

Marbella, March 2026

NEWSLETTER



Birds that inhabit and depend on Marbella's coastline with dune ecosystems

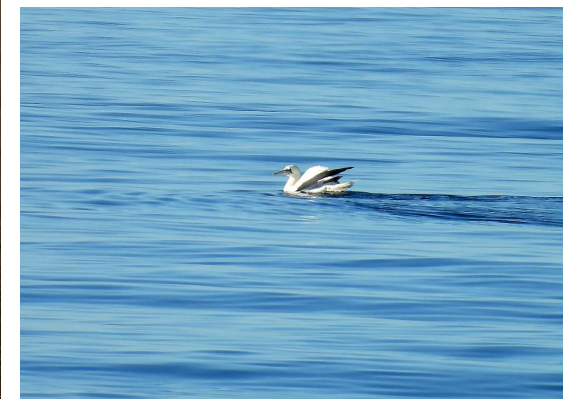
Coastal dunes are not just sand and vegetation. They are a living, fragile and essential ecosystem that provides shelter, food and resting areas for many bird species, both resident and migratory.

In the images, we can see some of the species that frequent our coastline, using the dunes as places to rest, observe their surroundings and protect themselves from the wind and waves. These apparently simple spaces are in fact vital for their survival.

Conserving the dunes also means conserving the biodiversity they support. Every step taken outside the designated paths, every piece of litter left behind and every disturbance to the environment has a direct impact on these birds and their habitat.

The photographs were provided by Juan Caracuel, ProDunas Marbella monitor and bird expert. He told us that he set up the telescope he always carries with him, and the students were able to observe first-hand a large group of gulls resting on the sea, especially lesser black-backed gulls and Mediterranean gulls. A sizeable group of great cormorants also passed by, around 40 in total.

Through these outings in the dune ecosystem, participating students learn the importance of respecting and protecting these natural spaces. Caring for the dunes means caring for the life that depends on them. Together, we can make a difference.



At first glance, they look alike... but they are very different

These are photos of two species that are often mistaken for each other, both are found here on our coastline.

Centaurea sphaerocephala – a native plant

This plant grows straight up to between 25 and 50 cm. It is a perennial. The leaves are somewhat hairy, with spiny tips; the lower leaves are lyre-shaped, up to 8 cm long, with pointed, toothed lobes. The upper leaves are toothed right out to the edges and are attached directly to the stem of the plant. The flowers are borne in small clusters in solitary heads at the ends of the stems; they are violet in colour and have a spiny appearance.

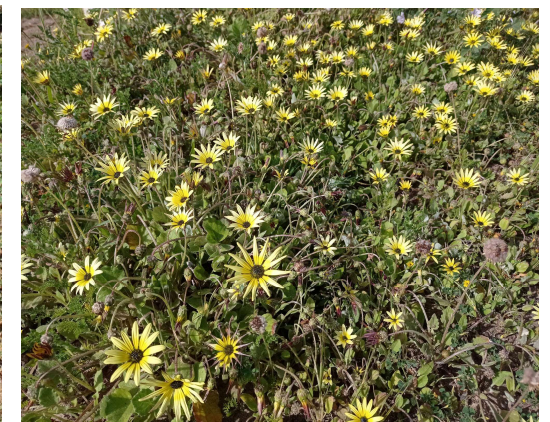


The species is native to the Mediterranean dunes. It is perfectly adapted to the wind, salinity, and lack of water. It is part of the natural balance of the dune ecosystem.

Archotheca calendula – this is a FIS (Foreign Invasive Species). It originated in South Africa. Its yellow, daisy-like flowers are very striking. Unfortunately, it spreads rapidly and displaces native flora by colonizing large areas.

The underside of its leaves is silvery, which makes it easy to identify.

Not everything that looks like "a pretty daisy" belongs in our natural landscape. Being able to tell the difference between species is the first step in protecting our dunes.



This morning we found several car seats dumped right in the middle of the dune system.
Yes, right on the dune.

This is a protected area. A fragile ecosystem. An environment we've been caring for for over 20 years with the help of volunteers, schoolchildren, and many committed residents.

This type of garbage not only mars the landscape but

- as it degrades, it also contaminates the soil;
- it can release toxic substances;
- It hinders the natural regeneration of vegetation;
- And removing it constitutes an additional effort for those of us who work to conserve this environment.

We remind you that there are Municipal recycling centres (Puntos Verdes) where this type of unwanted item can be disposed of safely. Looking after our coastline is everyone's responsibility. We all enjoy its beauty. Keeping it clean and safe means we can all continue to enjoy it.

Respecting the dune is respecting our natural heritage.

If you see illegal dumping, please report it.

And if you want to be part of the solution, join our volunteer programs.





ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION – AS SOON AS YOU START GOING TO SCHOOL

This week we shared a wonderful day with the youngest children at the Fuente Nueva. Junior School

The 1st and 2nd Graders not only understood what a dune system is, how it is built up over time, and why it's so important... but they also acted it out!

Thanks to Patricia, a biologist from ProDunas Marbella, the children became "sand dunes" and "dune plants" for a little while, understanding in a practical way how the wind moves the sand, how dunes are created, and how vegetation helps to stabilize and protect them.

Learning by playing is one of the best ways to instill environmental awareness at this tender age.

Thank you to the teaching staff at the Fuente Nueva Junior School for opening their doors to us. This is the best way to start sharing the importance of our dune ecosystems with the upcoming generations.

We never stop learning!

FOUR STUDENTS FROM THE SAN JOSÉ SCHOOL IN ESTEPONA JOIN THE DUNE VOLUNTEER FORCE

Past Tuesday, four secondary school-level students from the San José School in Estepona, joined the ProDunas Marbella volunteers for two hours to work on the Las Golondrinas dune.

They took part in our dune conservation work, grubbing out the false mimosa stumps remaining in the area.

We really appreciate their involvement, their interest, and their commitment to conserving the environment. Every action counts in continuing to protect our dunes.



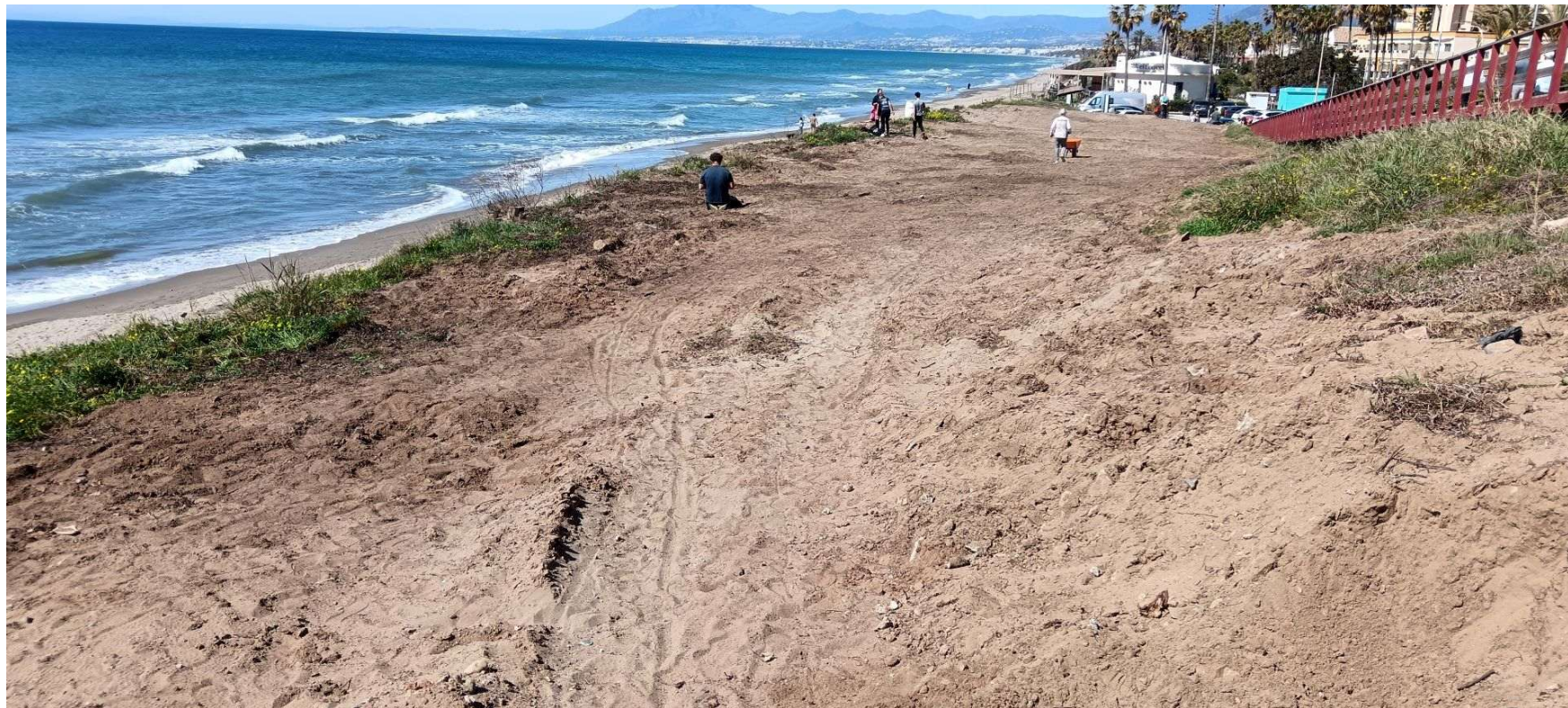
We've finished at Las Golondrinas Dune: Goodbye to the False Mimosa Trees

We've now completed the work at Las Golondrinas Dune, and as you can see in the video, the area is now free of False Mimosa trees.

It's been weeks of intense work, during which we've made progress with the support of machinery and also thanks to the collaboration of our volunteers, who worked simultaneously on various tasks on the ground.

How many? More than 200 False Mimosa (*Acacia saligna*) signs... and just as many Giant Giant Reeds (*Arundo donax*) that we haven't even counted!

The result is already visible: a much clearer space, ready to continue its recovery and the restoration of the natural balance of this dune environment.



OUR VOLUNTEERS, ALWAYS ON THE BALL IN THE FIELD

A few days ago, our most active volunteers set out to explore various dune areas to identify invasive alien species, with a view to organising upcoming volunteer days as well as school-based activities focused on their eradication. During one of these outings, in the Real de Zaragoza area, they found a vast amount of rubbish left behind by squatters who had vacated their dwelling, as well as a stranded drug-smuggling boat.

ProDunas Marbella immediately alerted the Civil Guard, who arrived at the scene straight away. Fieldwork not only helps us to continue protecting and conserving our dune ecosystems, but also to detect any incidents that may affect these invaluable areas.



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