

## **Fundación Cepsa Celebrates World Wetlands Day in Andalusia**

- For 19 years now, this day has been a day of celebration for Cepsa and Fundación Cepsa.
- Fundación Cepsa is working for the conservation and appreciation of two wetlands in Andalusia: the Madre Vieja Environmental Station and Laguna Primera de Palos lagoon.
- This year's slogan, *Inseparable: Water, Wetlands and Life*, revolves around the importance of these natural spaces for the sustenance of humanity and nature.

Fundación Cepsa celebrated World Wetlands Day, an event it has been commemorating for 19 years, following the conservation and enhancement of Laguna Primera de Palos lagoon (Huelva) and the Madre Vieja Environmental Station in Campo de Gibraltar (Cádiz).

World Wetlands Day has been celebrated every February 2 since 1997, the date when the Convention on Wetlands was signed in Ramsar (Iran, 1971): It was the first treaty on the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands. The central theme this year is the importance of water in these natural enclaves. The day is celebrated each year with a different slogan. The 2021 slogan is *Inseparable: Water, Wetlands and Life*.

Every year, Fundación Cepsa carries out an environmental education program for young people from schools in Campo de Gibraltar and Huelva. The students who come to the Madre Vieja Environmental Station and Laguna Primera de Palos lagoon take part in educational workshops and fun activities aimed at learning about and valuing the importance of these types of natural spaces. They are also invited to take part in a drawing competition with these environments taking center stage. Due to COVID-19, the activity could not be held as Fundación Cepsa would have liked this year, since every year about 600 students at each location participate in this activity and visit the wetlands. In 2021, schools have been offered the possibility of carrying out the environmental workshop in the classroom or virtually to continue teaching environmental values and raising awareness on the importance of conserving these natural spaces. To date, the program has two schools in Campo de Gibraltar and three in Huelva.

## **Madrevieja Environmental Station**

In 2009, Cepsa decided to recover and restore this nature reserve as part of its policy on biodiversity, sustainability, and support and respect for the environment, with a view to promoting nature research. The site also serves as a space for environmental education and is open to the public. Fundación Cepsa led the project, which was the first of its kind in the province of Cádiz. Ten years after it was opened, it continues to grow in importance. The richness and diversity of its habitats make the Madrevieja Environmental Station a true sanctuary for more than 139 inventoried bird species, as well as an ideal enclave for the development of the owl recovery project in southern Spain, in collaboration with the regional government of Andalusia and the European Union.

## **Laguna Primera de Palos**

The Primera Laguna de Palos lagoon is included in the Network of Protected Areas of the regional government of Andalusia and classified as a Nature Reserve. Since 2005, it has also had a RAMSAR classification (International Convention for the Conservation of these areas). The lagoon is practically on top of the site owned by Cepsa, which partnered with the Andalusia regional government in 2000 to restore the marshland designated by law as a Protected Area. This space is just one of the products of Cepsa's pledge to one of its key values: sustainability, and is an excellent example of how biodiversity can be protected and endangered species helped to recover. Since its restoration, Cepsa and its foundation have continuously done research, maintenance and enhancing the public's experience there. It was the first time a Spanish industrial company had taken part in a project such as this, and it was also the first time a private energy company had committed to making such a valuable resource available for public use. Cepsa put all its energy into recovering and restoring the site, championing respect for the environment, commitment to nature, environmental education, and business sustainability.

**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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