

Marbella, November 2025

NEWSLETTER



Artola Dunes Natural Monument - A Jewel of our Heritage and a Source of Pride for Marbella's Natural Legacy



On the coast to the east of Marbella lies one of the most valuable remnants of the ancient Mediterranean dune system: the Artola Dunes Natural Monument (Cabopino). Declared a Natural Monument in 2003, this area is protected because of its unique ecological, geomorphological, and scenic value. It harbours a nearly intact dune ecosystem, with mobile, semi-static, and fossil dune formations, and flora and fauna adapted to the challenging coastal conditions.

At ProDunas Marbella, we work daily on its conservation, restoration, and promotion: we safeguard native species, fight Foreign Invasive Species (FIS), carry out volunteer fieldwork, and encourage environmental protection so that this treasure continues to be a source of pride for our city.

Did you know that you can sponsor a dune in Marbella?

The Dune Sponsorship Project is an educational initiative promoted by ProDunas Marbella, working jointly with the Marbella City Council's Department of the Environment and Beaches.

The aim is to connect schoolchildren with nature through active conservation work on the dunes along the Marbella coastline. Each school sponsors a dune area that they visit and care for throughout the school year.

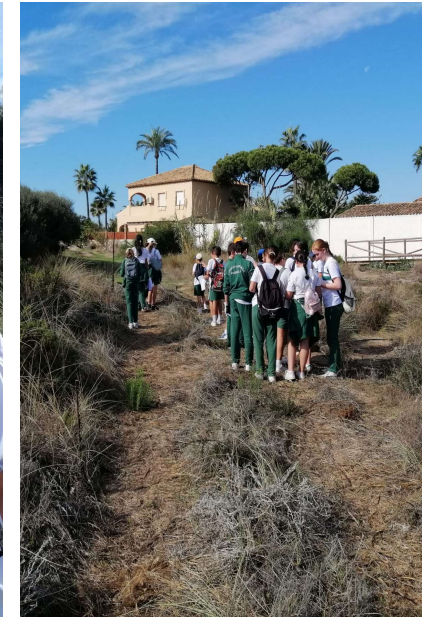
During these visits, the schoolchildren learn to identify native plants, help eradicate all FIS (Foreign Invasive Species), get rid of litter, and study the small fauna that inhabit these ecosystems.

In this way, they discover how dunes work, why they are essential for protecting the coast, and how all our actions contribute to maintaining the natural balance.

Sponsoring a dune means learning, caring, and leaving your mark on Marbella's natural heritage.



Alborán School Returns to Its Adopted Dune



After a few years' hiatus, Alborán School has enthusiastically resumed its role as a dune sponsor in the Environmental Education Program promoted by ProDunas Marbella.

A group of 30 students visited their adopted dune, El Barronal de la Morena, and took a very active part in a conservation day.

During the morning, the students focused on eradicating the invasive Highway Ice plant, a creeper plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) and cleaned up the dune environment, removing glass, cigarette butts, and plastics that threaten this valuable ecosystem.

It was a very dynamic group, full of questions and eager to learn, demonstrating that environmental education is a powerful tool for raising awareness of ecology and fostering commitment to our dune conservation from an early age.

At ProDunas Marbella, we celebrate Alborán School's return to its dune. The Councillor for the Environment and Beaches, Diego López Márquez, also visited the dune to hold a press conference and personally witness the commitment and enthusiasm of these young schoolchildren, who are the hope for the future of the valuable El Barronal de la Morena dune ecosystem.

Welcome back!

Ricinus communis – How to Detect the Castor Bean Plant in its Early Stage of Development

Although we've been finding Castor Bean plants (*Ricinus communis*) in the dunes for years, this week we were surprised to see them in their earliest stage, just as they begin to germinate.

In this initial stage, they can easily go unnoticed or be confused with other species, which is why it's important to know how to identify them from the start.

How to recognize them:

- They show up with two small, shiny oval-shaped leaves (the cotyledons).
- The pinkish or reddish stem (hypocotyl) is very distinctive.
- Sometimes, attached to the leaves, they can still retain the white, fleshy endosperm of the seed pod.

These structures are also described in botanical studies of young castor beans. In a few days, they develop true leaves, palmate in shape, similar to an open hand.

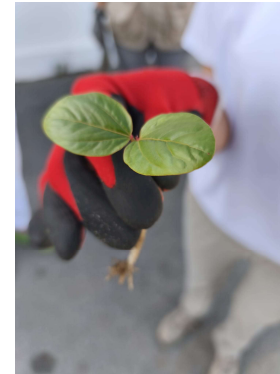
Why eliminate it?: Castor beans are toxic in all their parts, especially the seeds, which contain ricin. They can cause skin irritation and is highly toxic to animals and can cause severe gastrointestinal problems.

Furthermore, in dune areas and along roadsides, they can take over and displace native flora, thus disrupting the ecosystem's balance.

What you should do if you find this species in a dune ecosystem:

- Notify ProDunas Marbella with a photo, the name of dune area, specifying the location.

Prevention is key to protecting animals from castor bean toxicity. Thanks to constant observation and the work of our volunteers, we continue to detect and grub out the FIS (Foreign Invasive Species) that threaten the biodiversity of Marbella's dunes. Even the smallest action helps to protect our coastline.



Good news for our dunes!

We are pleased to announce that the Environmental and Beaches Department of Marbella City Council has renewed its collaboration with the ProDunas Marbella Association, reinforcing the ongoing commitment to protect and preserve our dune ecosystems.

Thanks to this continued partnership, we will be able to:

- Strengthen conservation, monitoring and maintenance work throughout Marbella's dune systems.
- Schedule more volunteer activities, environmental education and awareness sessions for residents, schools and visitors.
- Ensure that the dune formations —which act as a natural barrier against coastal erosion and as a refuge for biodiversity— remain healthy and thriving.

If you would like to join us, take part in upcoming activities or get your educational Centre involved, this is a great opportunity! Together, we can protect this natural heritage that unites us and is so valuable for our coastline.



Harvesting Juniper Berries on the La Víbora East Dune

A few weeks ago, students from the German School took part in a conservation day on the La Víbora East dune, where they collected 5 kg of juniper berries (*Juniperus macrocarpa*).

Once collected, the seeds were dried and sorted by the company that works with us—our benefactors: Cantueso Natural Seeds in Córdoba—who have sent us photos of their work.

In the coming weeks, they will begin the selection phase, a key step in obtaining high-quality seeds for our future dune restoration projects.

Thanks to the commitment of the schools and the technical work of our partners, we continue to make progress in the recovery and conservation of our natural heritage.



ProDunas Marbella Takes Part in the VIVA Seagrass Platform Meetings at the IEO Málaga

ProDunas Marbella took part in the technical workshop organized by the VIVA Seagrass Platform, held at the facilities of the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO) in Málaga.

The meeting brought together specialists, conservation organizations, and personnel from public administration bodies to advance the conservation and recovery of Mediterranean seagrass meadows.

During the session several advances were presented. These included new scientific developments, lines of research, and ongoing projects related to the protection of these ecosystems, which are considered true marine lungs and thus essential for biodiversity and climate change mitigation.

The meeting was held in collaboration with the Regional Government (La Junta) of Andalusia and with the support of the Unicaja Foundation, consolidating a space for cooperation between institutions, scientists, and environmental associations.

At ProDunas Marbella, we continue to train, share knowledge, and reinforce our commitment to coastal protection.

Because protecting the sea also means protecting our dunes.



SEE YOU IN DECEMBER

ASOCIACIÓN
ProDUNAS
MARBELLA

