

Project "S.O.S Caretta" celebrates *World Sea Turtle Day* with more than 1,800 schoolchildren

- **The project "SOS Caretta: Fishermen for Biodiversity," carried out by Hombre y Territorio in collaboration with the Fundación Cepsa, promotes the conservation and rescue of sea turtles in western Andalusia.**
- **Students from Huelva and Cadiz have participated in educational sessions on the importance of protecting these species.**

On *World Sea Turtle Day*, the Hombre y Territorio Association and Fundación Cepsa make the first assessment of the educational and awareness program in schools in Cadiz and Huelva that is part of the project "*SOS Caretta: Fishermen for Biodiversity*". The purpose of this initiative is to promote rescues of loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), among other species, with the collaboration of the fishing sector.

In this first phase of "S.O.S Caretta," the importance of protecting sea turtles and the fishing sector's role in their conservation was brought to schools. The action, coordinated by Hombre y Territorio, was carried out in the municipalities where fishing entities have joined the program and seeks to raise awareness among the coastal school population about biodiversity conservation by promoting their role as young ambassadors to protect sea turtles.

Due to the public health situation, these environmental education workshops were held virtually, thus achieving the participation of more than 1,800 students from 20 schools. The success of the program has contributed to the support of local entities, such as the "Asociación Amigos de la Ciencia de Algeciras" through the science fair *Diverciencia 2021*, and *Capitán Canaleta*, in Huelva. The second phase of the educational program will continue next year in these towns and the rest of the project's areas of influence.

About the project

The project "S.O.S. Caretta: Fishermen for Biodiversity," (www.soscaretta.org). It aims to promote rescues of loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) and other species such as the leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), while also working to collect data on the location of specimens and other aspects such as the interaction of turtles with marine litter. All data obtained will be made available to the competent administrations and incorporated into Spanish Marine Strategies.

"*SOS Caretta*" will work to improve collaboration within the fishing sector to conserve these species, which are classified as Vulnerable to Extinction according to the IUCN

(International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list. The *Caretta caretta* is also included on the List of Wildlife Species under Special Protection and is listed as Vulnerable in the Spanish Catalog of Endangered Species.

This project has the institutional support, among other entities, of the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Sustainable Development of the Regional Government of Andalusia, 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 collaborating entity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development of the Regional Government of Andalusia, it has participated in sea turtle conservation projects in this region. Furthermore, it has international experience as regards sea turtles and their relationship with the fishing sector.

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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