



# Honeyguide

**WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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Señora Salomé Cabrera  
Departament de Turisme CIME  
Plaça Biosfera 5  
07703 Maó (Menorca)  
Illes Balears (SPAIN)

28 October 2013

Dear Señora Cabrera

Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays has recently returned from one of our regular wildlife holidays on Menorca – a group of 14 people, including guides. We were disturbed to see the scale of road ‘improvements’ on Menorca, and to hear about this from GOB Menorca (Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Naturalesa).

This is a letter to ask the authorities on Menorca to think carefully about any changes being planned. We request that development is environmentally sustainable and protects the special character of Menorca that attracts us and many visitors to the island.

#### Honeyguide holidays on Menorca, and our conservation contributions

Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays was founded in 1991 and we ran our first holiday on Menorca in 1994. Our holiday in October 2013 (see <http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/wildlife-holidays/menorca.html>) was our 20<sup>th</sup> group on Menorca.

Honeyguide contributes to Menorca's economy through accommodation, meals, minibus hire etc., all of which we seek to secure from local providers, thus ensuring the resources we bring directly benefit the island. Part of our philosophy is that we also contribute directly to safeguarding the wildlife and landscape that our groups enjoy. We do this with a donation to GOB Menorca as part of the price of every holiday. This year we donated 650 euros to GOB Menorca, bringing the total contributed to GOB over many years to £9805 (about €10980). We do that for all of our holiday destinations, and our total conservation donations since 1991 total £90,000 – more than 100,000 euros.

Why do we come to Menorca? The wildlife – birds, flowers, insects etc – is important, of course, both within nature reserves but also more widely distributed throughout the island. We enjoy this alongside the landscape, archaeological sites, architecture and good hospitality at Matchani Gran, near San Clemente.

Menorca has a quiet charm, which is the blend of many features. Natural assets include gullies, caves, wetlands, the coast, woods of oak & olive and the mosaic of small fields with stone walls. These support an attractive mix of wildlife, including birds of prey, wetland and migrant birds, wild flowers and much more. Reports of our past holidays, which show how we enjoy Menorca's environment, are available on [www.honeyguide.co.uk](http://www.honeyguide.co.uk).

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*Señora Salomé Cabrera, from Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays, page 2.*

### UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

It's no coincidence that this mixture of attractive features – which attracts us as visitors – is similar to the reasons that UNESCO designated Menorca as a Biosphere Reserve in 1993.

We wonder if the Biosphere Reserve, and the reasons behind it, is taken into account as much as it should be in planning the future infrastructure and economic development of the island, including for tourists.

### Road building and the case for sustainable development

Our reasons for visiting are worth explaining at any time, but we are especially writing now because of the major 'improvements' proposed for the main east-west road on Menorca between Mahón and Ciutadella.

We have looked at the plans online and seen one new, large road junction already built near Ferreries. In our view, these changes seem to be out of scale, bigger than needed, with too much land-take and out of character with the gentle landscape of the island.

We know there will always be changes and some infrastructure improvements. We are concerned that any changes should be in the spirit of sustainable development: to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment.

### A request

We know that a letter from a small nature tourism company in England may have little influence. What we hope is that Menorca's decision makers will take this as an illustration of the way sensitive visitors to Menorca think, and to see us as a voice on behalf of those visitors and for nature.

We ask that the present plans for roads, and all development on Menorca, should be sympathetic to the environment, and always to ask these questions:

1. Is any change consistent with Menorca's designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve?
2. Are decision makers certain that they have upheld their responsibilities under the EU Directives that promote nature conservation and sustainable development?

Yours sincerely



**Chris Durdin**  
Honeyguide founder and director



**Dr Chris Gibson**  
Honeyguide leader on Menorca, and Principal  
Adviser, Natural England