



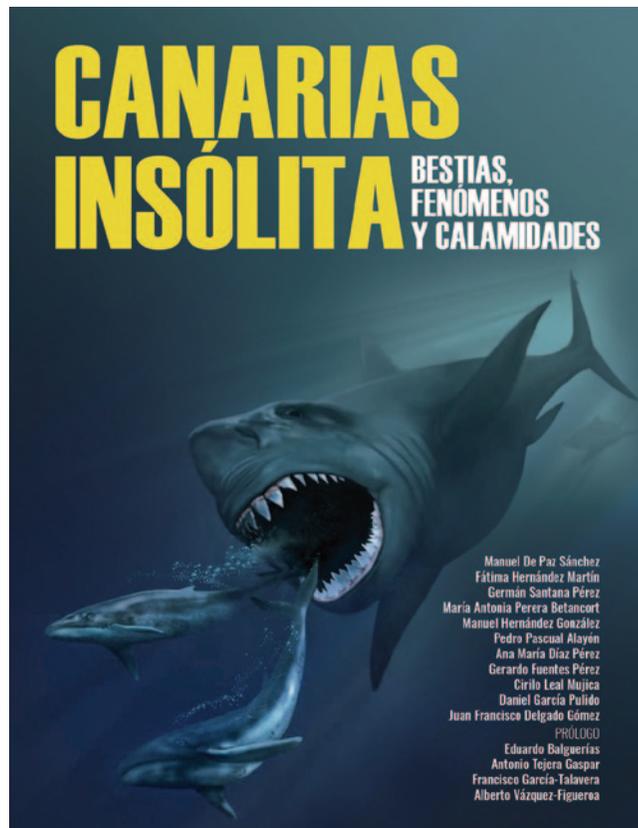
THE BEASTS AND CATASTROPHES OF THE CANARY ISLANDS

When reality surpasses the imagination

Herques is a Canary Island book publisher specialising in those with local cultural and historical content. Now the latest book about the unattractive side of the Canary Islands is just being published.

Canarias Insólita: Bestias, Fenómenos y Calamidades (Incredible Canary Islands: beasts, phenomena and accidents) has united more than 55 stories, which sometimes seem almost unbelievable and yet are scientifically proven. Four scientists and authors from the Canary Islands' two universities, Alberto Vázquez-Figueroa, Eduardo Balguerías, Antonio Tejera Gaspar and Francisco García-Talavera, collated the scientific works and stories.

For example, the giant megalodon shark is not only present in horror stories, but actually lived in our oceans two to 17 million years ago. It was a mighty beast whose existence is proven by fossil teeth. Also, the giant octopus that attacked entire ships is more



↑ The super-shark was probably about 20 metres long

than just a sailor's yarn. Giant lizards, giant rats and even large ratite birds have actually

lived on the islands. The second part describes phenomena and accidents. These are

the times when the islands were beleaguered by epidemics such as the plague and smallpox. The third chapter on tragedies and island phenomena contains a collection of mysterious incidents and strange events from all seven islands that have shaped the archipelago's history since time immemorial. Volcanic eruptions, storms and floods, as well as unforgettable stories such as those of Catalina Lercaro and the death of the frozen pilgrims of Valle de Güimar will captivate the reader's attention.

The book is in Spanish and requires language skills. It is printed in colour on glossy paper and contains an unusual collection of stories that invite you to remember, to be amazed and be spooked. With a view to Christmas, the book would make a great gift idea. It's available in local bookshops and at El Corte Inglés. There is more information on the website www.editorialherques.com. ■

FUERTEVENTURA

It's a wrap!

The shooting of the movie *Solo* in Fuerteventura, the first film to be shot entirely on the island, has been completed. It's based on the true story of Álvaro Vizcaino Albertos, who survived a surfing accident four years ago. On his way to Punta Paloma en Cofete where he was going surfing, he slipped and fell down some cliffs on the Costa Barlovento where he survived for two days in complete solitude. Enrica Roberta Martino, who is responsible for selecting the locations, explained that, "Some of Fuerteventura's less hospitable landscapes will be shown in this movie which also demonstrates the great love that surfers have for this island and its sport." The feature film with Alain Hernández and Aura Garrido in the leading roles was produced by Fargo Films and Miramax Media Entertainment and directed by Hugo Stuen. *Solo* is expected to premiere in June 2018. ■



↑ Solo is a movie that should not only captivate surfers

EXTREME STRESS AND FEW PSYCHOLOGISTS

Guardia Civil sick leave high

According to the latest figures an alarming number of Guardia Civil officers suffered psychological difficulties during the first half of this year.

When Socialist MEP Miguel Ángel Heredia questioned the Spanish central government about the situation, he was told that a total of 494 officers had taken time off sick for the condition between January and the beginning of June, 56 of them being in the Canary Islands. The majority of the enforcement agents having taken excused absence due to mental health

issues are in Madrid (46), followed by Las Palmas (31) and Seville (29). In Valencia there were 26; Santa Cruz de Tenerife 25; Cádiz 22; and Murcia 21, amongst other areas.

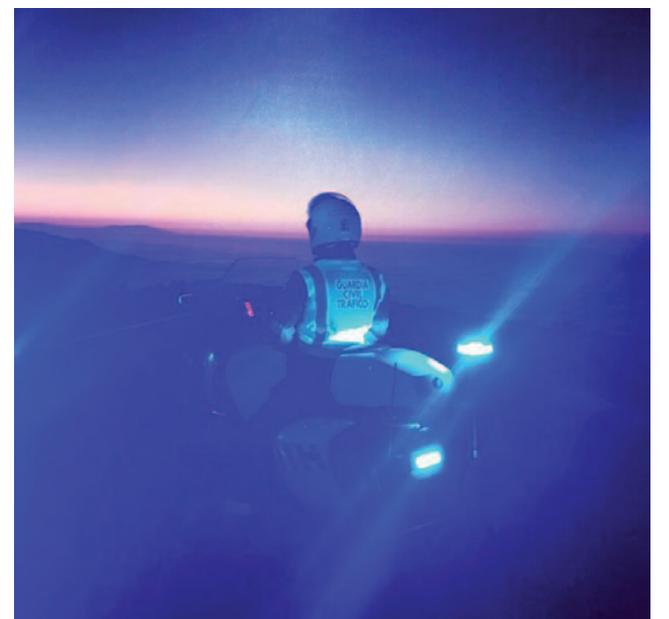
Heredia demanded an explanation as to why so many officers have been overburdened psychologically in such a short period of time. One suggestion is the budget reductions made by Mariano Rajoy's ruling PP government in recent years, which have led to cut-backs. Since 2011, the Guardia Civil force has been reduced

by 6.4 per cent, from 82,692 officers to 77,427. The stressful nature of the job, combined with increasing terrorist threats and lowered staff levels, creates situations that not everyone can cope with, evidently.

In addition, there are only 62 police psychologists available for the entire force, meaning that each psychologist is responsible for a massive 1,242 officers. Their distribution is also a little bizarre. There are 30 psychologists in Madrid alone, a significantly reduced number in other areas,

and in the Canary and Balearic Islands, Navarre, Murcia, Asturias and Extremadura there is only one for each region. ■

→ The police should always be there for us when we need them, but who takes care of them?



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