

Fundación Cepsa Celebrates World Wetlands Day in Andalusia

- For over 20 years now, this event has been a day of celebration for Cepsa and Fundación Cepsa
- Fundación Cepsa is responsible for the conservation and enhancement of four wetlands in Andalusia: the Laguna Primera de Palos and Marismas del Odiel, the Madre Vieja Environmental Station in San Roque, Arroyo Negro in La Línea
- This year's theme, *Revitalizing and restoring degraded wetlands*, aims to raise awareness of the importance of protecting and restoring wetlands, so that these natural sites continue to provide benefits to the planet
- Twenty primary schools from Huelva and Campo de Gibraltar are participating in this year's event, which starts tomorrow

An important week is starting for the environment and the economy of the province of Huelva. This morning, Fundación Cepsa started off the events for World Wetlands Day, an event it has been commemorating for 20 years as part of its work to conserve and promote Laguna Primera de Palos lagoon and Odiel Marshes (Huelva) and the Madre Vieja Environmental Station and Arroyo Negro in Campo de Gibraltar (Cádiz).

Every year, Fundación Cepsa carries out an environmental education program for young people from schools in Campo de Gibraltar and the province of Huelva. The students who come to the Madre Vieja Environmental Station and Laguna Primera de Palos lagoon take part in educational workshops and fun activities aimed at learning about and valuing the importance of these types of natural spaces. The students are also invited to take part in a drawing and photography competition, with these environments taking center stage. To date, the program has schools in the Campo de Gibraltar (San Roque, Algeciras and La Línea) and several others in Huelva (Palos de la Frontera, Moguer, Huelva, Gibraleón and Mazagón). For Campo de Gibraltar, the school Sagrado Corazón de Jesús de Puente Mayorga, San Roque, will open this Wetlands event, while the school Hermanos Pinzón de Palos will open the sessions for Huelva.

World Wetlands Day has been held on February 2 every year since 1997, the date when the Convention on Wetlands was signed in Ramsar (Iran, 1971). It was the first treaty on the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands. The

central theme this year is the importance of protecting and restoring these ecosystems. It is celebrated each year with a different theme, and the 2023 theme is *Revitalizing and restoring degraded wetlands*.

Narciso Rojas, head of Fundación Cepsa in Huelva highlighted "the importance, not only environmental, but also economic that these ecosystems have for our province. That is why we hold these conferences, to make the wetlands better known with our young people and the rest of the population. They are another sign of the identity of Huelva."

Madrevieja Environmental Station

In 2009, Cepsa decided to recover and restore this nature reserve as part of its policy on biodiversity, sustainability, and support and respect for the environment, with a view to promoting nature research. The site also serves as a space for environmental education and is open to the public. Fundación Cepsa led the project, which was the first of its kind in the province of Cádiz. Ten years after it was opened, it continues to grow in importance. The richness and diversity of its habitats make the Madrevieja Environmental Station a true sanctuary for around 140 inventoried bird species, as well as an ideal enclave for the development of the owl recovery project in southern Spain, in collaboration with the regional government of Andalusia and the European Union.

Arroyo Negro

In 2021, Fundación Cepsa launched a collaboration with the City Council of La Línea to promote Arroyo Negro, a wetland located in this municipality of Cádiz that is rich in biodiversity and is home to many species of otters and kingfishers or the *Aphanius baeticus*, among others. Both institutions hope not only to regenerate the space, but also turn it into an enclave to promote environmental education.

Laguna Primera de Palos

The Laguna Primera de Palos lagoon is included in the Network of Protected Areas of the regional government of Andalusia and classified as a Nature Reserve. Since 2005, it has also had a RAMSAR classification (International Convention for the Conservation of these areas). The lagoon is practically on top of the site owned by Cepsa, which partnered with the Andalusia regional government in 2000 to restore the marshland designated by law as a Protected Area. This space is just one of the products of Cepsa's pledge to one of its key values: sustainability, and is an excellent example of how biodiversity can be protected and endangered species helped to recover. Since its restoration, Cepsa and its foundation have continuously done research, maintenance and

enhancing the public's experience there. It was the first time a Spanish industrial company had taken part in a project such as this, and it was also the first time a private energy company had committed to making such a valuable resource available for public use. Cepsa put all its energy into recovering and restoring the site, championing respect for the environment, commitment to nature, environmental education, and business sustainability.

Odiel Marshes

This site is located at the confluence of the mouths of the rivers Tinto and Odiel, near the capital of Huelva. In the last 25 years, Fundación Cepsa has carried out numerous actions aimed at raising awareness and protecting this system. Rehabilitations, archaeological and natural conservation, generation of new spaces, introduction of the osprey and publications, along with organized visits with the aim of raising public awareness of its natural and ecological importance are some of the projects promoted. The Junta de Andalucía and the Fundación Cepsa are also promoting an informative program for the Sabinar del Estero, a plot of more than 10 hectares in the Odiel Marshes Natural Park, in the province of Huelva, recovered in the last two years to gather samples of the different ecosystems of the natural space. The action is included in the collaboration agreement between the Territorial Delegation of Sustainable Development and Fundación Cepsa.

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 activities. The areas of action for Fundación Cepsa are social, environmental, and scientific-educational.

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