

Case study: The Spanish Biogolf project: positive deviance

The aim of the Biogolf project is to preserve biodiversity on and around golf courses. It started with a pilot at the Centro Nacional de Golf in Madrid. The project is promoted by the Open de España, supported by the Spanish Golf Federation and funded by the municipality of Madrid.



The public opinion is often focused at the negative impacts of golf courses such as the intensive water usage and the impact on the environment. However, golf courses could also serve as recreational areas that bridges urban areas with the natural environment. Golf courses can form an important reservoir for biodiversity and with the Biogolf project, the Spanish organizations want to emphasize the positive effects of golf courses on the environment.

The Centro Nacional de Golf is build on former waste dump and is located close to the natural area of Muro del Monte del Pardo. The course therefore moderates in between a protected area and the city of Madrid.

Hacking to create a healthy bird population

The Biogolf project introduces birds, such as owls and falcons, that are raised in captivity back into the wild by using the 'hacking' method. Young falcons are trained to reach their hunting capacity by giving them exercise and experience. Once the birds are confident and independent, they are released into the wild. With the installation of nest boxes around the golf course, breeding space is created for birds of prey and for insect-eating birds. The underlying thought is that a healthy bird population controls the amount of insects that are attracted to the numerous water hazards at the golf course.

The Biogolf project is providing nest boxes for bats and nocturnal animals such as owls. Also invasive species are controlled, more vegetation is provided at the waterside and the habitat for amphibians and reptiles is increased. This makes the Biogolf project an outstanding example on protecting the biodiversity at a golf course.