



PRESS RELEASE

No: 248/2018

Date: 3rd May 2018

Improvements to Europa Foreshore

The Minister for the Environment, John Cortes, recently visited Europa Foreshore to see the recent installation of interpretation panels, picnic tables and balustrades that form part of the wider Management Plan for this unique corner of the Gibraltar Nature Reserve.

Europa Point Foreshore is the narrow strip of land that slopes into the sea immediately below the walls and cliffs at Europa Point. This component of the Reserve has become one of the few remaining natural stretches of limestone coastline on Gibraltar's western shoreline. It is an area rich in plant species, particularly showy this year following abundant rain and with no recent eastern gales that tend to burn out the vegetation. The amount of plantlike has been enhanced by extensive and ongoing restoration efforts, particularly by volunteer Bart Van Thienen. The profusion of flora and fauna been evident at the foreshore this year has been much to the delight of nature lovers.

More than 125 plant species have so far been recorded in this area by the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society's (GONHS) Botanical Section, including a regional endemic; the Gibraltar Sea Lavender. The rather exposed, coastal nature of the foreshore excludes most species found in other parts of the Rock. Europa foreshore is also a good location to spot seabirds and waders that are relatively difficult to see in Gibraltar. Some of the characteristic species recorded in this quiet corner of the Reserve include the Ruddy Turnstone, Oystercatcher and the Common Sandpiper. Invertebrates also thrive at Europa Foreshore, with recent research focusing on ants, beetles, snails and butterflies. Reptiles are also common, in particular the Andalusian Wall Lizard and the Moorish Gecko.

The Department of Heritage, Environment and Climate Change is wanting to open up more areas of Gibraltar for the enjoyment of nature, and has a number of other sites earmarked for this treatment. Providing the general public with information on Europa foreshore, in terms of both its wildlife and heritage value, will undoubtedly help increase awareness of its conservation importance. The two new interpretation panels give details of the wildlife and the history of the area, and have been produced by the Department of Heritage, Environment and Climate Change with the assistance of the Gibraltar Museum, Gibraltar Heritage Trust and GONHS.