



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Health & Environment
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PRESS RELEASE

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Barbary partridge programme nearing completion

The work to secure the Barbary Partridge population of Gibraltar is now nearing completion.

The Barbary Partridge, a bird that in mainland Europe is only found wild in Gibraltar, is one of the Rock's natural gems.

Primarily a bird of open scrub, its population declined greatly in the early 2000s for a number of reasons. These have included predation, but the most significant reason is likely to have been lack of open habitat. This was as a result of the growth of vegetation without the opening up thick scrub and increasing open areas where the species feeds and breeds.

In order to tackle this, a programme of habitat clearing has been undertaken in various areas over the past two years. Already sightings suggested that there had been a slight recovery in numbers.

However a decision was taken in consultation with the Nature Conservancy Council that there was a need to increase the number of partridges in order to guarantee their survival.

After considerable effort which included talks in Rabat between Environment Minister Dr John Cortes and senior Moroccan Government officials, arrangements were made to import Partridges from Morocco.

With the logistic support of Bland Group International, nearly 300 young partridges have been brought over and are currently in quarantine in a specially prepared facility after which they will be released in various locations. A small group imported as eggs have already been released as a trial with every indication of success.

Works have been carried out by the Department of the Environment's Upper Rock Management team and the supervision of the birds is in the hands of the experienced GONHS bird of prey unit.

Minister for the Environment, Dr John Cortes, stated, "I had for many years been concerned about the survival of these iconic birds in Gibraltar and was determined that during my time as Minister we should work to ensure that the

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species was not lost from the Rock. I am thrilled that we have just about achieved this.