

Fundación Azul Marino, together with Fundació Oceanogràfic, presents the 7th edition of the «Aquí Salvamos Tortugas» campaign in Castellón

- Close to twenty coastal municipalities in the province join the nest protection protocol driven by both organisations.
- The event brought together local authorities and beach staff to align protocols and reinforce frontline training.
- This edition celebrates a historic milestone: the recovery of 1,000 sea turtles at the Oceanogràfic's ARCA del Mar.
- A record of four nests in Castellón municipalities in 2025 confirms the consolidation of the species in the western Mediterranean basin.

Oropesa del Mar (Castellón), 30 June 2026. Fundació Azul Marino presented today, coinciding with the start of the nesting season for this species, its awareness and protection campaign for the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in collaboration with Fundació Oceanogràfic. This is the 7th edition of the «Aquí Salvamos Tortugas» campaign aimed at Mediterranean coastal municipalities.

The event, held at Bellver Blue Tech Zone, brought together local authorities, beach staff and stakeholders from the nearly twenty coastal municipalities in the province of Castellón that have joined the initiative. The session served to reinforce coordination between administrations, with the aim of aligning action protocols and preparing frontline staff to respond correctly when these animals reach the sand.

The meeting was led by the Regional Secretary for Environment and Territory of the Generalitat Valenciana, Sabina Goretti; the director of Fundació Azul Marino, Pablo García; and Celia Calabuig and Mercedes Calabuig, president and vice-president of Fundació Oceanogràfic respectively. It was also attended by representatives from several of the municipalities involved, including the Environment Councillor of Castellón, Gonzalo Romero; the Environment Councillor of Alcalá de Xivert, Juan Carlos Barceló; the Beaches Councillor of Oropesa del Mar, Isabel Moya Pascual; the Beaches Councillor of Nules, María José Esteban; and the Culture Councillor of Torreblanca, Gema Edo. During the session, García and Goretti presented awards to the participating town councils for their involvement in the campaign, and technical training was delivered to municipal cleaning and lifeguard staff.

A historic milestone: 1,000 turtles recovered

The 7th edition of «Aquí Salvamos Tortugas» celebrates a historic milestone for marine conservation this year: the recovery of 1,000 sea turtles at the Oceanogràfic's ARCA del Mar. This figure represents years of scientific and veterinary work and collaboration between administrations, fishermen, volunteers and citizens, and demonstrates that a broad, coordinated protection network is possible. Each of the recovered specimens arrived at the centre after suffering one of the main threats facing the species, such as accidental capture, plastic pollution, collisions with vessels or various pathologies.

The session also highlighted the results of the previous season in the province of Castellón, where four nests were located on the beaches of Nules, Almazora, Peñíscola and Alcocebre. The turtles born from those nests have spent the year under the care and monitoring of Fundación Azul Marino at its Marine Species Conservation Centre, and their official release back into their natural habitat will take place after the summer.

"The fact that the turtles born last year on our coasts have developed so positively at our Conservation Centre demonstrates the importance of a fast, coordinated response on the beach," explains Pablo García. "This campaign aims to give practical tools to town councils and to cleaning and lifeguard staff, since the success of these nests depends entirely on local management and the cooperation of citizens."

A tribute to Félix Moncada

The event concluded with the release of a loggerhead turtle named Félix Moncada, in tribute to the Venezuelan marine biologist and international reference in sea turtle conservation who passed away just days ago. Moncada dedicated decades of his life to the study and protection of these species in the Caribbean and was one of the driving forces behind the monitoring programmes that today serve as a model across the Mediterranean. With this gesture, Fundación Azul Marino and Fundación Oceanogràfic paid tribute to his legacy.

A shifting trend in the Mediterranean

The initiative responds to a shifting trend in the Mediterranean. The loggerhead turtle's nesting colonies were traditionally concentrated in the eastern basin, but multiple environmental factors are changing their behavioural patterns and progressively extending their nesting towards the western basin, where it used to be exceptional. Since 2012, when the first protection protocols were designed, they have nested on the Valencian coast every year, reaching a record of 14 nests registered during the 2025 season.

This season, 16 coastal town councils in the province have joined the campaign: Vinaroz, Benicarló, Peñíscola, Alcalá de Xivert-Alcocebre, Torreblanca, Cabanes, Oropesa del Mar, Benicasim, Castellón, Almazora, Burriana, Nules, Moncofa, Xilxes, La Llosa and Almenara.

The Regional Secretary for the Environment, Sabina Goretti, wished to "congratulate the municipalities that have had the good fortune to witness turtle nesting on their beaches. This phenomenon drives us to activate new protective activities and fills us with a sea of possibilities to conserve the biodiversity of our coasts."

Beyond Castellón, the 7th edition of «Aquí Salvamos Tortugas» involves more than 80 coastal municipalities across the Valencian Community, the Region of Murcia, Andalusia and the Balearic Islands, as well as numerous public and private organisations committed to protecting marine biodiversity. To amplify the message, 1,700 billboards will be installed in coastal municipalities and across Ferrocarrils de la GVA. The partner network includes Fundació Oceanogràfic, Fundació Azul Marino, Seville Aquarium and Palma Aquarium, together with the fishing sector, whose collaboration is key: many of the specimens recovered at ARCA del Mar arrive thanks to alerts from fishermen's guilds and professional fishermen.

What to do if you see a nesting turtle

With the arrival of summer and increased activity on the beaches, the campaign reminds bathers of simple guidelines to act correctly if they witness a nesting: keep a safe distance, do not interact with the animal and completely avoid using lights, torches or flashes, which can disorient it. The most important step is to call 112 immediately, an alert that activates the protocol to protect the nest during the three or four months of incubation and to ensure that hatching is completed safely between September and October.

About Fundació Azul Marino

Fundació Azul Marino is an organisation dedicated to the conservation of marine species and environmental education in the province of Castellón. In collaboration with Fundació Oceanogràfic, it manages the Marine Species Conservation Centre at Bellver Blue Tech Zone, where it cares for and monitors threatened marine wildlife before returning it to the sea.

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