



THREAT TO EXISTENCE

Marine life is dying

Much stricter laws and harsher penalties for non-compliance are being demanded. "We must ensure that these activities are organised, regulated and carried out safely and sustainably for the sake of the cetaceans and other marine animals, including noise levels and distances between visitors and the animals. At the moment, the licensing standards are so lax that almost every boat meets them. This must change and be enforced more strictly," Bernabé stressed. In his opinion, the marine mammals that live in the archipelago's waters are a living and fragile wealth that could be lost if not treated with the necessary sensitivity.

However, the Canary Islands Government apparently complains that it is unable to monitor the irregular companies and withdraw them from activities, due to a lack of staff. Not a very promising statement that seems to show how little the authorities seem to be aware of the seriousness of the situation and the importance of nature conservation in the Atlantic.

A day between blue and black

On April 20, Marcos Alonso from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria wanted to spend a nice Easter day with friends at Playa del Agujero in the borough of Gáldar. However, it turned into a day which was to change many people's perspectives, as his experiences were shared across social media rapidly. When he wrote his first Facebook post, he summarised what had occurred under the title 'A day between black and blue'. In his own words, translated from Spanish, Alonso explained what happened to turn the day so dark:

"...When we came back from a shopping trip, we saw a group of people and a local policeman on the shore. They were lined up around a dolphin that was bleeding from his mouth as its jaw was completely shattered. He also had cuts on his sides, possibly caused by a boat. At the same time some other people were taking care



↑ **Yet another dead dolphin as obvious proof that man and sea have to find a new way to interact with each other**



↑ **The sea turtle was pulled ashore with a lifebelt, released from its burden and handed over to the rescue station**



↑ **Plastic waste from far away - a butter dish from Egypt**

of a turtle that was caught in rigging and a buoy. A local resident threw himself courageously into the water with the help of a lifebelt to bring the animal ashore. The sea turtle was completely trapped and had a deep cut on one of its fins caused by the cords, who knows for how long? Finally, several people were able to free the animal and notify the local wildlife sanctuary. At least that animal lived, unlike the poor dolphin.

"Touched by what was happening, we returned to the beach and collected all the plastic we could find in bags. We had quickly filled five and that was just the beginning. While collecting, we came across a dead shearwater that had been

choked by a string around its neck ... (no comment). To finish, we found three more pack-



↑ **A shearwater that has choked - no words can express the cruelty**

ages whose labels caught our attention because they didn't come from here. Due to the barcode we could determine that a spray can came from Turkey, a mosquito spray and a butter dish came from Egypt, and the cap of a water bottle had apparently sloshed from Morocco to our coast. This reminded me of a documentary I had seen recently about the plastic that was coming to us from those countries. Today I could see with my own eyes that this is true. Not to mention the many microplastic particles we saw on the beach.

"Dear sea that gives me so much, today I have clearly understood your message, a message full of evidence and pain, and I have no choice but to ask your forgiveness for the atrocities that my stupid race, with its unreasonable and exaggerated arrogance, is inflicting on you."

Words from a Canarian who simply wanted to spend a carefree day on the beach, only to be confronted with the uncomfortable truth of the situation we are creating and for which others are suffering terribly. ■

A COMMUNITY MOURNS

Shocking murder

Continued from front page

The story unfolds

Silvia (39) and her husband were separated and she'd returned to live in Germany. However, she regularly visited with their children, six year old Jonas and ten year old Jakob, and they'd recently arrived on Tenerife. Handrick had apparently told his children that he'd hidden Easter presents in a cave, and at around 10am on April 23, the family set off in search of them, in the mountains above Adeje, close to the hamlet of La Quinta. Yet, around 5pm, Jonas was found in a terribly distressed state near the village. Thankfully, his rescuers found a Dutch resident, called Annelies, who was able to speak to the boy in German. Jonas said his father had beaten his mother in a cave, that he'd seen blood and run away. "The boy was completely disturbed, but calmed down when I spoke German to him," said Annelies.

When police arrived, the six-year-old was taken into the care of the local Youth Welfare Office, and a search began that involved 100 personnel from the Guardia Civil, police forces, military, fire brigade and other emergency services, plus a dog squadron and helicopter crews. Low clouds and the high amount of caves in the area complicated the search. Sadly, the bodies of Silvia and her son were found, almost 24 hours later, in a cave located between Barranco del Agua and Barranco del Burro. They both had horrific injuries and clear signals of having been beaten to death, apparently with large rocks, and of having tried to defend themselves.

Investigation and arrest

Handrick owned a house in Adeje, and officers found him at home when they visited. He admitted to having argued with his wife, but insisted that he left her in the forest safe and sound. However, he had suspicious injuries to his face and knuckles, so was detained.

According to reports, his neighbours of two years described Handrick as reserved and solitary but otherwise 'normal'. Though he'd integrated little into the community, he often spent hours reading on his terrace. No one seemed to believe him capable of such an act. To date, there've been no indications of any violence between the couple in the run-up to the visit.

In a further development, the judge ordered a second house search, to be conducted in the suspect's presence, when Handrick declared he needed medicine left in his home and officers became suspicious there may be other substances in the building. On this occasion, a crowd gathered and shouted insults as the accused passed by.

Mourning the tragedy

Mayor of Adeje, José Miguel Rodríguez Fraga, ordered a two-day mourning period and one minute's silence for Silvia and her son. Other political authorities in the Canary Islands also observed a minute's silence. Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez expressed his concern, as well as his hopes that the young survivor would be able to carry this dreadful load. Juan Salvador León, Canary Islands Member of Parliament, stated "It's quite clear to me that this man must be mentally disturbed. How much cruelty is involved in planning and carrying out the killing of a woman and child in this way? A ten-year-old boy who has just started living was suddenly torn from life by a crazy macho. I hope the judiciary will apply the strength of the law."

Four women have already been killed at the hand of their partners this year in the Canary Islands, and now another child has died as well. There've already been 18 mortal victims of domestic violence in Spain this year.

At the time of going to press, young Jonas was waiting in the care of authorities with the support of German Protestant Church priest Immo W. ■



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