

The Junta de Andalucía awards the project 'S.O.S Caretta: fishermen for biodiversity' of the Asociación Hombre y Territorio, promoted by Fundación Cepsa

- **The project has been recognized in the category Education and Environmental Awareness of the Environmental Award of the Regional Ministry of Sustainability, Environment, and Blue Economy**
- **Over the last three years, the fishing sector that collaborates with S.O.S Caretta has rescued 52 turtles that have been cared for at the Junta de Andalucía's Recovery Center in Algeciras**
- **The award supports Fundación Cepsa's work in protecting and conserving biodiversity**

The Asociación Hombre y Territorio (HyT) has been awarded for the project *S.O.S Caretta: fishermen for biodiversity* in the 28th edition of the Environmental Awards of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, and Blue Economy of the Junta de Andalucía Regional Government. The collaborative project *S.O.S Caretta*, coordinated by HyT in collaboration with Fundación Cepsa, was recognized in the category of Environmental Awareness and Education.

This initiative recognizes the awareness and training efforts that succeeded in involving the Andalusian fishing sector in rescuing and learning about the endangered populations of loggerhead turtles, or *Caretta caretta*, the species that gives its name to the project, on the coasts of Cadiz and Huelva.

"We accept this award on behalf of all the people and organizations that are making this adventure possible. We would like to give special thanks to the fishermen who are already heroes of the project, which has marked an important milestone in their involvement in the conservation of these species in Andalusia. We believe that their work deserves this recognition, which we will pass on through Hombre y Territorio to each and every one of them and to the participating fishing entities. Achieving this recognition allows us to transmit the effort that so many people and organizations of different kinds are making to make this project a success in Andalusia," noted Patricio Peñalver, coordinator of S.O.S. Caretta and project director at HyT.

The project has the participation of the guilds and associations that operate in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Punta Umbría, Isla Cristina, and Tarifa, as well as their town councils. Thanks to their collaboration in this initiative promoted by Fundación Cepsa and supported by the Junta de Andalucía, among other groups, more than 50 specimens of *Caretta caretta* have been rescued to date since its launch in May 2021, which are cared for, prior to their release, at the Junta de Andalucía's Recovery Center (Cegma) in Algeciras, Cadiz. In addition, more than 8,000 people participated in environmental education activities during this time.

Jesús Velasco, director of Fundación Cepsa in Andalusia, emphasized that "this recognition shows the validity of this program in the recovery of marine biodiversity in our seas and the importance of public-private collaboration, as well as the coordination of all the actors in environmental awareness and education initiatives. Faced with the challenges that lie ahead in terms of ecological transition and environmental conservation, we must join forces and generate high-impact alliances, such as those that Fundación Cepsa has developed in Andalusia."

Andalusia is a key entry and exit point to the Mediterranean and its coasts make it one of the most biodiverse maritime regions in Europe. Turtles use the beaches as feeding and sheltering areas and sometimes, in the Mediterranean part, as a nesting area as well.

The project's efforts include training and resources for fishers to carry out safe rescues. They leave the rescued turtles in each port collaborating with the project, thanks to an agreement with the Public Ports Agency of Andalusia, and the turtles then receive specialized veterinary care from the Ministry of Sustainability, Environment, and the Blue Economy of the Andalusian Regional Government, the body in charge of their care. After they recover, the turtles are released into the sea with the support of school groups and social and specialized entities such as Seashore Environment and Fauna and Foredunes.

More information in the video '[SOSTurtles, protectingthe turtles](#)'

HyT is an association with extensive experience in the conservation of marine species and environments. A collaborating entity of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, and the Blue Economy of the Regional Government of Andalusia, it has international experience in the field of sea turtles and their relationship with the fishing sector.

Fundación Cepsa is a non-profit organization of general interest that aims to be a transforming agent in the context of the ecological transition through actions aimed at meeting social needs. Fundación Cepsa is made up of three strategic areas: Individuals, in order to promote the general well-being of society; Biodiversity, through projects focused on the care and restoration of ecosystems; and Social Innovation, to be a driving force for transformation in the ecological transition.

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