

# Mediterraneans

CONSERVING THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF BAJA CALIFORNIA

No. 1 Baja California • april 2016

## Flora and Fauna

Snowy Plover  
Agave shawii

## 15th Anniversary

Lifetime  
achievements

## Black Brant Beer

A toast to conservation



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15  
Terra  
Peninsular  
ANIVERSARIO



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# Message from the Director

## A Wake Up Call

Only when we are in touch with nature, feel the texture of trees, breathe the sweet aroma of flowers, and find ourselves in the surrounded by birds, do we understand the urgent need to take care of our world.

Terra Peninsular has been dedicated to the unconditional protection of habitats in the Baja California peninsula for 15 years. Many have questioned why we pursue our mission with such passion. However, our motivation is simple: we love nature. We love this omnipresent element that despite being everything, means nothing for so many others.

The busy city life and the excessive usage of social media have created couch activists. Their beliefs revolve around tweets, likes, and shares in Facebook and their idea that this will help the cause to save endangered species.

Please, don't get me wrong! Social media is an excellent tool to spread our message to a broader group of people to inform them about our work. Nonetheless, what the world really needs are individuals determined to protect nature with real in-the-field actions like volunteer work, knowledge, and contributions.

Please bear in mind that however you decide to collaborate with Terra Peninsular, it will certainly help to protect the land that your children will inherit one day.

The past 15 years have been remarkable thanks to the hard work of everyone involved. To celebrate our anniversary and the joint efforts made by the local community, researchers, supporters, Board members, staff and friends of Terra Peninsular, we're launching our newsletter: *Mediterranews*.

I invite you to plunge into its pages and enjoy the reading!

**César Guerrero**

**Executive Director of Terra Peninsular**

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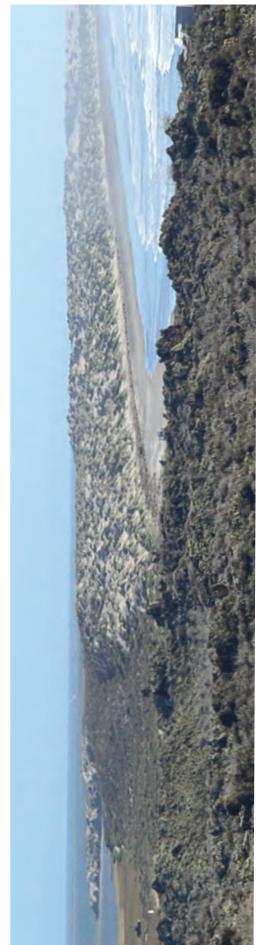
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# 15

Terra Peninsular  
ANIVERSARIO

## 15 SUCCESSES

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION OF NATURAL  
PROTECTED AREAS (CONANP) RECOGNIZED  
**1,820.62 acres** — of — **RANCHO LA**  
**CONCEPCIÓN** as an **AREA VOLUNTARILY**  
**DESTINED FOR CONSERVATION**

— The —  
**9,131.03 acres** of **Valle Tranquilo**  
**Nature Reserve** are recognized as an **ADVC** by **CONANP**

— The —  
**SAN QUINTÍN**  
**COALITION**  
**WAS FORMED IN**  
**2010**

along with ProEstereos  
Pronatura and The  
Nature Conservancy.

The San Quintín Coalition promoted  
— the protection of —  
**297,803.99 acres**  
of the **SAN QUINTÍN LAGOON**  
COMPLEX as a **NATURAL PROTECTED**  
**AREA.**

— Protection of —  
**29,739.47 acres**  
of **MARITIME SUCCULENT SCRUB**

**13,437.59** acres  
of the **San Quintín Bay**  
are recognized as a **RAMSAR site**,  
thanks to the efforts of San Quintín Coalition.

Protection of  
**3,884.62** acres of coastal  
wetlands and sandy beaches at the  
**SAN QUINTÍN LAGOON COMPLEX**

— **45** —  
awareness and  
community  
engagement  
**events**,  
including  
exhibitions,  
**WORKSHOPS**  
and conferences.

— The first —  
**ten California**  
**condors** were reintroduced  
in **Baja California** with the  
collaboration of the  
Center for Scientific Reserch  
and Higher Education  
of Ensenada  
and San Diego Zoo.

**4,498.85** acres of the  
**San Quintín Volcanic**  
**Valley Nature Reserve** are protected.

Monitoring the main species of shorebirds,  
waterbirds and migratory birds at  
**SAN QUINTÍN BAY**,  
mainly Black Brants, Snowy Plovers,  
Hérons, Terns and Skimmers for  
**five consecutive years.**

We're currently promoting  
— the protection of —  
**1,422,126.90**  
acres **in SIERRA**  
**DE JUÁREZ** as a  
**FOREST RESERVE.**

**4,504.73** acres  
in Sierra de Juárez are protected by a  
conservation agreement with Ejido  
Laguna Hanson and Rancho Rodeo del Rey

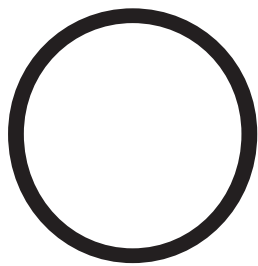
— **CONANP** —  
recognized the  
**2,034.81**  
acres of **Punta**  
**Mazo Nature**  
as an **ADVC.**

— Along with the —  
**COMMUNITIES OF**  
**SAN QUINTÍN BAY,**  
**2** WE BUILT **interpretative**  
**stations** COLLECTED  
**30 tons of trash**, managed  
**one PET** (Temporary Employment  
Program), hosted **ONE BIRD FESTIVAL**  
**1** Enviromental Monitoring Committee.



# OUR FIRST CAUSE

## Marketing Product



ur conservation strategies to protect the habitats and wildlife of Baja California are not only about monitoring and measuring tools or mapping and writing reports, tasks that only experts understand. No, our conservation strategy also involves the community, and it can be fun for everyone! This is why we came up with the idea of our first cause-marketing product: The Black Brant beer. Sweet, isn't it?

But, what is exactly a cause-marketing product?

The idea of a cause-marketing product is to, first of all, find a local brand concerned with a cause, then to create a product and sell it and, finally, to use the profits to continue working for the cause that inspired the project in the first place.



**ESCAFANDRA**  
CERVECERÍA





Art by: Seis Grados

In this case, the cause is conserving the natural habitat of the Black Brant, a magnificent species.

To kick off this strategy, we approached Escafandra Brewery from Ensenada. Together, we came up with a seasonal beer and a name of great significance for Terra Peninsular and especially for the San Quintín Bay: The Black Brant.

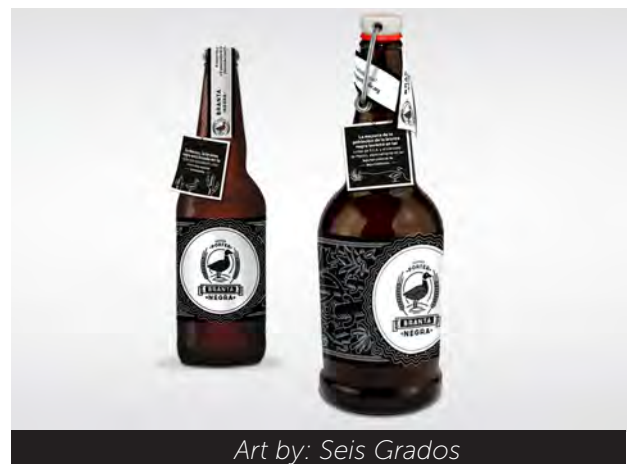
The Black Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) is one of the most characteristic of migratory shorebirds of the San Quintín Bay. Every year, a population of around 30,000 birds flies from their breeding place in Alaska to winter in the Pacific Coast of Baja California.

We chose a bourbon porter beer because of its strong flavor and elegant style. It will be available during the winter months –November 2016 to February 2017– to match the presence of the migratory bird in the peninsula.

**So, wait for it,  
the Black Brant is  
coming.**



Art by: Seis Grados



Art by: Seis Grados



▲ *Agave shawii* ssp. *shawii*.

# Agave Shawii

## A Unique Species in Baja California

By: Antonieta Valenzuela and Sula Vanderplank

**A**long the Pacific Coast and among the peninsula's scrub vegetation, a plant stands out: ***Agave shawii***. This medium-sized agave is an endemic species of Baja California; it has a rosette of spiny leaves and yellow flowers at the top. This species flowers only once throughout its life, and this may even take more than 20 years.

Terra Peninsular's logo is represented by an ***Agave shawii*** because of its traits: it is a Baja California endemic plant, it grows in a restricted area on the coast and it is part of the habitat known as Maritime Succulent Scrub that occurs at the southern end of the California Floristic Province. These characteristics also make the peninsula a globally unique natural area.

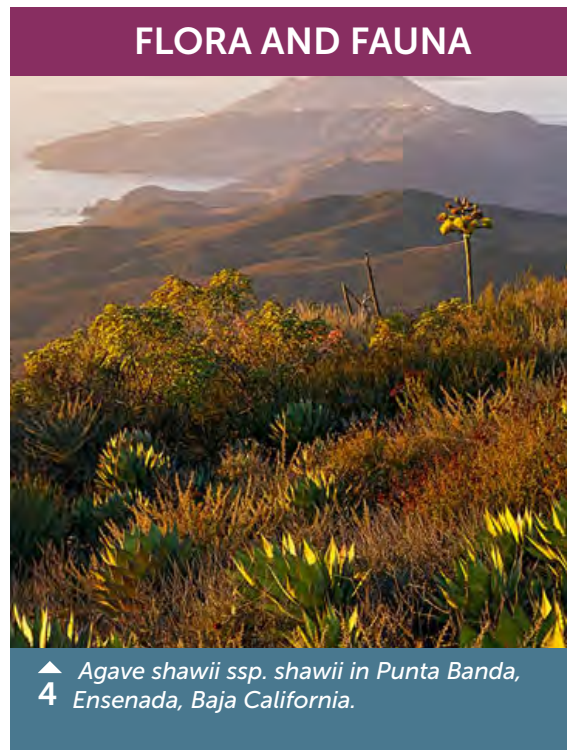
The ***Agave shawii*** is one of the most distinctive species of the Maritime Succulent Scrub Region. This type of vegetation is found in the southern part of the state of California, USA, but it mainly inhabits the west coast of Baja California, between Ensenada and El Rosario. Moreover, it is a unique habitat with a high variety of endemic species in which succulents predominate.

The Maritime Succulent Scrub Region is concentrated on the southernmost region of the California Floristic Province, and it covers most of the state of California and northwestern Baja California. It is also one of the 34 biodiversity hotspots of the world and one of the five Mediterranean regions on the planet. Thus, it is of great importance for conservation.

In the region near El Rosario, where elements of the Maritime Succulent Scrub of the Mediterranean region cohabit with elements of the desert region, the ***Agave shawii*** ssp. ***shawii*** inhabits with another almost identical subspecies, the ***Agave shawii*** ssp. ***goldmaniana***, which is subtly different, being a little taller and more robust.

Nowadays, the population of ***Agave shawii*** ssp. ***shawii*** nearly extinct in the USA. For this reason, it is of extreme importance to conserve this species in Baja California, especially given the lack of state and national protection on both sides of the border. Its restricted distribution is one of its traits, which also makes it extremely vulnerable.





## FLORA AND FAUNA

1 ▲ *Agave shawii* ssp. *shawii*.

2 ▲ *Agave shawii* ssp. *goldmaniana*. Photo: Greg Starr.

3 ▲ Sula Vanderplank, associated researcher at Terra Peninsular, next to an *Agave shawii* ssp. *goldmaniana* in the Valle Tranquilo Nature Reserve.

Destruction, modification or restrictions of its habitat are the main threats that this plant faces every day. Although this happens at a faster pace in the USA, the industrial and agricultural expansion on the northwest coast of Baja California has had an exponential increase in the last years, making it too, a considerable threat to the species. Sometimes the *Agave shawii* is used to feed cattle. This has a very negative impact since these plants are being cut even before they flower, which normally takes between 20 and 40 years to do so.

The *Agave shawii*, of the family Agavaceae, is divided into two subspecies: *Agave shawii* ssp. *goldmaniana* and *Agave shawii* ssp. *shawii*. They can be differentiated according to their areas of distribution: the *A. shawii* ssp. *goldmaniana* is a species that belongs to the desert and grows in the central part of the peninsula, while the *A. shawii* ssp. *shawii* predominates on the coast.

The most robust variety is *goldmaniana*, which can reach a height between 9 to 16 ft. Its distribution is concentrated in the central and southern part of the peninsula. Meanwhile the *A. shawii* ssp. *shawii* has a more compact and narrower form, its height reaches between 6 and 13 ft, and it is distributed along the coast all the way to the 30th parallel of the North Hemisphere (30°0'N).

It is worth saying that both subspecies are very different from each other although the differences are almost imperceptible to the uninitiated eye. Both of them produce red buds that turn into yellow flowers. Nevertheless, the *A. shawii* ssp. *shawii* has a panicle-like inflorescence with between 8 to 14 lateral branches, ovate leaves and rosette up to 40" in diameter. On the other hand, the *A. shawii* ssp. *goldmaniana* has longer leaves, often more branched inflorescence with 18 to 25 lateral branches, and rosette up to 59" in diameter.

The areas of occurrence of these two iconic Agaves meet right at Terra's Valle Tranquilo reserve, near El Rosario at the southern limit of the California Floristic Province.

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Photo: Alan Harper.

# Snowy Plover

## in San Quintín

By: Daniel Galindo

**T**he Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*) is a small shorebird that belongs to the family **Charadriidae** (Plovers), and is protected both in Mexico and in the USA, for it is considered a threatened species.

Snowy Plover populations are declining in North America and it is estimated that only about 26,000 individuals remain. The main causes of its decline are related to habitat loss, the increasing number of natural and introduced predators, and human disturbances such as unleashed dogs, all-terrain vehicles, kite flying, and litter, which attracts ravens, coyotes and gulls to the plover's nesting sites.

It is estimated that around 2,600 Snowy Plovers nest in Mexico. Of this number, up to 380 individuals are found in San Quintín Bay, mainly in Laguna Figueroa, Punta Azufre, San Ramón Beach and Punta Mazo Nature Reserve.

During winter, more than 500 Snowy Plovers from American populations arrive to the sandy beaches and salt marshes of San Quintín. The main problems they face are: crows and coyotes that prey on their eggs,

chicks being run over by cars on the beach, and continuous human disturbance of their resting and feeding areas. We know the origin of some of these Plovers that overwinter in San Quintín because they are marked; they have a unique pattern of rings of different colors that were placed on their feet in areas where they have nested or where they were hatched.

In the last three years, a lot of Snowy Plovers have come to visit us, mainly from central California, the Great Salt Lake in Utah, and as far away as Oregon. The Snowy Plovers of San Quintín are also marked, this is how we know that some of them have decided to change their residence and now breed in the USA. Others migrate about 400 km south into Baja California for the winter, and then return in the summer to continue breeding in San Quintín.

The Snowy Plover is a shorebird about 5 to 6 inches long from the tip of its beak to its tail, and weighs about 1.5 oz. Males are generally larger than females, and





2 ▲ Photo: Alan Harper



3 ▲ Photo: Daniel Galindo



4 ▲ Photo: Daniel Galindo



5 ▲ Photo: Daniel Galindo



6 ▲ Photo: Daniel Galindo



7 ▲ Photo: Daniel Galindo

they have black patches on their forehead, neck and ears. Females have similar plumage to the males, but the patches are brownish. Snowy Plovers mainly nest on sandy beaches, salt flats and salt marshes. They make small depressions in the substrate or, in many cases, they take advantage of natural or human-made depressions (footprints or tire tracks) or animal tracks.

Their breeding season occurs between March and July. The female lays three eggs and incubates them during the day while the male incubates at night. They both continue doing this over a period of 25 to 30 days. Unlike other birds such as Sparrows and Hummingbirds, Snowy Plover offspring hatch fully feathered. Within a few hours, they leave the nest under the care of their parents who take them to safe areas. There their big eyes help them hunt insects, like kelp flies, and crustaceans, without their parents help. After a few days the female will leave the family to mate with another individual; therefore, the male will ensure that their offsprings survive until they are able to fly, about 28 days after birth.

The Snowy Plover is one of many iconic species in San Quintín.

**Help us preserve it!**

## Daniel Galindo

Daniel Galindo is from Veracruz and Baja California Sur, he has a Bachelor's Degree in Marine Biology from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur (Autonomous University of Baja California Sur) and a Master's Degree and a Doctorate from Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marinas of the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (Interdisciplinary Center of Marine Sciences of the National Polytechnic Institute). He has closely collaborated with Terra Peninsular when monitoring the Snowy Plovers in San Quintín Bay. He loves to go birding, take pictures and share his knowledge on ecology and conservation of birds with whoever is around. He lives in La Paz, with his wife Abril and their two kids Daniel and Nicolás.







# Watching my baby grow up

By: Alan Harper / *President of the Board*

The staff asked me for a few reflections on Terra's upcoming fifteenth birthday. I can easily say that outside of my family, watching Terra mature has been the most rewarding thing of my life.

Terra started as a dream almost twenty years ago, when there was a movement to establish "land trusts" in Latin America. At that time, many people were thinking about how to adapt conservation efforts to different patterns of land ownership and distinct conservation priorities. Leaders, in this process were The Nature Conservancy, The Lincoln Land Institute, and Pronatura, A.C.

The need for a new local conservation organization became clear when the first fight to conserve San Quintín began in 1999. The owner of Punta Mazo and an international group of "investors" proposed an enormous housing development of 15,000 houses that would destroy this pristine dune system and poison the successful oyster farms in the bay.



As we formed our response to this development (which was ultimately not approved by the federal government), I met like-minded conservationists, mostly Mexican, and we discovered that we shared a common dream. So in the winter of 2000 we started a year-long process of strategic planning, which resulted in the founding of Terra on April 20, 2001.





Our first years were perhaps the most exciting because we planned without limits. We worked to both identify the areas of highest conservation value, and where we had a chance of actually making a difference. From this, we ended up focusing on two areas, quite a distance apart from each other. These were the borderlands east of Tijuana (an area we call "Las Californias"), and the land stretching north from Valle de Los Cirios (at 28° N) to the bay of San Quintín. Both of these areas are important not just because each was amazingly diverse and relatively intact, but also because they are corridors, that connect the mountains to the desert, and allow migration to maintain healthy populations and allow adaptation to climate change.

Our projects in Las Californias focused on sustainable use, creating economic activities that are tied to conservation. We created a joint venture with a local ejidatario (owner of communal land) to protect land for ecotourism, and worked with the Kumeyaay Indian Community of San Antonio Necua to create a visitor center.

In Valle Tranquilo, where the parcels are larger and tourists are fewer, we concentrated on land deals, where we would use simple title, or other mechanisms to protect the land from development.

But our most ambitious project, and to me the most satisfying, has been our project at Punta Mazo in San Quintín. The idea of conserving Punta Mazo—a 10 kilometer dune system that forms the border of one of the most pristine and important bays on the Pacific coast of North America—had been a dream for so many conservationists for at least two decades. But clouded title, and the delusion of touristic development had frustrated all attempts to proceed.

We had almost given up hope of being able to make any progress at San Quintín, when we heard in June of 2012 that Mexico's highest court had cleared all the title disputes, and we could now see if we could protect this extraordinary parcel. Within a year, we were able to do it, and now we believe that this parcel is permanently preserved for the benefit of the Mexican people and the plants and animals that make their homes there, and a vital threat to the sustainable aquaculture of the bay has been removed.

We still have so much to do—finishing our reserve at San Quintín, working to accommodate the changing society, climate (and sea levels!) at the bay, consolidating our reserve at Valle Tranquilo, continuing to work in the Sierra, and, if we can manage it, working on some of the other threatened habitats of Baja. But we have made a start!

There are so many people I want to thank, but to name everyone would be impossible. Our founding board helped us find our vision (and a few of us are still here!). Many scientists have guided our efforts, and have helped us set priorities. Our staff, lead by César Guerrero, is second to none, and is working so effectively to create conservation successes. Jim Riley—our lead volunteer, our visionary, and our goad—has given us so much, including a field guide to plants of our reserve. And, of course, our funders, both private and public, who have believed in our vision for fifteen years, and continue to allow us to protect my favorite place on the planet.



# BLACK BRANT

rebel...with a cause



Coming soon.  
November 2016.





# 15th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS CALENDAR

april 23

15th Anniversary  
celebration

august

Cheers to  
Nature  
Conservation

october 29

2nd San Quintín  
Bay Bird Festival

december 10

Dinner for  
Baja California

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For more information, please contact us to  
[info@terrapeninsular.org](mailto:info@terrapeninsular.org)

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# What do we actually do?



## MISSION

Terra Peninsular conserves and protects the natural ecosystems and wildlife of the Baja California peninsula.

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## VISION

The natural resources of the Baja California peninsula are protected and managed for sustainable uses that are compatible with ecological processes.

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## WHERE DO WE WORK?

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Our conservation actions are conducted mainly in Baja California, from the U.S.-Mexico border to Punta Baja, south of El Rosario, as well as Sierra San Pedro Mártir and Sierra Juárez.

In the neighboring states of Sonora, Baja California Sur and Sinaloa, we work hand in hand with other organizations to protect migratory birds and shorebirds.

- a** Baja California
- b** Sonora
- c** Baja California Sur
- d** Sinaloa



## OUR STR

---

Our conservation strategy is:

### **Adaptive habitat management**

Habitat are monitored and rehabilitated based on scientific grounds and supported by our academic researchers.

### **Land protection**

Conservation areas are designated based on ecological importance and use the most appropriate instruments to ensure their permanent protection.

### **Community engagement**

We seek to raise awareness and engage the local community to take action toward the conservation of the natural resources of Baja California.



## WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY DO?

## WHO ARE WE?

Terra Peninsular, A.C. is a Mexican non-profit organization. We are an inclusive association that does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion or sexual orientation. We are committed to preserve the natural ecosystems and wildlife of Baja California.

## VISIT US

Calle Tercera #1282 between Calle Espinoza and Calle Castillo, Zona Centro, Ensenada Baja California. C.P. 22800



## WHAT DO WE DO?

- 1 We work to conserve the natural ecosystems of the peninsula.
- 2 We protect habitats that are home to many species to ensure their presence.
- 3 We seek to maintain the successful functioning of ecological processes.



## STRATEGY

based on  
associated

on their  
adequate  
protection.

the community  
nature in



Conserving  
the Natural Beauty  
of Baja California  
since 2001

# ESCAFANDRA CRAFT BREWERY



Diving into the deepest  
flavors of Ensenada



ESCAFANDRA  
CERVECERÍA



# Glossary

## ADVC

The Areas Voluntarily Destined for Conservation (ADVC) are lands voluntarily destined for preservation of natural ecosystems, including biodiversity, environmental services or cultural and historical values. They include sustainable development strategies that benefit the functional integrity of ecosystems and contribute to mitigate the effects of climate change.

## ANP

Protected Natural Areas (ANP) are the protected areas of the country where the original environment has not been significantly altered by human activity or where the environment needs to be preserved.

## AGAVE SHAWII

This species is one of the iconic plants within the Maritime Succulent Scrub. The succulent, ovate leaves have sharp teeth. The large panicle-like inflorescence has 8-14 branches atop a 6-9 ft spike-like stalk. The rosette of leaves dies after flowering. It was the most important terrestrial food source for the Kiliwa and other native peoples. *Agave shawii* spp. *goldmaniana* has a distinctly wider, often more branched inflorescence than *A. shawii* spp. *shawii*. It belongs to the Agavaceae family.

## CONANP

National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP).

## ENDEMIC SPECIES

It refers to a species that only exists in a defined geographical location; it can have different extents, but it is usually more restricted than those areas that other species inhabit.

## MARITIME SUCCULENT SCRUB (MSS)

The Maritime Succulent Scrub (MSS) is a type of vegetation that is located in the southern part of the California Floristic Province. It is a dominant plant community on the West coast of Baja California between Ensenada and El Rosario. Due to the diversity and degree of endemism, it is considered as a biodiversity hotspot. The scrub is one of key ecosystems in the South of the California Floristic Province (CFP).

## SUCCULENTS

Succulents are plants that inhabit desert areas and that have thick leaves and stems capable of storing water in order to survive during long drought periods. An example is the cholla.

## (CFP) CALIFORNIA FLORISTIC PROVINCE

The California Floristic Province is one of 34 global biodiversity hotspots due to its variety of endemic species of flora and fauna. This zone occupies most of the state of California, USA, and Northwest Baja California. It is characterized by a high level of endemic species and for being one of the five Mediterranean-type climate regions of the planet.

## ROSETTE

Set of leaves that are found in the base of a stem and which are very close together.

## RAMSAR SITES

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and signed at Ramsar, Iran in 1971. The objective of this designation is the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

# Volunteer and internship opportunities

**T**erra Peninsular offers a volunteer and internship program to strengthen professional expertise, knowledge and skills. According to career and interests, volunteers and interns can join our environmental conservation work in any of our departments. A brief description of the best-suited careers for each department and its main activities are detailed below:



**Spanish Communication skills required.**

## Conservation Department:



### Social Awareness and Participation Program:

Sociologists, psychologists, natural resources managers, biologists and anyone interested in working with natural resources and people living near protected areas.

**Activities:** interviews, surveys, monitoring, participatory mapping, workshops, Geographic Information System (GIS), etc.



### Adaptive Habitat Management Program:

Biologists, oceanologists and related studies, people interested in monitoring protected areas.

**Activities:** biological monitoring, sampling, fieldwork, etc.



### Land Protection Program:

Environmental studies undergraduates, environmental lawyers, biologists, natural resources managers and GIS specialists.

**Activities:** support in designing and marking priority conservation areas, help in land protection through legal tools for effective conservation in priority areas, producing manuals, searching for information and shaping strategies. Good writing skills required.



## Administration and Finances Department:

### Accountants and business administrators

**Activities:** reviewing and creating administrative procedures, coordinating reception of suppliers, accounting records, etc.



## Development and Communications Department:

### Communication specialists, graphic designers, marketing students

**Activities:** promotional material design, planning communication and marketing strategies, etc.

### Translators

**Activities:** translating different documents for the website and promotional material, from Spanish into English, English into Spanish.





# How to apply?



1

Make sure there is a collaboration agreement between the educational institution and Terra Peninsular (to get credit for internships).



2

Send your resume to [info@terrapeninsular.org](mailto:info@terrapeninsular.org) and clearly indicate the area you're interested in, whether you're applying for volunteering or internship.



3

According to your profile and interests, we'll refer you with the person in charge of the department or area.



4

Interview with the responsible person of the department.



5

If accepted, hand in the following documents to Human Resources: proof of address, birth certificate, current government-issued photo ID (Mexican or foreign), and certification of recent studies completed.



6

Sign the contract (for internship).



7

Begin activities.

\*The intern will be responsible for completing the requirements for internship accreditation, as well as committing to the established schedule and activities.

# 15 Terra Peninsular

ANIVERSARIO

Nobody can change the world  
**without friends**

