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naturalistas

# La Marciega, the marsh

the marsh that brings it  
all together







## The importance of water

A marsh is an environment characterised by the permanent or temporary presence of water. The La Marciega Marsh comprises a coastal lagoon, other zones of seasonal flooding and a long pebble beach, all protected by **one of the Canary Islands' largest tamarisk groves**.

## A foodbank for a town

This ecosystem is among the most productive on the planet and it has always played vital function for our species. It is from this ecosystem that we have obtained building materials, firewood, medication, food, water and, nowadays, a perfect place to enjoy and contemplate nature.

The existence of the Los Caserones settlement on the edge of the marsh, one of the largest coastal settlements on the island from the Pre-Hispanic Age, is no coincidence. Its inhabitants knew how to take full advantage of what was available and, it would seem, the villagers' celebrations marking the start and the finish of the annual cycle are due to one of the fishing techniques used there, known as **la envarbasca**.

In addition, these environments exercise important control over the water cycles, storing it or reducing the destructive potential of ravine flooding or storms at sea.



## Constant change or exchange

The bed of the La Aldea ravine, which goes deep towards the heart of the basin, is the first section of the artery through which the sediment and water feeding everything flow; it is through this that such enigmatic animals as eels, and other marine species, travel, and as it flows there are other aquatic environments which are vitally important for a huge list of living beings, among which migratory birds stand out.

## A fragile space, under threat

Overuse and contamination of the aquifer is hindering normal development of the flora and fauna; exotic invasive species are causing damage which cannot be absorbed, as does waste matter, which spoils the landscape. Infrastructures, such as overhead cables, are a threat for the valuable birdlife which flies continuously over the zone, and the unregulated and uncontrolled transit of people and pets gets in the way of their reproduction and makes it difficult for them to rest.



## What has been done?

Over recent years, some actions have been carried out aimed at mitigating the impacts that the marsh is suffering. The priority has been, and continues to be, the dissemination of information about the valuable assets belonging to the marsh. This is done by means of guided visits, presentations and lectures, or by means of informative material like what you are now reading or which you will find on your walk around this area.

But, as well as this, it is becoming vital for the marsh's uses to be regulated. We should and we must visit the marsh, but for it to become the paradise it was destined to be, it is vital that these visits are ordered and regulated. So, a single itinerary has been signposted, and transit is limited through the most sensitive areas and those with greatest potential for recovery.



## What can be done?

Let's work to increase its surface area, to recover flood areas and to manage to reactivate agricultural activity on its periphery - always with criteria respecting the surroundings and taking good care of them - to ensure that each one of us understands their value, **so that we become involved in their improvement and conservation.**