

CAIS DO MOLIÇO

The biodiversity in this area is very interesting. The reed beds crossed by small water channels provide areas of abundant food, shelter and reproduction to various species of birds.

One of the most emblematic birds, and one of the main reasons why “Ria de Aveiro” was classified as ZPE (Zona de Proteção Especial – area of special protection) is the purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), a “in danger” species because its population is decreasing. Here, especially in spring/ summer, it is very easy to watch this bird flying from the reproduction area and to fishing and vice versa.

A relevant species is also the marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*). This bird also nests in these reeds and, while hunting, it flies very low over flooded areas and reeds. This species presents a clear sexual dimorphism. The male's wings are grayish with dark tip

and a gray tail. The female and juveniles are dark brown.

The Mallard ducks (*Anas platyrinchos*) and the graceful European Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) inhabit this area all year long.

In autumn/ winter we can watch the small reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) and the cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). The cormorant hasn't got waterproofed feathers. Thus, after a certain period of diving in searching of their prey, it looks for a perch where it can rest and dry its wings.

Enjoying these species inhabiting the marsh challenges our responsibility to contribute to the preservation both of these species and their habitat. Unfortunately, some of these birds become endangered species by lack of suitable habitat.

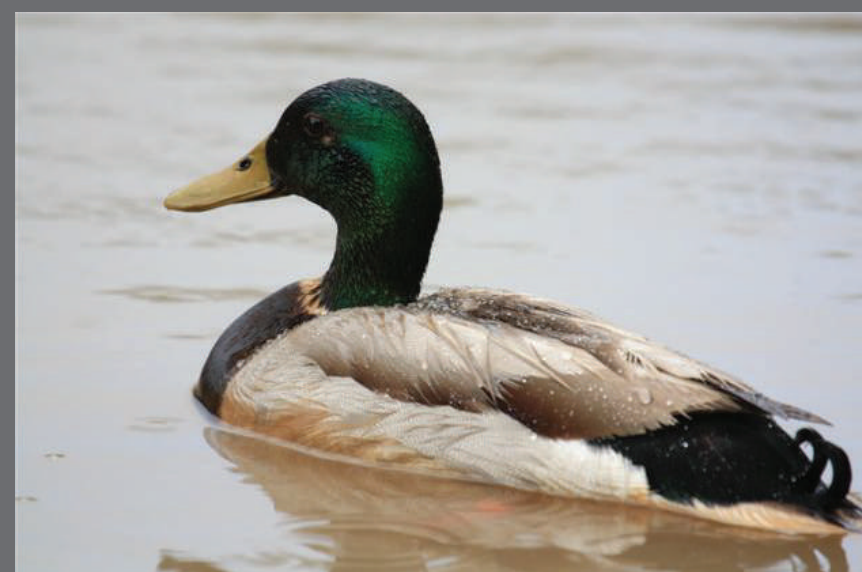
Text: Leonel Rocha
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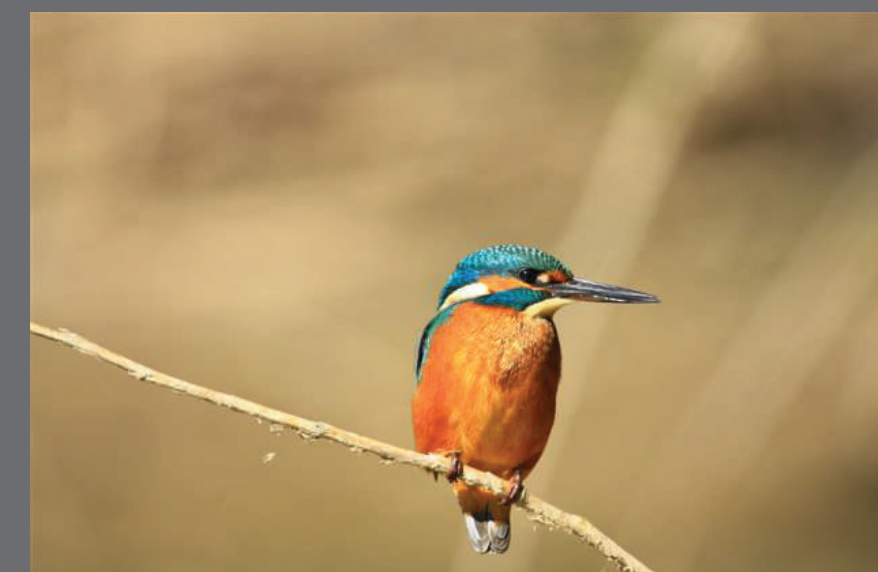
Ardea purpurea



Circus aeruginosus



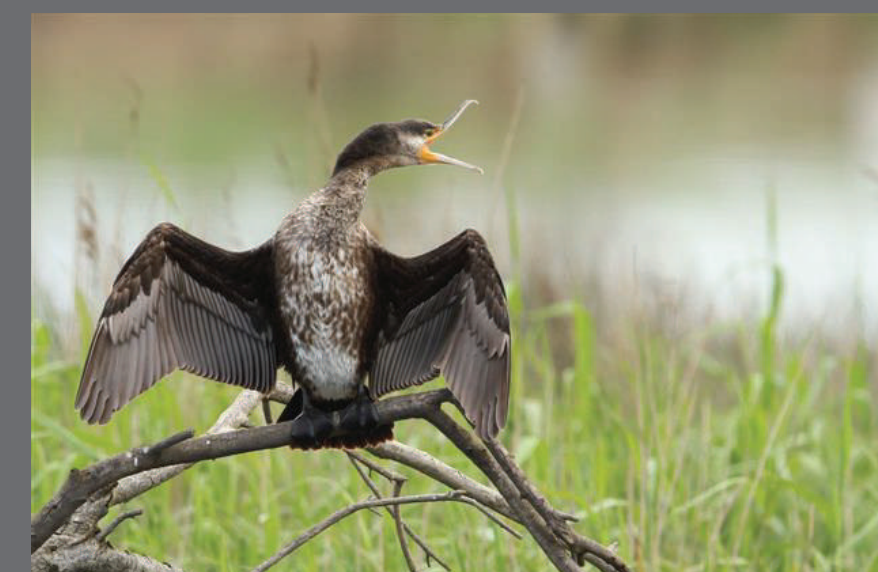
Anas platyrinchos



Alcedo atthis



Emberiza schoeniclus



Phalacrocorax carbo