

## **Fundación Cepsa releases 25 owls since the start of the project for the recovery of the species at Madre Vieja**

- **The initiative is a joint project between the Junta de Andalucía (regional government of Andalusia) and the European Union**
- **Ornitour bands five chicks at the Madre Vieja Environmental Station.**

The project to recover the owl in southern Spain at the Madre Vieja Environmental Station, owned by Fundación Cepsa and managed by Ornitour, concluded with the release of 25 specimens since the start of the program in 2019.

The project for to recover the *Tyto alba* barn owl in southern Spain began with the acquisition of a breeding pair on loan from the Junta de Andalucía (regional government of Andalusia), which had a first clutch of six eggs. In addition, the project has also received several donations of specimens from individuals and has added an additional breeding pair. This has enabled the release of 25 owls to date with their corresponding rings from the Madre Vieja Environmental Station. In addition, there are five chicks that will also be released soon.

Ornitour has banded these five chicks at the Madre Vieja Environmental Station for control and monitoring once released, extracting feathers to verify their sex through DNA and controlling the animal's weight.

This initiative is carried out in collaboration with the Junta de Andalucía (regional government of Andalusia) and the European Union bird ringing service, Euring, an organization that promotes international collaboration in the study of birds, particularly in Europe and along the African-Eurasian flyway. Euring has allowed Madre Vieja to use red rings with white numbers, a color combination not seen anywhere else in Europe, meaning that the birds ringed at this site are easy to identify across the continent.

The head of Fundación Cepsa in Campo de Gibraltar, Estrella Blanco, reiterates that "Cepsa recovered the natural space of Madre Vieja more than ten years ago and since then, together with Fundación Cepsa and Ornitour, we work for the enhancement of the area, betting on biodiversity, and demonstrating that the coexistence between industry and nature is possible. And thanks to this particular project, which is having very good results, the owl's presence in southern Spain is recovering."

The Madre Vieja Environmental Station is a research center and nature reserve owned by Fundación Cepsa, which has worked to restore the wetland since 2009. Since its inauguration in 2014, Ornitour has been working not only to conserve the area, but also to recover species and the passage of birds in this corner of Campo de Gibraltar, which is open to the public to enjoy and learn from.

**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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