

Busted bird of prey poachers

WILDLIFE officers in Malaga have dismantled a sophisticated poaching network targeting protected birds of prey across the Costa del Sol.

Investigation Operation Betula began after falconry experts raised concerns about suspicious activity in Alhaurin el Grande woodlands.

Criminals systematically tracked Northern Goshawk and Eurasian Sparrowhawk nests during spring breeding periods. To secure future harvests, raiding parties took most of the chicks but deliberately left one behind in each nest so parent birds would return the following year.

Laundering stolen chicks required a licensed breeding facility. Suspects fitted closed metal leg bands onto stolen nestlings and forged transfer certificates to pass off wild raptors as captive-bred stock.



Eurasian Sparrowhawk poachers.

Demand from falconry enthusiasts and private collectors drives this trade, with legally bred Northern Goshawks fetching between €1,500 and €4,000 on the commercial market.

Civil Guard officers intercepted suspects in the countryside as they prepared to raid active nests, finding metal rings hidden inside backpacks.

Searches of properties

and a zoological facility uncovered detailed hand-drawn maps, nest coordinates, and falsified commercial documentation.

Forensic teams from the Guardia Civil Criminalistics Laboratory subsequently used DNA profiling on seized birds to prove wild origins. Two individuals now face criminal charges for wildlife trafficking and document forgery.

Line improvements



Plaza Mayor train station.

RENFE is investing €1.2 million to upgrade five stations on the C1 Cercanías line in Malaga. The project covers Plaza Mayor, Victoria Kent, Malaga Centro Alameda, Torreblanca and Montemar Alto. These improvements aim to better comfort, accessibility and safety for the 28,500 daily passengers who travel on the line.

Work began at Plaza Mayor on Saturday, July 6. Upgrades at Victoria Kent and Malaga Centro Alameda will follow later in the month, while Torreblanca and Montemar Alto will start progressively. All stations will remain open during the work. Key improvements include better lighting, new handrails and non-slip stairs.

The wider C1 route will undergo platform extensions, with five halts being

adapted to accommodate 100-metre trains. Track duplication near the airport will also improve reliability. Transport planners intend to increase line capacity by 60 per cent and reduce waiting times between trains from 20 minutes to 15 minutes. This development is expected to benefit more than 14 million passengers.

In addition, full double-track services will return to the Alora area on Wednesday, July 17. This follows the completion of repairs to damage caused by storms in February. The final works include electrification, safety systems and drainage improvements to support the planned service increases across the regional network.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Personalised health checks:

Why prevention should be tailored to every individual

AS preventive medicine continues to evolve, healthcare providers are moving away from the traditional 'one-size-fits-all' approach to health screening. Instead, personalised health checks are gaining prominence, offering assessments designed around each individual's medical history, lifestyle and specific risk factors.

Hospital Quirónsalud Marbella has recently launched a new Personalised Health Check Service, an initiative led by its Internal Medicine Department that aims to deliver more precise, patient-centred preventive care.

According to Dr Javier Moreno, Head of Internal Medicine at Hospital Quirónsalud Marbella, personalised screening programmes can offer significant advantages over standard medical check-ups.

"Not every routine health check performed indiscriminately is necessarily useful," explains Dr Moreno.

The key difference lies in tailoring the assessment to the individual. Factors such as age, gender, family history, lifestyle and personal health



Internal medicine team - Quirónsalud Marbella.

concerns are reviewed during an initial consultation with an Internal Medicine specialist, who then designs the most appropriate screening programme.

The approach reflects a growing emphasis on evidence-based prevention. Rather than carrying out the same tests for everyone, physicians focus on those most likely to provide meaningful information and help detect disease at an early stage.

"We know that well-designed personalised health checks carried out at appropriate intervals can reduce both the risk of disease and its severity if it does occur," says Dr Moreno.

The service can be adapted to assess risks associated with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and other conditions, particularly where family history or individual circumstances suggest a higher risk

Hospital  Quirónsalud
Marbella

profile.

Another benefit is convenience. The programme has been designed so that all examinations, specialist consultations and diagnostic tests can be completed in a single day at the hospital. Results are reviewed by the same Internal Medicine specialist who coordinated the process and are typically available within four days.

For many international residents, business professionals and frequent travellers living in or visiting the Costa del Sol, the ability to obtain a comprehensive health assessment without multiple appointments is a significant advantage.

Ultimately, the goal is not simply to identify illness, but to help people stay healthy for longer. Early detection, combined with lifestyle changes and appropriate medical guidance, can play a crucial role in preventing future health problems and improving long-term quality of life.

INFORMATION & APPOINTMENTS

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