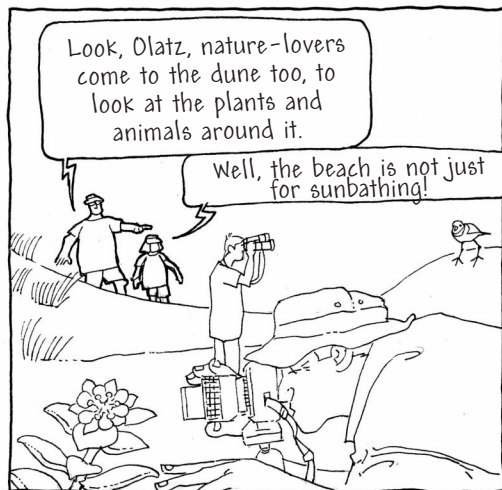


The dune stops cold wind, too, and we can sunbathe when it's not summer as well. It's like a natural solarium.

Yes, like lizards in the sun, ha-ha.



Look, Olatz, nature-lovers come to the dune too, to look at the plants and animals around it.

Well, the beach is not just for sunbathing!



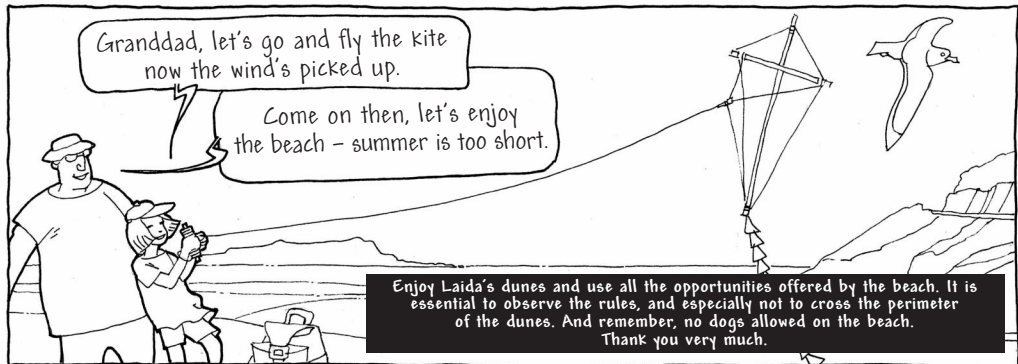
The beach is full of life now, and that's great.

And it's better because we can do a lot more on the beach.



The most important thing is not to cross the rope.

Yes, if we step on the plants we'll destroy the dune growing there.



Granddad, let's go and fly the kite now the wind's picked up.

Come on then, let's enjoy the beach - summer is too short.

Enjoy Laida's dunes and use all the opportunities offered by the beach. It is essential to observe the rules, and especially not to cross the perimeter of the dunes. And remember, no dogs allowed on the beach. Thank you very much.



THE LAIDA DUNES GIVE US LIFE

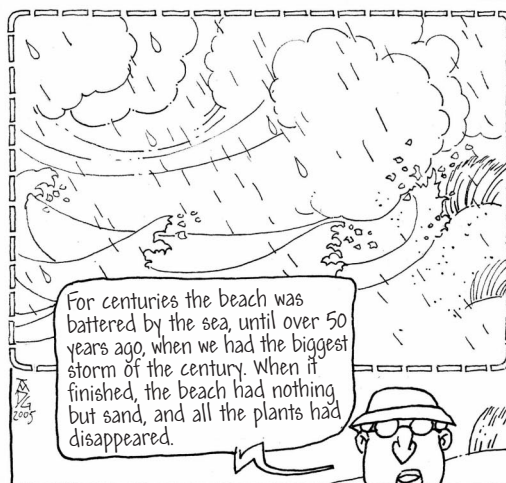
Look how beautiful the beach is, Olatz. It reminds me of when I was your age.

And what was the beach like then?

It was as big as it is now, and the dunes were so tall we played hide-and-seek there until they disappeared.

Antxon is a very special granddad. Laida is his favourite beach, where he walks in the summer with his granddaughter Olatz. One day Olatz wonders about the mounds of sand she sees around her.

Disappeared? Why, what happened?



For centuries the beach was battered by the sea, until over 50 years ago, when we had the biggest storm of the century. When it finished, the beach had nothing but sand, and all the plants had disappeared.



The beach never got back its original appearance. The wind blew over the beach, and the sand was constantly moving. Plants couldn't grow there.



Look, granddad, a rope.

Yes Olatz, a rope we can't cross. Over there the dunes are growing slowly and we can't interfere.



Yes Olatz, now we're seeing the dune grow, but work began on this in 1999. Before anything was done, they did a survey on how the wind behaved and where sand was building up.

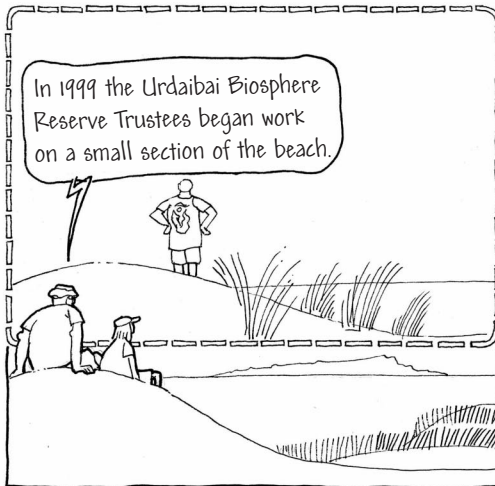
Who worked on it?





The people at Urdaibai, Olatz. They collected all the data, and drew up a plan to save the beach.

And where did they start?



In 1999 the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve Trustees began work on a small section of the beach.



They put dry osier branches at strategic locations to make barriers to catch the sand blown by the wind.

Why did they do that?



Because fine sand is blown around the wind, and when it hits the branches it is caught at the base, and so the dune gradually gets bigger.

And won't the dune get bigger without the branches?



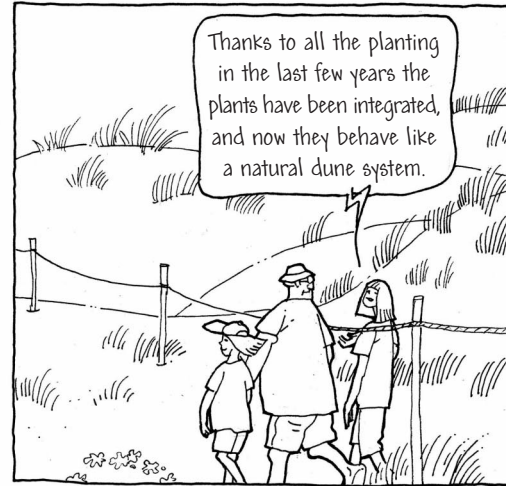
Yes it will, Olatz, but very slowly. The sand traps help to make the process faster by simulating natural processes. There was no time to lose with the state the beach was in.

Look granddad, they're planting something over there.



Hello son, what are you planting?

We're putting in sand-securing plants. The plants are very typical of sand dunes, and they form a typical dune system. By planting them we're accelerating the natural process.



Thanks to all the planting in the last few years the plants have been integrated, and now they behave like a natural dune system.



Look granddad this plant is different.

That's called sea bindweed, and nobody planted it. Like other dune plants, it appears as the dune takes shape.



Now plants that disappeared 50 years are coming back again - sea daffodils, caper spurgues and sea holly.

They're strange plants.



They're strange because they grow in an inhospitable environment, blown around in the wind with salt from the sea, on dry ground. They're specialist plants.

So they can't be taken out, can they?

No. If we take the plants away the dune will disappear.



You see, Olatz, thanks to their work we can have a bigger, more beautiful beach.

That's why we have to obey the rules.



Look how much space there is for sunbathers.

Yes, thanks to the dune there's plenty of room when the tide comes in.