

Students from Oropesa del Mar, Benicàssim and Castellón successfully rear shark eggs in their classrooms to support conservation

- Fundación Azul Marino and Fundación Oceanogràfic drive this pioneering educational project in the province to raise awareness of the fragility of marine ecosystems and dispel false beliefs about sharks.
- The foundation closes the school year taking stock of an initiative that has allowed students to monitor the development of the embryos before their return to the sea.

Oropesa del Mar, 22 June 2026. Coinciding with the end of the school year, Fundación Azul Marino takes stock of the pioneering educational project that brought the rearing of small-spotted catshark eggs (scientific name: *Scyliorhinus canicula*) to four schools in Castellón.

Over recent months, students from CEIP Santa Águeda in Benicàssim, CEIP Dean Martí and IES Torre del Rei in Oropesa del Mar, and Àgora Lledó International School in Castellón have cared for shark eggs in their classrooms and continuously monitored the embryos until they hatched.

As the hatchings took place, the pups were progressively transferred to the Marine Species Conservation Centre, a facility the foundation coordinates together with Fundación Oceanogràfic at Bellver Blue Tech Zone. The programme seeks to strengthen the bond between the whole educational community and marine natural heritage, and to raise awareness of the importance of protecting the coastline.

A technical and scientific challenge in the classroom

The process began in February with training for teachers to ensure the correct handling and maintenance of the embryos and the incubation systems. The Fundación Azul Marino team then installed the aquariums in quiet, noise-free areas of the schools, such as libraries and laboratories, before running educational sessions with students on Mediterranean sharks and the threats they face.

Throughout the incubation months, students took on the weekly responsibility of monitoring parameters such as temperature, salinity and water quality. To avoid the risks of conventional aquariums, the initiative used a system based on adapted wine coolers, which kept the water in the right conditions.

For Laura Roig, Sustainability coordinator at IES Torre del Rei in Oropesa, “the initiative has brought students closer to the marine environment, a setting that is geographically close yet still unknown in many respects, awakening in them a greater awareness of its importance and of the need to respect and preserve it. One of the most significant moments of the project comes with the hatching of the shark eggs, an experience that brings great satisfaction to students and teachers alike. The activity has also

made a remarkable contribution to values education, fostering responsibility, commitment and care for living beings among students”.

The small-spotted catshark, a common species in the Mediterranean Sea that is not currently considered threatened, has become the teaching resource for awareness-raising in the classroom, serving as a means to address issues such as bycatch, the origin of seafood and the effects of climate change.

Through direct observation of the embryos and the pups, students have been able to understand how any alteration of the marine environment compromises biodiversity.

These eggs come from a local line of collaboration between the foundation and the province's fishermen's guilds, which safely recover the eggs from inside females caught accidentally in nets, allowing the foundation to collect and incubate them at its facilities and release them back into the sea after hatching.

“Tu Mar” project

These actions form part of the “Tu Mar” project, an initiative that seeks to bring marine natural heritage closer to the educational community and to foster a stronger connection with the coastal environment. Following this year's success, Fundación Azul Marino is already working on expanding the initiative next year, allowing it to broaden the training programme and reach a larger network of teachers in the province of Castellón.

The educational impact of this method meant that, in earlier phases of the initiative, students from the province presented their learning at international education forums in Miami (USA).

With the end of the academic term, Fundación Azul Marino closes the cycle of this edition. All the eggs incubated in the classrooms have completed their development and the pups remain at the Marine Species Conservation Centre (Bellver Blue Tech Zone). These small sharks, now returning to the sea, have acted as ambassadors of the Mediterranean, awakening the curiosity of the school community about the most threatened species on our coasts and the actions we can take to improve their conservation status.

About Fundación Azul Marino

Fundación Azul Marino is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the protection, conservation and outreach of the Mediterranean Sea.

Based at Bellver Blue Tech Zone, in a strategic natural setting on the Castellón coast between the municipalities of Oropesa and Benicàssim, for the past two years it has run the Marine Species Conservation Centre (CCEM), an advanced marine wildlife recovery centre designed to care for species before their return to the natural environment.

Veterinary staff from Fundació Oceanogràfic work at these facilities as part of a collaboration agreement for Mediterranean species.

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