

Tarifa Fishermen's Guild joins the conservation of sea turtles in the Strait of Gibraltar

- **The Fishermen's Guild of Tarifa adheres to the project 'S.O.S Caretta: Fishermen for Biodiversity' with the collaboration of Fundación Cepsa**
- **The Town Hall and the Port of Tarifa (APBA) support the fishing sector by providing their collaboration to the initiative.**
- **The main objective is to promote the rescue and conservation of sea turtles by fishermen and it is coordinated by the Asociación Hombre y Territorio.**

The Asociación Hombre y Territorio (HyT) continues to make progress on the implementation of the initiative *S.O.S. Caretta: Fishermen for Biodiversity* along the coasts of Cádiz, promoting the rescue and conservation of sea turtles by the fishing sector in Andalusia, with the collaboration of Fundación Cepsa. On this occasion, the Tarifa Fishermen's Guild has joined the project, as well as the Port Authority of Algeciras Bay (APBA) and Tarifa Town Hall.

The Strait of Gibraltar is the gateway to the Mediterranean and highly migratory species such as sea turtles coexist with fishing activity in the area. "The industry can be a great ally in the conservation of these species, by both recording sightings and actively participating in the rescue of sea turtles that are in trouble or accidentally entangled in fishing gear," said Patricio Peñalver, project coordinator at HyT. Meanwhile, Manuel Suarez, skipper of the Fishermen's Guild of Tarifa, which, along with other fishing entities in Andalusia, has joined this conservation project, said that "it is essential that fishermen become aware and take part in these types of initiatives, which also have so much weight in environmental education activities geared towards the school population. It is our commitment and our duty as ambassadors of the sea". Through its fishing signposts at the different ports, Cepsa also supports the outreach efforts by providing this information to fishermen.

One of the project's objectives is to create a support network at the local level to support the fishing sector in its commitment to sustainability. Therefore, in the town of Tarifa, collaboration has been sought with the Town Hall and the Port Authority of Algeciras Bay (APBA). "Tarifa Town Hall, in line with the Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is placing a focus on sustainability and the commitment to biodiversity protection, in this case, by collaborating with the project *S.O.S. Caretta* and supporting the Tarifa Fishermen's Guild in their commitment to the project," said Sandra Navarro, Councilor for Education, Environment and Animal Protection, who represented the local government in the ceremony held last Thursday at the Port of Tarifa, in which project materials were handed out. Also present was Juana Santander, representing the APBA and in charge of the Sustainable Development Area at the Port of Tarifa, who pointed out that "the support of the APBA to this project is in line with the Port's Green Strategy, whereby the institution aligns itself with the Agenda 2030 of

the World Network of Port Cities (AIVP) commitments to act in a sustainable way, with the environmental priorities established by the European Ports Organization (ESPO), with the European Green Pact's lines of work, and even with its own line of action included in the Sustainability Commitment (CS) 4: Ecosystems and biodiversity". On behalf of Fundación Cepsa, its representative in the Campo de Gibraltar, Estrella Blanco, reiterated "Fundación Cepsa's support and commitment to initiatives in favor of the marine environment and biodiversity in the Campo de Gibraltar. This project will not only save turtles, but will also raise public awareness about the importance of taking care of our seas.

The target species are the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). Both species are listed as endangered. "Each of these species has its own characteristics and rescue techniques must be adapted to the size of the specimens and, of course, to every unique situation, which is why training activities are key, as well as the implementation of rescue protocols and telephone assistance from specialists through 112," explained Carolina Fernández, from *Seashore Environment and Fauna*, a veterinarian specializing in marine fauna, technical advisor for the project and leader of the training workshops for the fishermen.

These workshops will be held in the coming weeks and will also look at opening up participation to other stakeholders. Several environmental education activities are scheduled in the project's areas of influence, directed towards the general public and schools. Tarifa is one of the four towns where the fishermen's guilds and associations adhered to this initiative operate, along with Isla Cristina, Punta Umbría and Sanlúcar de Barrameda. HyT and Fundación Cepsa will continue to support the project by getting fishing organizations and other institutions in the region involved. *S.O.S. Caretta* has the support of environmental and fishing administrations at the national and regional levels, such as the Ministry of Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge (MITERD), the Directorate General of Sustainable Fishing at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing and Food, and the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Sustainable Development under the Andalusian Government, as well as entities representing the fishing sector, like the Andalusian Federation of Fishermen's Guilds and the Andalusian Federation of Fishing Associations.

HyT is an association with extensive experience in the conservation of marine species and environments. A partner organization to the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development under the Andalusian Government, it has participated in sea turtle conservation projects in this region. Furthermore, it has international experience in regards to sea turtles and their relationship with the fishing industry.

Fundación Cepsa is a general interest, nonprofit entity whose aim is to carry out initiatives that serve the needs and priorities of the local communities where its founder, Compañía Española de Petróleos S.A. (Cepsa), conducts its business. The areas of action for Fundación Cepsa are social, environmental and scientific-educational.

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