

Press release

## Red Eléctrica and Fundación para la Conservación del Quebrantahuesos collaborate to mark 86 km of power lines in the Sierra del Cuera range for the protection of birdlife

**5,000 blade-type devices have been installed on three electricity transmission lines with an investment of 165,000 euros**

In Oviedo, on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Red Eléctrica has completed the signalling work with bird-saving devices on three electricity transmission lines in the Sierra del Cuera range (Asturias) to protect the birdlife that uses this corridor and, in particular, the bearded vulture, an endangered and protected species.

The signalling, which is carried out on the ground cable of the power lines to increase their visibility, has consisted of the installation of around 5,000 reflective blade-type devices on 86 kilometres of cable on the Penagos - Soto de Ribera, Siero - Puente San Miguel 1 and Siero - Puente San Miguel 2 lines. This work was done in collaboration with Fundación para la Conservación del Quebrantahuesos (FCQ, Foundation for the Conservation of the Bearded Vulture).

The Manager of Licences and Environmental Management Area of Red Eléctrica, Luis Velasco, and the President of Fundación para la Conservación del Quebrantahuesos, Gerardo Báguena, visited today the area where this work, which has involved an investment of 165,000 euros, is almost finished.

“These works have been quite a challenge for Red Eléctrica because of their technical complexity, as it has been necessary to take the lines out of service due to safety criteria; orography, which has required the use of automatic machines; and execution schedule, taking into account the bearded vulture’s return to the area these days. In total, we have invested more than 2,400 hours of work by specialised personnel,” says Luis Velasco.

Nowadays, there are a total of 34 bearded vultures in Picos de Europa. All of them use the Cuera corridor relatively frequently. The south-facing slope of the pre-coastal mountain

range of the Cuera is a popular area for the species, both as a favourable flight area and as a feeding ground.

According to the study carried out by Fundación para la Conservación del Quebrantahuesos, 13.08% of the 1,182,795 geolocations collected for the Cantabrian Mountain range as a whole are concentrated in the area around the power line that runs along the southern slope of the Sierra del Cuera. The surrounding areas, such as the area around Picos de Europa, the Cares gorge or the Sierra de Juan Rober, are also used intensively, so that, in addition to the geolocations collected, there is also movement between them.

Gerardo Báguena, president of the FCQ, points out that “Red Eléctrica’s commitment in this case has been remarkable, and the sensitivity shown and the record execution time of the refurbishment is noteworthy.” The foundation has been working for years on the conservation and protection of this species. To this end, and in order to achieve continuous monitoring of the movements of the specimens it manages, it equips them with geolocation devices. Thus, they have generated more than 2.5 million pieces of data, allowing real-time monitoring of very precise information throughout the country—position of the bird, height, speed, and direction of movement.

### **Protection of birdlife**

As part of its commitment to sustainability and the protection and conservation of birdlife, Red Eléctrica runs the project “Birds and power lines: mapping of bird flight paths,” a tool that allows the identification and mapping of areas of presence and flight paths of birds, allowing the preparation of sensitivity maps that identify areas of greatest potential risk of collision in order to adopt the most appropriate and effective corrective measures and improve the compatibility of electricity facilities with birds.

In this regard, the company has a Signalling Plan to which it allocates more than one million euros annually and acts on more than 200 kilometres of lines every year, thus minimising the impact of sensitive electrical installations on birdlife, identified internally and also with the collaboration of regional administrations and environmental organisations.

Red Eléctrica also continuously assesses the effectiveness of the different line signalling systems and conducts research into new protection devices, in addition to carrying out different actions to guarantee the safe interaction of birdlife with the electricity towers when they use them as nesting, resting or surveillance areas.