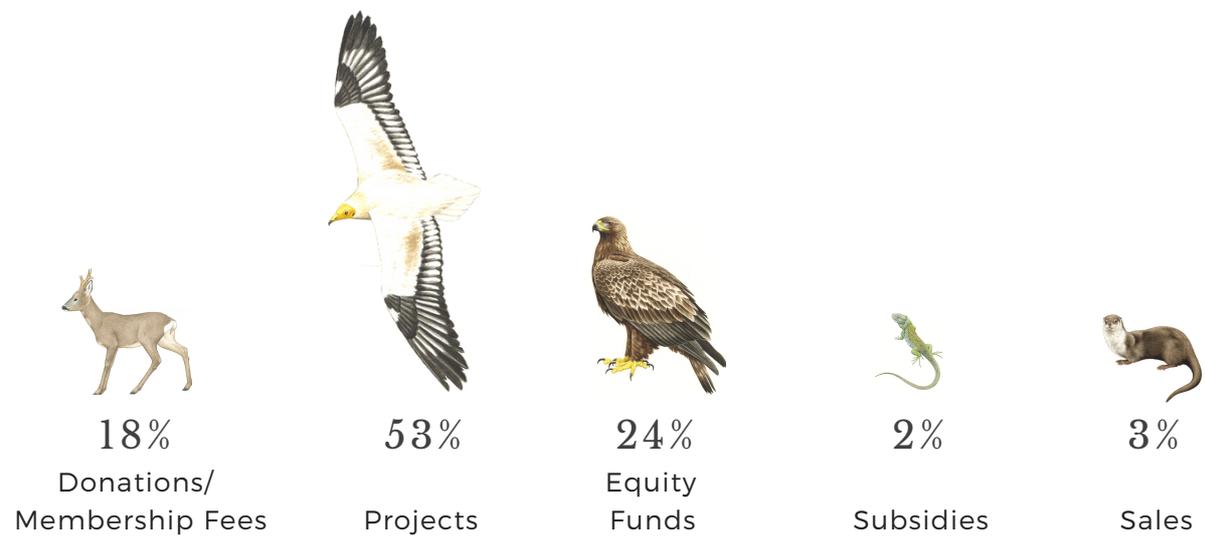
- Seminar “50 years of Protected Areas in Portugal”, at Portuguese Parliament;
- Fundraising by Natura Iberica, in De Beken, Renkum, The Netherlands;
- ONGA-ENED (National Education for Development Strategy);
- XXIX Pedagogical Days of Environmental Education;
- 3rd Open Day of the Professions, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo;
- Pedagogical Days in Foz Côa 2023;
- Summer Sports, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo;
- European Vulture Conference 2023, Cáceres, Spain;
- “Olive oil removes all evil”, in Mata de Lobos, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo;
- Seminar "Iberian Strategy for Bone-breaker Conservation in Portugal and Spain"

Financial Report

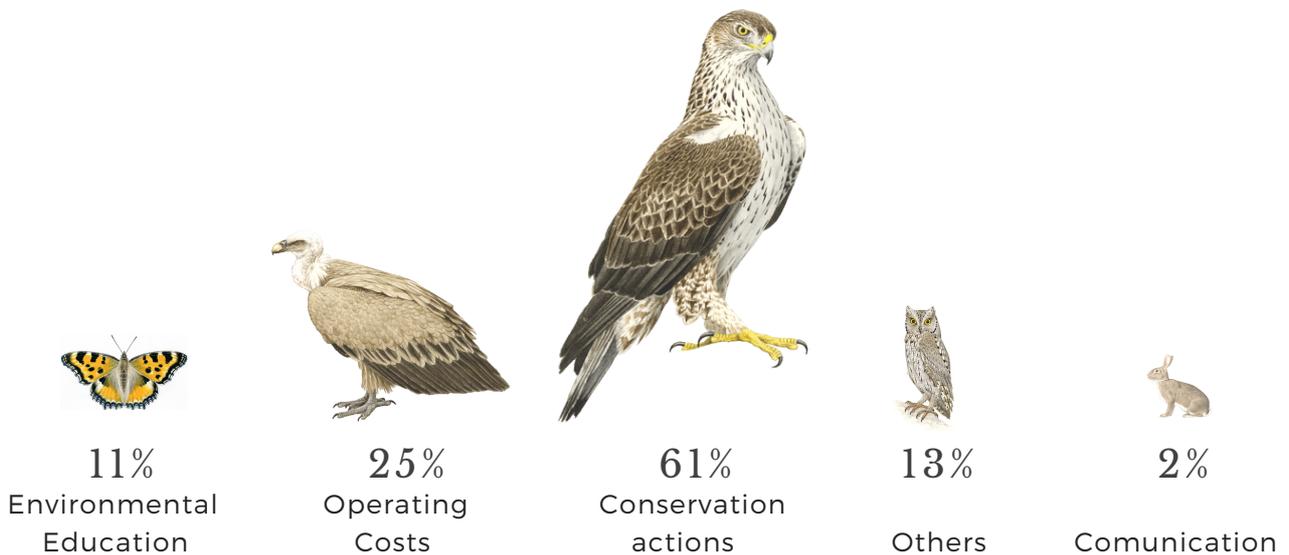
ATNatureza/Faia Brava's accounts have been audited by a Chartered Accountant, validated by the Supervisory Board and will shortly be available at www.faiabrava.pt.

The following graphs illustrate the distribution of income and expenditure by main categories during 2023.

INCOME



EXPENSES



Who supports us

FUNDERS

Belmiro de Azevedo Foundation
Viridia
Fundo Ambiental
Compete 2020

EU LIFE project
Natura Iberica
Trees For All
Ressourcement BV

PARTNERS

Vulture Conservation Foundation
Palombar
Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre
SPEA
LPNatureza
Herdade da Contenda
GNR - Republican National Guard
ANPC
ICNF - Institute for Nature Conservation
and Forests
University of Aveiro
University of Coimbra
Polytechnic Institute of Bragança
Plataforma de Ciência Aberta
CERVAS
Oriolus Ambiente
Ambienduca
Wild Côa
BIOPOLIS
CIBIO
Inature
VHL University
CIMO
MAVA

ENTITIES

Municipality of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo
Municipality of de Pinhel
Local council of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo
Parish union of Algodres, Vale de Afonsinho
and Vilar de Amargo
Local council of Cidadelhe
Local council of Escalhão
School group of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo
School group of Pinhel
School group of Sé - Guarda
School group of Afonso de Albuquerque -
Guarda
Volunteer firefighters of Figueira de Castelo
Rodrigo
GNR of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo
Casa da Cisterna
Côa Museum
Rewilding Europe
Foundation Côa Parque
CCDRCentro
Buiting Advies
Territórios do Côa, ADR
1% for Planet

TECHNICAL TEAM

António Araújo
Sílvia Lorga
Eduardo Alves
Carlos Barroqueiro
Frederico Leite
Luís Pereira
José Dinis

VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS

Gilberto Raimundo
Floris van der Togt
Dirk den Hollander
Jeroen de Boer
Joana Alves
Naomi Attia

RESERVA
FAIA BRAVA

ATNatureza



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FAIA BRAVA



RESERVA_FAIBRAVA



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