

## **Thank you Alan!**

All who have had the chance to rub shoulders with Alan, to work with him, to share many good and some difficult moments, have unanimously appreciated his tremendous human qualities. Always taking care of others, always ready to give a hand, to explain, to pass on his experience...

Alan's life and career is intimately linked to the History of Tour du Valat. He came to the Camargue for a three month training period... and spent there the rest of his life.

He arrived at Tour du Valat with a passion for birds and a real willpower, but no scientific background; he quickly earned Luc Hoffman's trust and became a worldwide recognized and appreciated expert, thanks to his relentlessness, to the guidance of Luc, to the support of many of you, among which were Heinz and Hubert. He built Tour du Valat's renown and carried it far beyond the Camargue and the Mediterranean basin.

All along his life Alan embodied values I consider as Tour du Valat fundamental values, those that Luc instilled and that are prompting us on a daily basis: an eagerness to learn and understand, a need to pass on this knowledge and share it so as to supply effective field conservation; and all this with a real commitment and the greatest humility, guided by a humanistic vision of Nature conservation, established with humans and not against them.

Today is the time for tribute and reverence. But the tribute to Alan shouldn't end here. It is crucial that Alan's life and career carry on being a source of inspiration in years and decades to come, including for those who have never met Alan. In that respect, Luc, André, Jean-Paul, Patrick and I have decided to establish the "Alan Johnson Award" which is meant to enlighten outstanding work of young scientists in conservation sciences, active in the Mediterranean basin. This prize will focus on this fertile interface between high quality science and concrete field conservation, in which Alan excelled. It will be awarded every second year, during Tour du Valat Young Scientists' Conference, organized in partnership with CNRS/Center for Functional and Evolutive Ecology and the Mediterranean Institute for Biodiversity and Ecology.

Thank you Alan!

Thank you for everything. Everything you have been. Everything you gave us. Farewell! No doubt, among Flamingoes, those beloved fire birds of yours, who are much alike "phoenix birds", that sometimes arise from their ashes.

Jean Jalbert  
Tour du Valat, 2nd of January 2015