

Marbella, May 2026

# NEWSLETTER



## Our Volunteering effort goes on!

More than 280 kg of African Daisy (*Arctotheca calendula*) have been eradicated in Torre Ladrones.

This unique area on our coastline was heavily invaded by this invasive species, which spreads rapidly and displaces the native flora of the dune system. Thanks to the work carried out, the area is beginning to look healthier, but its recovery has only just begun.

There is still a lot of African Daisy to be got rid of and much of the ground to be restored to native vegetation.

We continue working to ensure that Torre Ladrones and the entire “Dunas de Artola” Natural Monument regain their balance.

And for that, every bit of help counts. If you care about our coastline, we need you.



# Learning, Nature, and Commitment in: Three days in the Dunes



For three consecutive days we welcomed schoolchildren from the **Vicente Aleixandre Secondary School** to the Marbella dunes. They took part enthusiastically in our Environmental Education Workshops.

These were days of learning, community building, and direct action in the care of the planet. The students helped remove many kilos of trash from the dunes, learned firsthand about the importance of protecting these valuable ecosystems, and also had time to enjoy themselves, observe, ask questions, take notes, make drawings, and, in their notebooks, colour in what they had learned.

At ProDunas Marbella, we want to thank the schoolchildren and teachers for their involvement, their enthusiasm and their positive attitude.

Caring for nature is something that begins in childhood.



## Green Globe and ProDunas Marbella work together

ProDunas Marbella got together with Green Globe on a cleanup and environmental education day in the Torre Real – Río Real area, as part of the Environmental Awareness and Participation Program in the Natura 2000 Network of Andalusia.

During the day, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students from **Hermanos Gil Muñiz Secondary School** learned a lot about the environmental value of this dune area and the Río Real surroundings, combining a cleanup of the natural space with an interpretive walk.

Juan Caracuel, ProDunas Marbella's ornithologist, accompanied the group to the Torre Real dune, explaining in simple terms the importance and interaction of native flora and birds, their presence, and the need to conserve these valuable ecosystems along the Marbella coast.

Working together, these organizations help bring environmental education closer to young people and foster a more respectful relationship with our natural environment.

ProDunas Marbella would like to thank Green Globe and the Hermanos Gil Muñiz Secondary School for their interest and participation in this event. Caring for the dunes and the natural environment in Marbella is a shared responsibility.





## Little Treasures Almost hidden in the Sand: The Red-tailed Lizard

Schoolchildren discovered that the Artola Dunes are more alive than ever, thanks to the sighting of the Red-tailed Lizard (*Acanthodactylus erythrurus*). This jewel of our fauna, which measures barely 20 centimeters, is a perfect example of adaptation and an excellent indicator of the health of our dune system.

**Strategic survival and thermoregulation:** Its distinctive red tail isn't just for show; it acts as a visual lure, drawing predators to attack the tail rather than its vital organs, allowing it to escape. It can regenerate its tail afterward. Furthermore, to combat the heat out on the sand, it makes rhythmic wiggles with its limbs to regulate its temperature and avoid overheating.

**Biological control and camouflage:** It feeds primarily on small insects, including ants, playing a vital role in the food chain. The mottled pattern of its skin provides exceptional camouflage, blending seamlessly with the sand and native vegetation.

**The dune's "seeder":** As it moves quickly, its legs gently stir up the surface of the sand. This action indirectly helps bury small seeds carried by the wind, facilitating their germination and contributing to the natural regeneration and stabilization of the ecosystem. Witnessing it in action has been a unique lesson in adaptation. Protecting its habitat ensures that future generations can continue to enjoy Malaga's biodiversity.



### **Biodiversity in our dune ecosystem**

The *Micrommata ligurina* (Green spider) is one of the most fascinating hunters in our dunes. Unlike other arachnids, this species does not depend on spider webs; its survival relies on active stalking and impeccable green camouflage that makes it invisible in the vegetation.

Its behaviour is notable for:

**Ambush strategy:** It remains motionless until it detects ground vibrations from its prey, then launching a swift and precise attack.

**Biological control:** As a solitary predator, it maintains the natural balance of the ecosystem by regulating insect populations.

**Specialized courtship:** During spring, males display a very cautious approach behaviour to ensure reproduction.

At ProDunas Marbella, we value these biological treasures that demonstrate the complexity and balance of our natural environment

## The German School Returns to Its Adopted Dune: An Example of Commitment to Conservation

Secondary school students from the German School (Colegio Aleman) have returned to Las Golondrinas, their adopted dune, to continue showing their commitment to this valuable dune environment.



A few weeks ago, machinery was working in the area to remove the regrowth of giant reeds (*Arundo donax*), a necessary task to prevent this FIS (Foreign Invasive Species) from continuing to take over and displace the native dune flora.

On this occasion, more than one hundred students took part in a conservation day. They collected and dumped the uprooted giant reeds in the collection skips, thus helping to prevent dispersal of seeds and possible regrowth. This promotes the natural recovery of the dune.

ProDunas Marbella thanks the German School for its continued support and connection to Las Golondrinas Dune. Returning to the dune, recognizing what has changed, and continuing its improvement is a very valuable way to learn about and care for the environment.

# ATLAS American School Visits the Artola Dunes Natural Monument

Schoolchildren from ATLAS American School took part in a comprehensive environmental education day at the Artola Dunes Natural Monument.

During the morning, they helped clean up in the dune area and in the controlled removal of the accumulated surface layer of pine needles, always with great care and under the supervision of our instructors, since this area is home to a wide variety of fauna associated with the dune ecosystem, such as the Iberian skink (*Chalcides bedriagai*).

It was an interesting, engaging, and educational morning. The schoolchildren were able to learn firsthand about the importance of conserving our dunes and to respect all the species that live there.

ProDunas Marbella thanks the school and its schoolchildren for their involvement in protecting this valuable natural area.

Conserving the dunes also means learning to pay close attention to what is happening beneath our feet.



## MIGRATORY BIRDS ON PRE-BREEDING PASSAGE — A BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE

During the past month, between 13 and 17 April, we had several interesting sightings during the school outings we carried out in the Ecological Reserve – Dunas de Marbella. This is to be expected, as these dates fall within the central period of the pre-breeding migration of passerines, wading birds and other groups of birds.

They are now moving towards Europe — sometimes as far as quite northern areas — mostly from sub-Saharan Africa, where they have spent the colder months.

On Monday 13 April, we observed at close range an Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) fishing attempt. This bird is scarce as a breeding species in our country, although some individuals from further north spend the winter here, while others cross towards Africa, both to the north and to tropical areas. It is listed as “endangered” in the Red Book of the Birds of Spain.

On Wednesday 15 April, a Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) flew over us. This heron species was, until a few years ago, considered “in danger of extinction” in some catalogues. Its situation has improved, but this does not mean that it is no longer a threatened species. It is also a long-distance migrant, as it spends the winter in tropical areas of the neighbouring continent.

To round off the week, on Friday 17 April, we observed two Northern Wheatears (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), a trans-Saharan migratory passerine that is now returning to Europe. Some individuals even reach Greenland after a spectacular journey of thousands of kilometres.

Shortly afterwards, just a few metres from the coast, a Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) was flying eastwards. This is a distinctive wading bird with a long, curved bill. Although it is relatively common as a wintering species on our coasts, some individuals also reach West Africa, and this bird still has a long way to go before reaching its breeding areas in the Arctic tundra, thousands of kilometres away.



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