

THE ISLAND OF SANTA CRUZ: A PRIVILEGED OBSERVATORY TO DISCOVER SEABIRDS

Seabirds find rest and food in the Ria da Coruña

Santa Cruz cove is a wintering area for seabirds such as **divers**, **common scoters**, **razorbills** or **common murre**s that visit us from northern Europe. In the migratory paths and during the winter, it is easy to see **northern gannets** and occasionally some **Scopoli's shearwater** or a **great skua** in the waters of the middle of the estuary. We can also see, either perched in the Corval of Santa Cruz or diving in search of fish, groups of **European shags** that have here one of the main places of Galicia.



Northern gannet
(*Morus bassanus*)



Razorbill
(*Alia torda*)



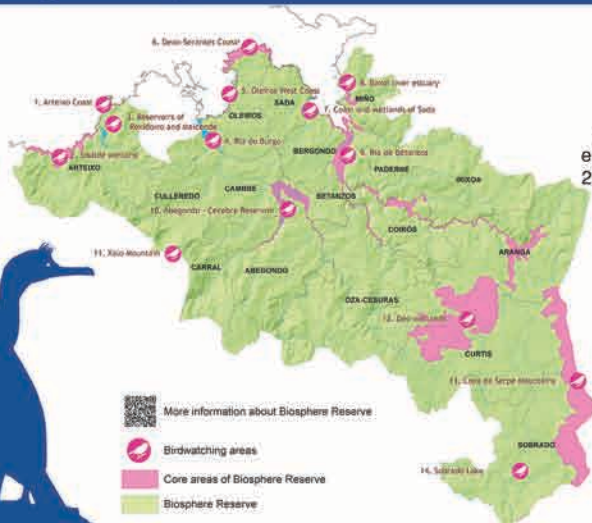
European shag
(*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*)

Scientific ringing is essential to the study of birds

Some birds visiting this coast such as seagulls and cormorants have rings with codes of reading. If we see some of them, it is very important that we send the data of the rings to the Bird Ringing Office of the Doñana Biological Station: <http://anillamiento.ebd.csic.es/>

Birdwatching in the Biosphere Reserve

The Biosphere Reserve Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo, declared by UNESCO in 2013, and of which the City Council of Oleiros is part, hosts more natural areas where we can enjoy an excellent day of birdwatching.



Not all seagulls are the same

Santa Cruz beach, especially in the winter at low tide, usually hosts six of the most common seagulls of our coast: **yellow-legged gull**, **lesser black-backed gull**, **Mediterranean gull**, **black-headed gull**, **mew gull** and **great black-backed gull**. But it is also an excellent place visited by less frequent seagulls, rare or wandering, such as the **European herring gull**, the **ring-billed gull**, the **glaucous gull** or the **iceland gull**.

But it is not all seagulls, because during the winter period, the beach is also visited by **little egrets** and waders such as **ruddy turnstone**, **common sandpiper** and occasionally **Eurasian oystercatcher** and **whimbrel**.



Europe's most threatened seabird visits us in summer

During the summer, and after a long journey from the Mediterranean, these waters receive an exceptional visitor, the **Balearic shearwater**, the most threatened bird in Europe, which meets with the **European shags** forming small puddles to fish in the ria.



Balearic shearwater
(*Puffinus mauretanicus*)