

## Periodic studies performed on the birds at the Palmetum of Santa Cruz

- **SEO/BirdLife is in charge of biweekly monitoring and preparing an annual report**
- **The list of birds registers 90 species to date, between migrators and nesters**
- **Fundación Cepsa collaborates with this monitoring and helps to update the park's informational materials**

Within the framework of the line of collaboration established between Fundación Cepsa and Palmetum, this year the regular monitoring of the birdlife of this botanical garden has continued, with biweekly bird censuses carried out by the Canary Islands delegation of the Spanish Society of Ornithology SEO/BirdLife. This study and monitoring of birds has, among others, the objective of establishing indicators of the state of biodiversity conservation.

Periodic sampling makes it possible to update the inventory of birds observed in this area of the capital, a habitual residence for some and passage and wintering for migratory birds that choose it to rest, feed, and regain strength during their long journeys. As such, the list of registered birds in the garden continues to grow, with around 90 species in total to date, between migrators and nesters.

This is information of great value, since birds contribute significantly to biodiversity, playing a key role in ecosystems. Its study provides valuable data on the health and state of this habitat. In addition to increasing the volume of ornithological information in the park, this continuous monitoring makes it possible to better assess the foreseeable impact that the pruning and clearing work carried out may have on the birds, as well as improvement works or new constructions, etc.

In the progress of the study that SEO/BirdLife prepares each year for this space, it is reflected that in the last period of spring migration the typical species of passage were seen, such as swallows, flycatchers, etc., and some others such as the tree pipit and the common shrike, which were observed much fewer times. The latter made a stop in the Palmetum of Santa Cruz on their migration from the wintering quarters south of the Sahara towards the Eurasian breeding areas. Likewise, other migratory birds were detected for the first time in this environment, such as the white stork (one specimen, in April).

In the summer months, the importance of this garden for local birds became evident, serving as a refuge and for drinking water, especially on the hottest days, and hosting flocks of canaries and sparrows, among many other species. Apart from serving as a drinking fountain for all the birds that visit the enclave daily, the Palmetum Botanical Garden lakes continue to host a relevant population of waterhens, along with a few gray herons, egrets, and little egrets.

Among the species that have been detected in recent months is the barn owl, a nocturnal bird of prey, known locally as a *coruja* or "white barn owl", which has been in the park for several weeks along with the usual long-eared owls. The Eurasian sparrowhawk was also seen, probably having come from nearby forests, but they left once the breeding period ended. However, the most common diurnal bird of prey that flies around the park every day is the common kestrel.

With autumn, birds returned to their wintering quarters, including a song thrush, a bird which in previous years had already stayed at the site all winter, taking advantage of the dates on some palm trees as well as fruit trees. Some nesting species were also found, such as partridges and canaries, which began to delimit their territories and courtship. This is a sign of the start of the breeding period, enabled in large part by the Park's mild climate.

### **Informational content**

These biweekly bird monitoring campaigns also serve to update the Palmetum's informational content, which makes it possible to inform and raise awareness among the local population and tourists about the need to conserve the natural treasures in this area.

The information that's collected is very useful for knowing which birds can be seen in each part of the park and on which dates. In collaboration with Fundación Cepsa, to disseminate all this information, the informational resources on the birds at the Palmetum have recently been updated, including both the information signage located at different points as well as the explanatory brochure for visitors.

Biodiversity conservation and recovery is one of the pillars of action of Fundación Cepsa, and it works on this by collaborating on various projects at the Palmetum of Santa Cruz to help protect and conserve the space and fauna that inhabit it, as well as to raise public awareness of the importance of sustainability, conservation, and respect for nature.

SEO/BirdLife is a Spanish public interest NGO dedicated to conservation that's a pioneer in our country. Its main objectives include the study and protection of birds and their habitats. It develops initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the public about the serious environmental problems that can harm birds and, by extension, human beings.



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