



Marbella, February 2024

# NEWSLETTER







### **The Torre Real Dune: A Story of Struggle and Caring**

Last January our volunteers met up at the Torre Real dune to give it the finishing touches. It had been two years since we reforested it. Following this replanting, with commitment and perseverance, the volunteers watered the little plants, by hand, once a week, for the two years, to give them the best possible chance of developing healthy root systems.

Today, we can see that the hard work has paid off and what we had to do now is much more enjoyable and less backbreaking. We only had to grub out some resproutings of the dreaded False Mimosa to leave this ecosystem ready to be enjoyed in all its splendour.

Our volunteers are not superheroes! However, because of their love for nature and their dedication to its conservation, magic is conjured up every Tuesday morning when we meet for the weekly dune conservation work.

Thank you for being part of this mission!





## Working with Xarblanca Elementary School in San Pedro Alcántara – a rewarding experience

We can't stress strongly enough how important it is to teach our youngest children to care for our coastal ecosystems. Teaching these youngsters to take care of nature also increases our experience and gives us immense satisfaction.

Beaches are not only places where we have a good time. They are fragile ecosystems that must be looked after. The accumulation of garbage and other litter seriously affects marine flora and fauna, putting the natural balance of everything on our coastline at risk.

Education from earliest childhood is key to changing this reality. The children who are taught the importance of taking care of the beaches, of not leaving our waste lying round, and to respect the natural environment, will grow up to be responsible adults, more aware of and committed to the conservation of the environment.

At ProDunas Marbella we provide interesting classes that stimulate awareness in the conservation of our ecosystems. We firmly believe that these are the first steps to a more sustainable future. Taking care of our beaches starts with small steps that, one by one, lead on to big changes.





**ALERT – FOREIGN INVASIVE SPECIES (FIS) SPOTTED IN THE NATURAL MONUMENT "DUNAS DE ARTOLA"**

One of our partners has spotted a *Cylindropuntia spp* plant, a FIS (Foreign Invasive Species), in the "Dunas de Artola" Natural Monument. This is a succulent, native to North and Central America. It represents a serious threat to the biodiversity of our dune ecosystems.

**Why is it a problem?**

- It forms dense stands that displace native vegetation;
- Its thorns are extremely strong and can harm people and wildlife;
- It spreads easily thanks to its ability to root quickly.

**Have you seen this plant in the Marbella dunes?**

If you do find it in any of the dune systems of the Ecological Reserve-Dunas de Marbella, especially in the Natural Monument "Dunas de Artola", we would appreciate it if you could send us a photo and its geographical location so that we can deal with it immediately.

Send it to our email: [asociacion@produnas.org](mailto:asociacion@produnas.org)

Your cooperation is essential to protect our ecosystems



## Research on Antibiotic Residues in the Environment

ProDunas Marbella supports the work of young researchers who are committed to the protection of our ecosystems. On this occasion, we want to highlight the work of Iván Toro Pineda, a student at the University of Málaga and who works with our Association. Together with Dr. Carlos Rodríguez Castro, titular professor of the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry of the Faculty of Sciences at the UMA and other international groups, Iván is studying the presence of antibiotic residues in residual waters.

His research analyzes how these contaminants affect biodiversity and contribute to the appearance of resistant bacteria, a global problem with consequences for human health and ecological balance.

It is essential to raise awareness of the impact of antibiotics on our ecosystems and promote more sustainable practices to reduce their presence in waters and soils.

You can learn more about his research in the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkF4xVPzd-I&t=1s>





THE CALAHONDA DUNE WON'T GIVE UP!



However, we are confident that we will get the better of the regrowth of the Giant Reeds! No other dune ecosystem has given us so much trouble. Recovering it has been a tough challenge. We are lucky that our Volunteers do not give up. They follow us week after week, digging out the roots (rhizomes) of these Reeds.

Unfortunately, the neighbouring urbanisation has not got involved. The Giant Reeds propagate easily in the sandy soli of the dunes and, if left unchecked, take over the entire area. The urbanization has a large proliferation of these reeds along the entire walkway. We would be infinitely grateful if environmental sensitivity could be developed among the local residents. The Giant Reeds are not Indigenous and can destroy all the native vegetation.

We will continue to work with our volunteers, supporting them and providing them with the tools to finish the job.

Thank you all!



## False Mimosa in the dunes: a worrying increase

*Acacia saligna*, better known as False Mimosa, is a FIS (Foreign Invasive Species) that, despite our best efforts, has been gaining ground in our dune ecosystems. Although it may seem harmless, its rapid proliferation poses a problem for the native flora.

This invasive plant competes with native species, making their regeneration difficult and altering the natural balance of the dunes. Its presence reduces biodiversity and compromises the stability of this fragile ecosystem.

At ProDunas Marbella we work to control its expansion and protect the native flora of the dunes. Conserving this is key to ensuring the dunes remain a natural refuge for our coastal biodiversity.

Let's take care of our dunes!





## Little gestures that make a big difference

For the second time the Hidralia team came out to help us with our dune conservation work. This time we took them to the Río Real dune, and we worked together on getting rid of the encroaching FIS (Foreign Invasive Species) to allow the native flora their necessary space.

Every effort counts, and thanks to their help the dune is in great condition, ready for spring – a natural refuge revitalised!

A big thank you to Hidralia for their continued commitment to the environment. The work of our Volunteers and that of the workers from Marbella Town Hall is also greatly appreciated. It makes it possible for our dunes to thrive.





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