

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF THE CLIFFS

Saving the Giants!

UNNATURAL CAUSES OF DEATH

Fewer drownings in 2018

The good news is that last year significantly fewer people drowned in the Canary Islands than in 2017.

The number fell from 93 in 2017 to 56 in 2018. The bad news is that there are still more deaths from drowning than from fatal traffic accidents, in which the number of fatally injured fell from 44 to 43 people. These accidents apart, yet another number is very alarming. The main cause of non illness-related death in the Canary Islands and Spain is suicide. The evaluation for the year 2018 is not yet available. However, it will correspond approximately to the figures of the previous year when 200 people took their own lives here.

Since 2007, more people in Spain have killed themselves than those who died in road accidents. It's a macabre statistic that makes you think. Sadly, a total of 3,679 Spanish residents took their own lives in 2017, 3,057 people died on the roads in 2018 and 372 drowned. Despite the high number of people dying in road traffic accidents and whilst bathing, they do not lead the statistics of 'unnatural' deaths in Spain. After suicide which occupies the first place, accidents from falls (3,057 cases) follow in second place and suffocation (2,336) in third place. On New Year's Eve there was a new tragic case which saddened the country, a three-year-old boy from Gijón choked to death whilst eating the traditional grapes and despite all efforts, he could not be revived. ■

At the beginning of the year, José Antonio Valbuena, Tenerife's Councillor for the Environment, and members of the Environmental Department as well as technicians from the Canary Islands Government and ecologists, met for a working meeting to discuss how successful the protection of the steep walls of the cliffs of Los Gigantes has been and which measures make sense for the new planning year.

The balance for 2018 was reported to have been positive. In this New Year, the goal of ecological equilibrium in and outside of the water is to be pursued further. One focus is on making the public aware of the special features of this landscape, especially in the Teno-Rasca nature reserve. The great diversity of species and especially the last specimens of the osprey, which breed in the steep walls, are a central theme. Furthermore, the radius of action of the conservation measures is to be extended. The public should be encouraged to use this nature reserve in a sustainable way, so



Conservation measures for the Los Gigantes cliffs are to be extended

that tourism, sporting and recreational activities can be carried out in this area with special care. This includes, for example, anchoring not closer than 250 metres off the coast, refraining from using loudspeakers in this area and hikers avoiding particularly delicate zones. Last year, a multilingual brochure with advice and suggestions was created and distributed to tourists and residents.

The Acantilados de Los Gigantes are of volcanic origin and rise between 300 and 600 metres into the sky. They extend over a length of 12 kilometres between the Punto de Teno in Buenavista del Norte and the former fishing village of

Los Gigantes in the borough of Santiago del Teide. They form a gigantic rock world where sea eagles, seagulls and lizards are at home. The Guanches called the giant wall the 'Muralla del Infierno' (Wall of Hell) and that is also the name of a swimming competition that has been held in autumn for three years running between the north-western tip of Punta de Teno and Los Gigantes.

Deep gorges run through the rock massif and flow into small, often naturally sandy bays. The best known of these is the Masca Gorge, which is currently closed to the public but is the only one easily accessible from the terrestrial side. Los Carrizales is

another option for example, but not an easy one. The cliffs rise elegantly above the surface of the ocean and extend deeply down beneath it, though at the coast, the depth of the sea is barely more than 30m. Due to its poor accessibility, the sea is particularly species-rich and therefore repeatedly attracts anglers and divers. The former fishing village of Los Gigantes was discovered and developed as a holiday resort by foreign investors in the 1960s. Today it is the northernmost extension of the holiday area on the south western side of Tenerife and is especially popular with British tourists, swallows and emigrants. ■

REBAJAS

30%

80%

50%

60%

Invierno

SALES

Winter

40%

70%

20%

90%

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