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GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing 4 October 2011

Iberian Avitourism App

A model to consider



"Iberian avitourism app"? Now, there's a mouthful!
But, that's exactly what it is.

Last month, a free app came out that is expected to encourage sustainable avitourism across 479 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Spain and Portugal. It is available for users of Apple's iPhones and iPads. The app, called "Iberian Birds," enables users to find the nearest IBA or other birding site, based on the user's geo-location (GPS) data. Users can also

learn what birds are to be expected at each site.

This effort has been funded by the Iberaves project, and is the outcome of a cooperative effort between BirdLife International, SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain) and SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal).

[Iberaves](#) is a European Union-funded project, providing training for hotels, travel companies, transport professionals, and tour guides to help them meet the needs of birdwatching tourists.

The app, available in English, is a further indication that spending by birder-tourists is expected to be significant.

A report on Iberian Birds is described by [BirdLife International](#), and you can find [iTunes download](#) information here.

One can only hope that this effort serves as an avitourism model that could be tried closer to home!

Binoculars Over the Decades:



Birdwatching historians have viewed the role of the illustrated bird field guide and the introduction of inexpensive quality binoculars as "democratizing" bird study, saving birdwatching from an otherwise elitist fate.

Without the accessibility of good optics, the very thought of "avitourism" would be, well, unthinkable!

The first high-quality binoculars sold in the U.S. were in the early

1890s, and this field tool has been evolving ever since. Of course, non-prismatic glasses, "opera glasses," were used for activity in the field at the turn of the century, and they were often 2x or 4x. Primitive "field glasses," or "bird glasses," only slightly better quality than the opera glasses, and of slightly higher power, were also on sale to early 1900s birdwatchers. Over the decades, the development of these profound tools would change the way we look at living birds.

Those democratizing binoculars gathered popularity between the two World Wars, and binocular production and availability moved quickly through the 1930s and 1940s. "Adequate" second-hand binoculars could be had in the early 1940s for about \$25, and "really adequate ones," according to Joseph J. Hickey in 1943, for anywhere between \$50 to \$100.

Sounds pretty reasonable, right?

But \$25 for binoculars in 1943 that were "adequate" would be equal to \$315 today, and spending between \$50 and \$100 for "really adequate" binoculars would be equal to \$630 to \$1,260 in 2011. And this would be for optics whose quality today would probably be considered below par for our use in the field.

Then the post-WWII flood of surplus binoculars and the proliferation of post-war Japanese-made optics further shifted the standards and even lowered many prices.

The recent sophisticated cascade of good binoculars at all sorts of prices is truly amazing, providing optics with sharp, waterproof, sturdy qualities virtually unheard of even two or three decades ago.

Words to Consider:

Joseph J. Hickey - **1943** - *A Guide to Bird Watching*

"The particular model that represents the best dollar-for-dollar buy varies every five years or so, as new improvements are perfected and manufacturers jockey for supremacy. Some years ago, Zeiss 8-power Deltrintems were considered the last word in superb workmanship and general all-around usage. I think they still are. Some people then began buying Le Maire 9's; today many have swung to the Bausch and Lomb 7's and 9's."

For Contact and More Information:

Besides using the links that are provided above to find out more on the related subjects, you can contact me on avitourism interests, site and trail/byway evaluations, and group presentations. You can reach me at the e-mail and P.O. Box addresses below.