

Marbella, March 2025

# NEWSLETTER



## The Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

**no longer likes the living conditions on the coastline of the Marbella dunes.**

Will we ever be able to coax it back? Will it ever want to come back?

It will soon be 10 years since this beautiful bird disappeared from our dunes. We have made great efforts to repair its habitat, making sure, for example, that the beach cleaning machines do not scrape away the base of the dune or go too high up in them.

We have roped off the dunes with a line of interconnected wooden posts. Plant debris collects around the bases of the posts, and this is what they really like to build their nests in.

All to no avail. The hustle and bustle created by tourism, which can be overwhelming, especially in high season, and the daily mechanical clean-up is too much for them and we have lost this beautiful wading bird.

If we want nature to continue to coexist with us and flourish, we must learn to respect, pamper, and love it.





## CAN ANYONE HELP US ANSWER OUR QUERIES ABOUT THIS BEETLE?

We found this beautiful larva in the Calahonda dune. This dune ecosystem is in recovery mode, poor in nutrients and native vegetation, but it can surprise us with the flora and fauna it produces from time to time.

Can anyone help us identify this larva? Is it a:

Stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*)? or a Rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes nasicornis*)?

We will try to find some more specimens since we are intrigued by the lack of trees and decomposing vegetation in this dune area. Precisely because of the uniqueness of this environment, we are driven to learn more about the secrets this subsoil holds.

Another rarity we have come across on several occasions, is the presence of beautiful skinks (*Chalcides bedriagai*).

The beauties of nature surprise us every day.

Can you help us identify its surprises?



**TO ALL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS – DO YOU WANT TO TAKE PART AND JOIN OUR “ACADEMIC PLATFORM”?**



When they reach their Final Degree Project (TFG) or Final Master's Degree (TFM), more and more university students who are looking for information on sand dunes, their vegetation and their conservation, get in contact with ProDunas because of our close relationship with these.

We plan on becoming the online Platform of Reference. We will create a springboard towards the possible formation of a future Career Bank. The interaction between university students from different centres in Spain could be rewarding and motivating.

This innovative platform will serve students at all levels to make themselves known to the wider public. This is a fundamental mechanism for you if you want an opportunity to become a competent professional, prepared to carve out a promising future in any field, be it teaching, research or business.

On our website you can find out all about the dune ecosystems work we are doing, up to and including the proposal for multifunction artificial reefs. This is an innovative project supported by our Association to stabilise the beaches and protect them from all possible storms and thus guarantee the survival of the dunes.

Marbella has a very important Natural Dune Heritage. It covers some 500,000m<sup>2</sup> stretching from the town of Marbella east to Cabopino. This heritage is established in 2 legal concepts: on the one hand there is the Natural Monument "Dunas de Artola" and on the other, the Ecological Reserve-Dunas de Marbella, which includes 9 dune environments also to the east of the town. These are really perfect ecosystems. Those interested can work on a volunteer basis and / or examine the flora and fauna which exists in these reserves as well as being able to collect very interesting data from various different perspectives.



## An enjoyable morning in Río Real

A few days ago our monitor and expert on birds, Juan Caracuel, visited the Río Real area to observe the migratory movement of the dragonfly (*Anax ephippiger*). However, on this occasion, he was out of luck and didn't see any.

The day however was full of life. Just 50 meters from the shore, three razorbills (*Alca torda*) made an appearance, accompanied by gannets, gulls, and numerous migratory birds (*barn swallows and house martins*) collecting mud for their nests.

It was also a busy day for the common chiffchaff and a little egret, which managed to capture a sizable fish, struggling a bit to swallow it.

On the dune, nature continued to show off. There were plenty of common greenfinches and a noisy group of coral snipe (*Estrilda astrild*), a FIS (Foreign Invasive Species) that has adapted to the area.

At ProDunas Marbella we continue to observe and enjoy the biodiversity of our coastline. Every outing is an opportunity to learn from and marvel at nature.

Have you seen any of these species on your walks along the coast? Tell us about it in our "comments" space.



## ACTION TAKEN WHEN A BEACHED DOLPHIN WAS FOUND IN ESTEPONA

Last Saturday we received a call about a beached dolphin on the Dune Beach in Estepona. Patricia, our biologist, and staff members from the Delegation for Conservation quickly headed to the site to evaluate the situation and decide what had to be done.

From here in ProDunas Marbella we want to remind everyone how important it is not to touch nor try to get the animal back into the sea without experts being present. Call 112 to activate the Rescue Protocol.

Thank you all for your help in looking after our marine fauna.







### **AN UNEXPECTED VISIT TO MANILVA AND ESTEPONA BY A GREY SEAL ON A CRUISE!**

Just minutes after the report of the stranded dolphin in Estepona, another surprising report came in: there was a seal in Manilva! It was a grey seal, a species native to the North Atlantic, that had apparently decided to visit Spain. The seal known as Carmela, has already been spotted in Galicia, Huelva, Cádiz, and now in Manilva, continuing her rare "cruise" through the Mediterranean.

Patricia, a biologist from ProDunas Marbella, and Luis, an Environmental Agent from the Andalusian Regional Government, went out there once and informed us that fortunately, the seal is healthy, uninjured, with a healthy pelt, and in excellent physical condition. She just needs to rest before continuing her journey.

We ask you to show the utmost respect for her and to keep your distance. If you see her, call 112. Do not approach her or disturb her in any way. When she decides she's had enough rest, she'll continue on her way.

We love Spain, and it seems the seals do too!



## WITH COOPERATION, THINGS GET DONE FASTER!



We are happy to say that the Río Real dune can manage on its own for a few weeks!

There were still a few False Mimosa stumps to be rooted out but they were beyond our volunteers' strength.

So we sent out a call for help to the Los Monteros Urbanization which borders the dune in the Los Monteros Reserve,. A gardener from the Reserve showed up armed with his chainsaw and made short work of the stubborn stumps!

Wonderful teamwork! We would like to thank the gardening staff and, of course, our hard-working volunteers for the magnificent work they have done.

In May, the Sierra Blanca Secondary School will come out with some Erasmus students to inspect their sponsored dune. We will have the students do some eradication work so they can get to appreciate what dune conservation involves and what it means for our dune ecosystems.





SEE YOU IN APRIL

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