

## PRESS RELEASE

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# The researcher Pedro Jordano joins the Spanish Royal Academy of Sciences as a Full Academician

- His entrance speech focused on the biodiversity of ecological interactions.



*Pedro Jordano yesterday during his inauguration as an Academician at the Spanish Royal Academy of // Spanish Royal Academy of Science..*

**Sevilla, 31 de octubre de 2024.** Biologist Pedro Jordano, CSIC Research Professor at the Doñana Biological Station was sworn in yesterday as a Full Member of the Spanish Royal Academy of Exact, Physical

and Natural Sciences. Jordano has been studying biological diversity from ecological and evolutionary perspectives for many years.

In his entrance speech, he talked about the biodiversity of ecological interactions and how species interactions shape the Web of Life. In addition, he mentioned the importance of protecting biodiversity, which acts as a buffer against changes in nature. If this buffer fails, the populations of some species can become plagues, opening what Jordano calls 'the gates of pandemics' and allowing covid, avian flu, Zika or malaria, to enter.

He also warned of the risk of new pandemics if natural environments and their biodiversity are not protected. 'Biodiversity conservation is essential to stop the spread of pathogens from natural reservoirs to humans,' says Jordano, referring to the origin of the virus that triggered the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

### **Dangerous gates**

In this way, added the scientist and new academic, the mechanisms that open these doors endanger biodiversity, i.e. climate change, deforestation, abusive hunting of large animals, intensive agriculture and livestock farming, etc. 'We have a toxic relationship with nature, we think that we will always find nature exploitable, available, with unlimited resources, when in fact this is not the case,' said Pedro Jordano.

According to the 2019 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), if this rate continues, the frequency of pandemics is expected to triple,' explains the ecologist.

### **Developing 'early detection systems**

Jordano, who was part of the Multidisciplinary Working Group that advised the Ministry of Science and Innovation on scientific matters related to Covid-19, has called for the urgent development of 'systems for early detection of ecosystem changes before they become irreversible.'

In the final part of his speech he expressed his excitement at joining the institution: 'The Academy is the place where I meet my heroes and heroines of Spanish science. For me it means an enormous honour and a great joy to which I hope to be able to correspond with my dedication to the institution'.

Miguel Delibes de Castro, in his reply, praised not only the professor's academic career, but also his dissemination skills: 'The Academy needs people capable of carrying out high-level research, but also those who can transmit and disseminate it, as well as those who are able to convince society and its leaders of the need for science, in this case, in particular, applied to the conservation of the planet'.

The event that took place yesterday at the Spanish Royal Academy of Sciences can be seen on the institution's YouTube account. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFC-4pSifmM>