

Fishermen from Sanlúcar de Barrameda Commit to Saving Sea Turtles Through Fundación Cepsa's 'S.O.S. Caretta' Project

- **The Fishermen's Guild of Sanlúcar de Barrameda and the Local Action Group of the Fishing Sector of the Northwest Region of Cádiz maintain their commitment to sustainability.**
- **This initiative, launched by Hombre y Territorio, with the support of Fundación Cepsa, continues to make progress in the Gulf of Cadiz to incorporate the fishing sector in the conservation and rescue of sea turtles.**

Asociación Hombre y Territorio (HyT) continues to make progress in 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. Based on earlier experiences, on a local scale, Hombre y Territorio is working to establish a closer relationship between the different stakeholders involved in the conservation and rescue of these animals.

Within the framework of this project, actions aimed at training and raising awareness in the fishing sector will be conducted, as well as initiatives with schoolchildren and the general public in the towns where fishing entities are involved. Sanlúcar de Barrameda, one of the most important fishing cities in Andalusia, has taken a step forward and joined the initiative. Their involvement is essential in demonstrating the fishing sector's commitment to sustainability.

"The fishing sector's awareness of marine sustainability is enormous, despite the image often projected of the industry. That is why the visibility these projects give to the commitment of fishermen is key," said José Carlos Macías, technician from the Fishermen's Guild of Sanlúcar de Barrameda and member of the Local Action Group of the Northwest Coast Fishing Sector of Cádiz.

The commitment of both institutions has been demonstrated with the delivery of materials at the Fishing Port of Bonanza, in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Prior to this, a coordination meeting was held, attended by personnel from the Andalusian Public Ports Agency (APPA), the entity that has signed an agreement to support the project, as well as Fundación Cepsa. Estrella Blanco, head of the Cadiz office, emphasized that "it is important for all of us to take care of the marine environment. Thanks to Hombre y Territorio, Fundación Cepsa, and, above all, the fishermen of Cádiz, we are convinced that we will achieve this objective, while also promoting environmental education and knowledge of loggerhead and leatherback turtles." Through its fishing posts at the different ports, Cepsa also supports the outreach work by delivering material to fishermen.

Training activities will soon be conducted for the fishing sector and other interested sectors, to improve the chances of survival of the rescued specimens, promoting the activation of the rescue protocol through the 112 phone line. "The role of the fishing sector is key in acting as sentinels. They are the eyes of society in the sea, and their collaboration is crucial to improving sea turtle conservation," commented Patricio Peñalver, project coordinator at HyT.

The project aims to conserve the most common turtle species in the Gulf of Cadiz: the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). Both species are listed as endangered. *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 of the Andalusian Government, as well as entities representing the fishing sector, such as the Andalusian Federation of Fishermen's Guilds and the Andalusian Federation of Fishing Associations.

In this first stage, fishing entities operating in western Andalusia, in the towns of Isla Cristina, Punta Umbría, Sanlúcar de Barrameda and Tarifa, have joined. Hombre y Territorio and Fundación Cepsa continue to seek new memberships from fishing entities, as well as institutional and academic institutions to join the project.

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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