

OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDY

Wild horses in Spain

This unique project was set up by ethologist and trainer Lucy Rees to promote the study of equine ethology in Europe through direct observation of a feral herd living in completely natural conditions.

We offer this facility to non-invasive research projects, to Equine Science students and veterinarians, to colleges and schools, and to those interested in natural horse behaviour and welfare.

The importance of first-hand observation of feral horses as part of professional equine training is usually underestimated. Domestic horses live in conditions that differ, sometimes profoundly, from those to which horses' long evolution adapted them. Their behaviour and welfare are affected. However we cannot recognise abnormal, stressed or pathological behaviour without knowing what normal behaviour is, and we cannot observe normal behaviour outside natural conditions.

Reading research on feral horses does not have the same experiential impact as spending hours with them, as students almost invariably comment. ***Pottokas in Piornal*** opens hitherto unavailable opportunities for research projects and as an integral part of student education.





Pottokas are a primitive, Basque breed of pony whose DNA, traced to the Pleistocene, shows little or no domestication effects. Ours live without any management or supplementary feeding on 1200ha. of mountain in Extremadura, Spain. Each pony's life history is known. Although few can be touched, they are used to students sitting quietly within 8m, allowing detailed observation.



Courses

We offer week long courses in equine ethology.
Other lengths of time can be arranged if needed.

Enrollment fee €475

Course only - Excludes Travel & Accommodation

They include:

- Theory sessions on basic ethological principles and equine ethology
- Observation and identification of behaviours (the ethogram)
- Data collection methods and analysis
- And the opportunity to plan and carry out a pilot study designed to answer a particular question

We adjust teaching level according to the students and the duration of the course. We also design courses for special groups, for instance schools, undergraduates or M.Sc. students. Study groups are welcome to bring their own tutor; we provide a guide to help find and identify the pottokas. We can also accommodate and help longer-term researchers.

We constantly need volunteers who wish to help and learn.



Accommodation

In the village of **Piornal** there are well equipped holiday flats and a municipal campsite. We also have a (primitive) bothy where hardy students may stay gratis.

(Restrictions apply, please email for more information)



Travel Arrangements

Fly into Madrid then take public transport to Plasencia where we will pick you up. Or share the cost of hiring a car from the airport with fellow students.

For more information

(English)

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Facebook Group:

Lucy Rees Wild Horses in Sapin