

BIODIVERSITY OF THE ALCUDIA BAY WETLANDS CORRIDOR: MARISTANY AND ESTANY DES PONTS



Ajuntament
d'Alcúdia



Universitat
de les Illes Balears



RESTAURALCÚDIA



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

VICEPRESIDENCIA
TERCERA DEL GOBIERNO
MINISTERIO
PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA
Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO



Plan de Recuperación,
Transformación
y Resiliencia



Financiado por
la Unión Europea
NextGenerationEU



RESTAURALCÚDIA

The RestaurAlcúdia project aims to renaturalise the urban wetlands of Maristany and Estany des Ponts, in Alcudia, degraded by waste and urban occupation. These areas, essential for biodiversity and flood risk prevention, are protected under European and local regulations. The main actions include the creation of new flood zones; removal of invasive species, waste and debris; as well as the promotion of citizen participation. Wetlands, previously considered unhealthy, are key for their supply of fresh water, biodiversity, flood control and climate change mitigation. This project leads the effort to restore lost ecosystems and shows the value of collaboration between civil society, the business sector and government administrations.

MORE INFORMATION

wwwf.es/restauralcudia

The RestaurAlcúdia project (2023-2025) is supported by the Fundación Biodiversidad del Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico (MITECO), within the framework of the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan (PRTR), financed by the European Union - NextGenerationEU.



HOW TO APPROACH NATURE



Enjoy nature without disturbing the fauna and respecting the flora.

Respect signs and rules posted in protected areas.



Take your binoculars, water and some food, such as nuts, in your backpack.

Keep your presence as low-key as possible, avoid sudden movements and bright colours, as they scare away wildlife.

Respect the flora by walking along the paths and do not pick flowers, branches, mushrooms or fruit.



Don't move stones or make rock piles, because they provide shelter for amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates, which will be in danger when their protection is removed.

Move at a slow pace and pay attention to tracks or songs to detect the most elusive fauna.



Birds are most vulnerable during the breeding season, which is usually between March and July. Do not approach nests.

Take your rubbish with you and deposit it afterwards in a suitable place, do not leave it in nature.



RECOMMENDED OBSERVATION POINTS

MARISTANY



ESTANY DES PONTS



The recommended itineraries are those available in 2025. Once the public use plan is implemented, it is envisaged that there will be signposted itineraries, which will probably be slightly different.



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Tiger Spiders
Albufera Grasshopper

Backswimmer
Aquatic snails
Lagoon Cockle
Grooved Carpet Shell
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Black Goby

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Cattail
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Tamarind
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Red Swamp Crayfish
Blue Crab
Australian Tubeworm
Domestic Cat
Ice plant or pigface
Couch Grass
Myoporum
Prickly Pear

BIRDS

THE FEATHERED INHABITANTS



EURASIAN WIGEON

(Mareca penelope)

Winter visitor. Swims in shallow areas with vegetation nearby. Both sexes have a large white patch on each wing, which is visible during flight.

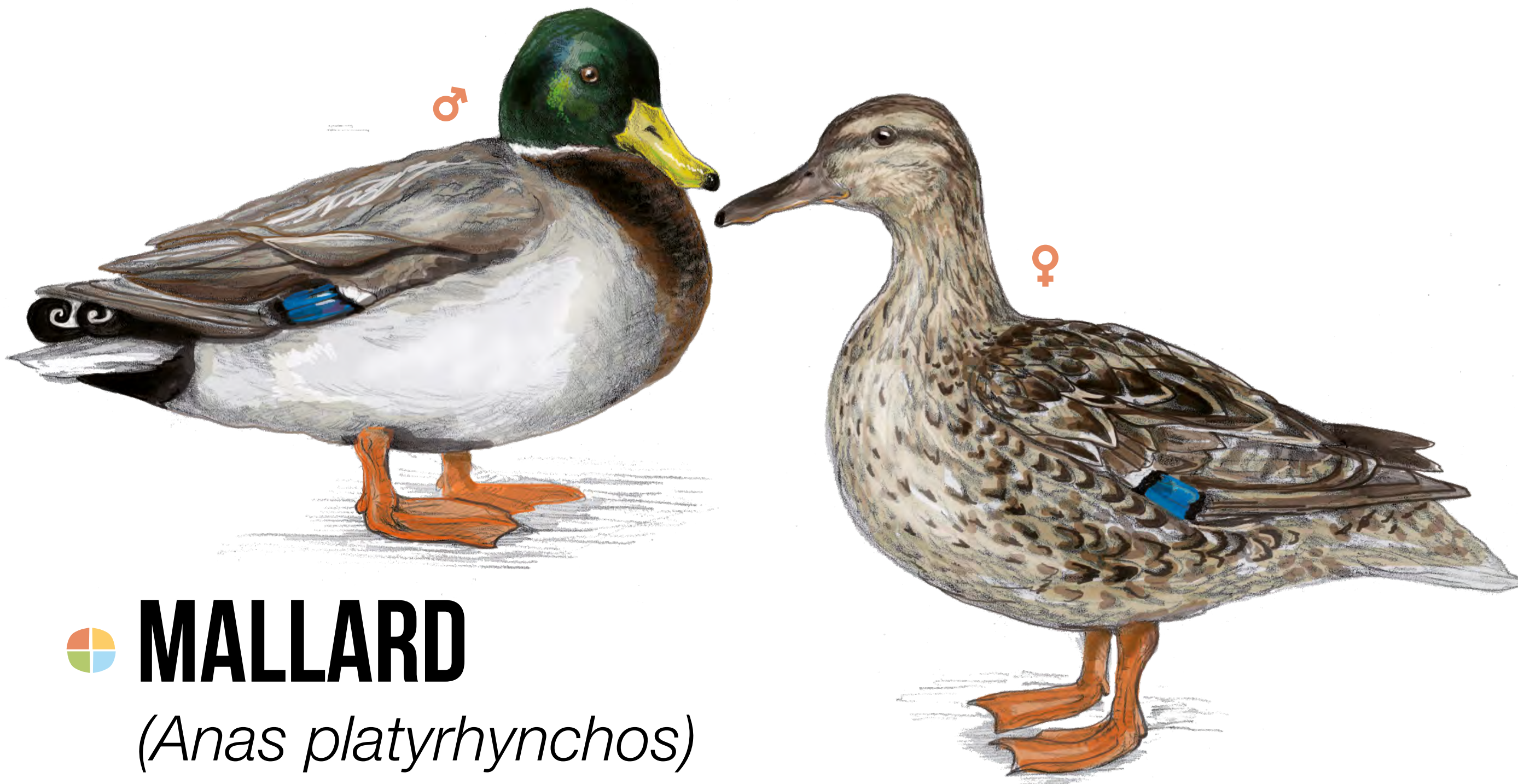


GADWALL

(Mareca strepera)

Winter visitor, though an increasing number stay year-round. In spring, it can be seen in calm waters, and in winter it might also be spotted in marshes and at the mouths of streams.





MALLARD

(*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Resident. Perhaps the best-known duck species. Can be seen in all types of aquatic environments. The mallard is the ancestor of the domestic duck.



COMMON POCHARD

(*Aythya ferina*)

Winter visitor. A diving duck often observed in small groups. Swims with its rear end slightly submerged.



RED-CRESTED POCHARD

(*Netta rufina*)

Resident, with additional winter visitors arriving. A diving duck. During flight, a white stripe on the front part of each wing is noticeable. Lives in both fresh and brackish water.



LITTLE GREBE

(*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

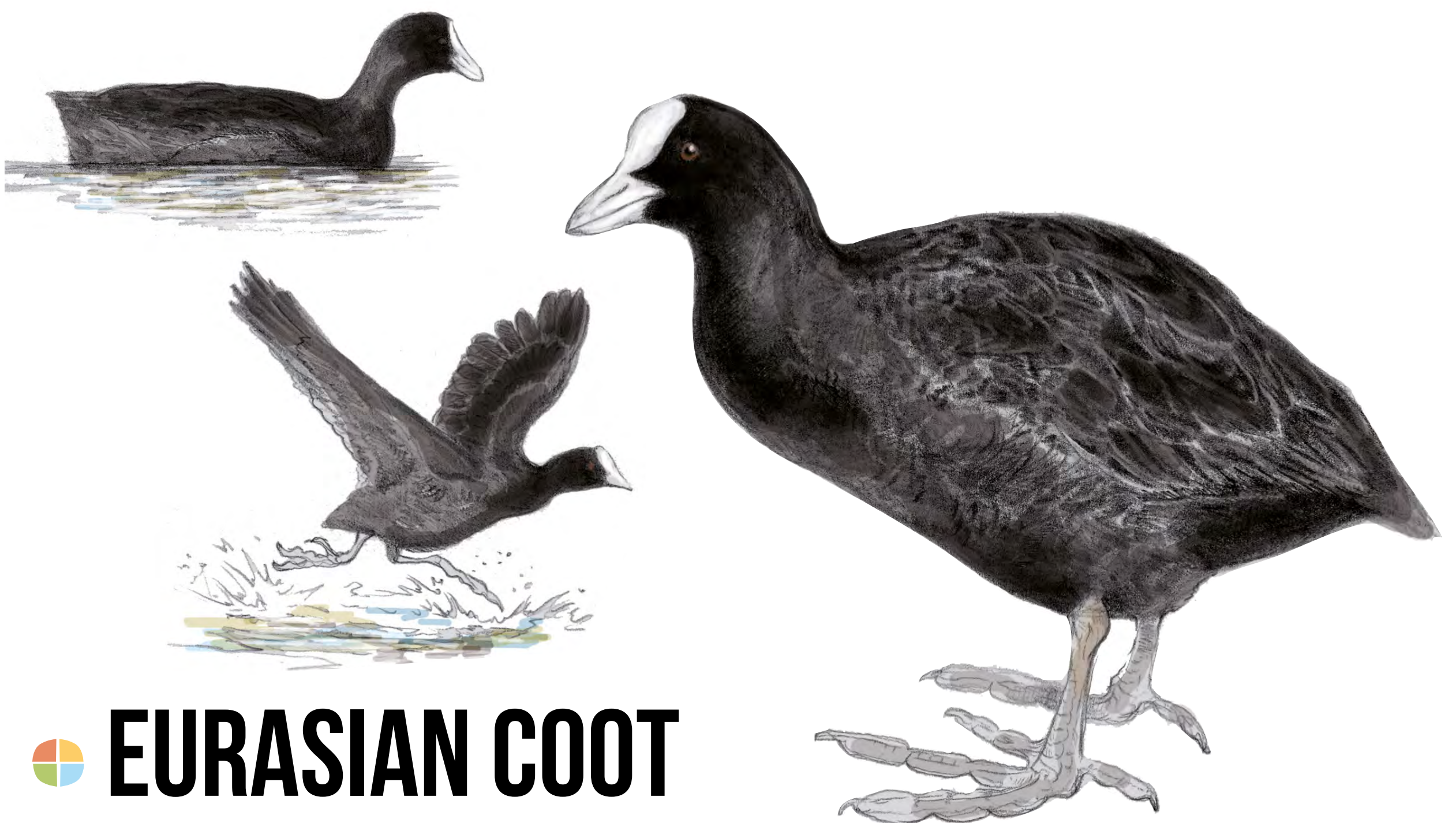
Resident. Small and compact appearance. Dives quickly, swimming several metres underwater before resurfacing at another spot. The nest is a floating platform of twigs anchored to the bottom.



GREAT CRESTED GREBE

(Podiceps cristatus)

Resident. From spring onwards, both sexes change to a more attractive colouration with characteristic groups of feathers on their cheeks. Feeds on small fish and aquatic invertebrates caught by diving.



EURASIAN COOT

(Fulica atra)

The resident population is supplemented by winter visitors. Associated with freshwater. Before taking flight, it runs for several metres along the surface of the water.



COMMON MOORHEN

(Gallinula chloropus)

Resident. Very shy, hides in vegetation. Widespread in coastal lagoons, ponds and streams. Can breed up to three times a year.



LITTLE EGRET

(Egretta garzetta)

Resident. Flies with its neck curved in an S-shape and legs stretching backwards. Moves slowly in shallow waters to catch small fish and other prey.





GREY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*)

Present in winter and spring; does not breed here. The largest of the European herons. Feeds on fish, insects and small vertebrates.



BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Resident; also winter visitors. Active at dusk and night. Feeds on fish and amphibians, which it hunts by stalking along the shore. Juveniles have a mottled brown and grey colouration.





YELLOW-LEGGED GULL

(Larus michahellis)

Resident. Very common, even in cities. Breeds on islets and cliffs, forming colonies that they defend aggressively. Has a very varied diet and is opportunistic.



LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

(Charadrius dubius)

Resident. Moves quickly by running or flying low. Lives on beach shores and the banks of streams, feeding on small invertebrates. Builds a simple nest on the ground.

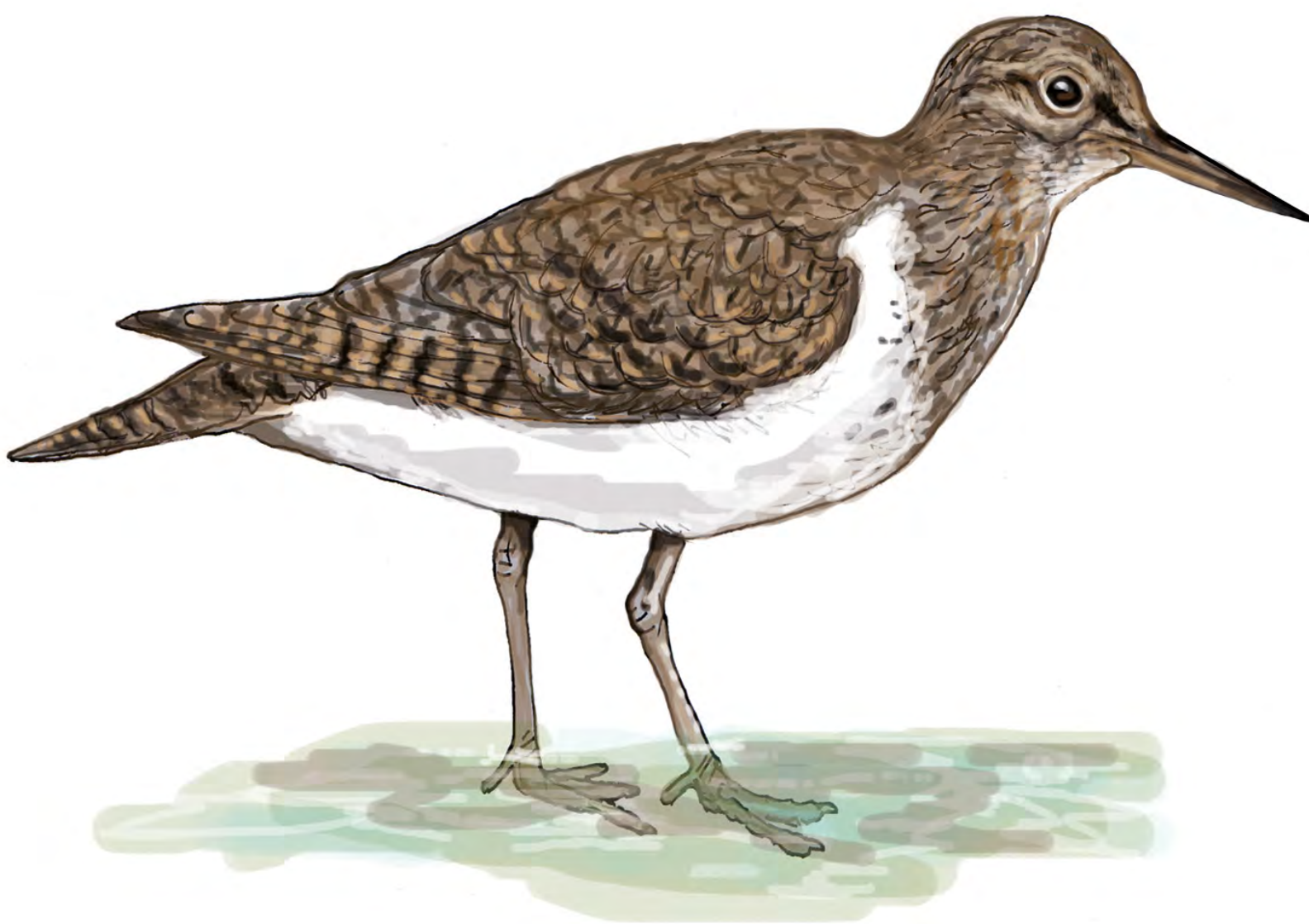




KENTISH PLOVER

(*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

Resident. Lives on sandy coasts. Builds nests by accumulating shells and stones. To defend it from predators, it feigns injury by dropping a wing and moving away from the nest.

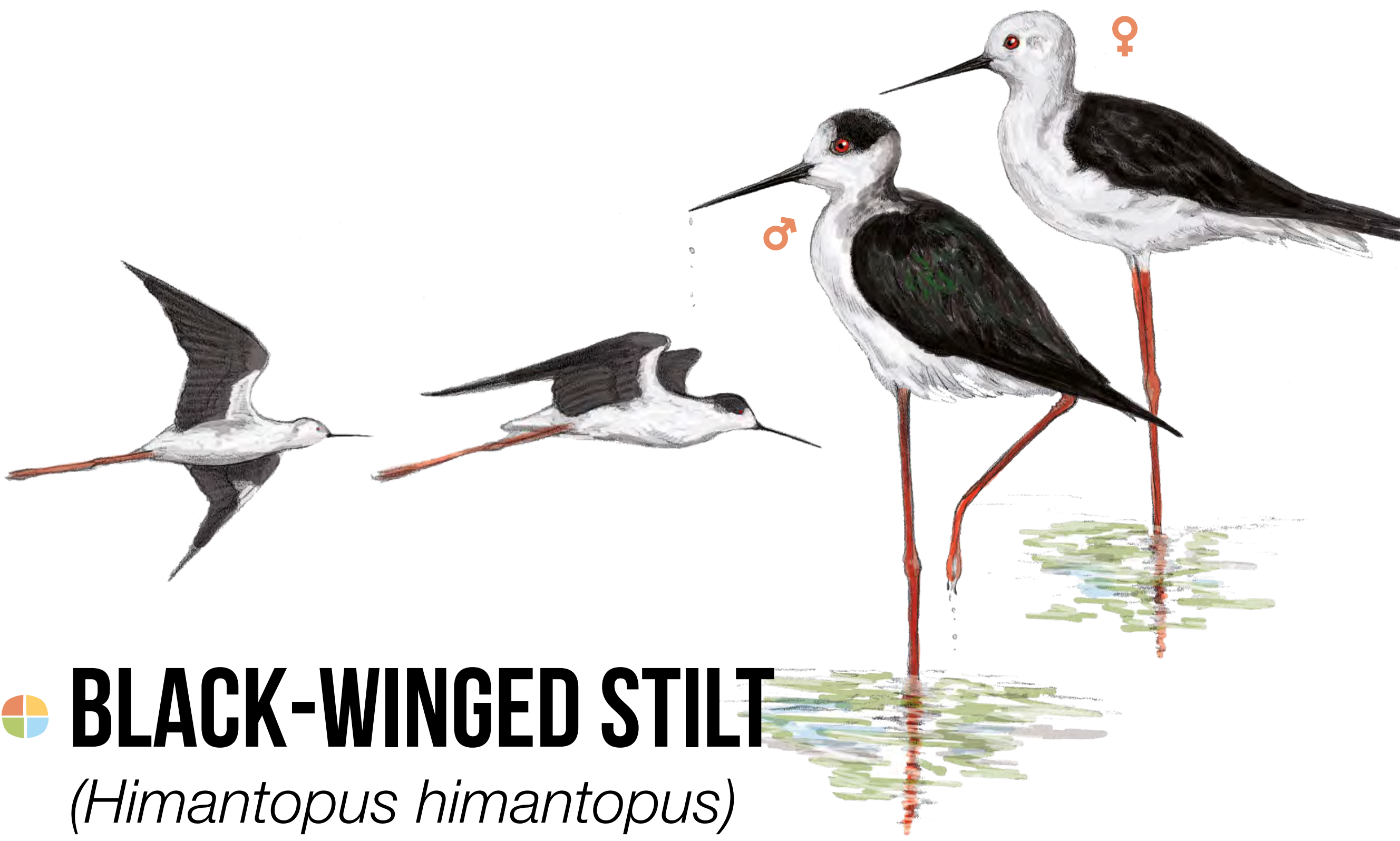


COMMON SANDPIPER

(*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Winter visitor. Feeds on small invertebrates caught in mud or on the surface of the water.

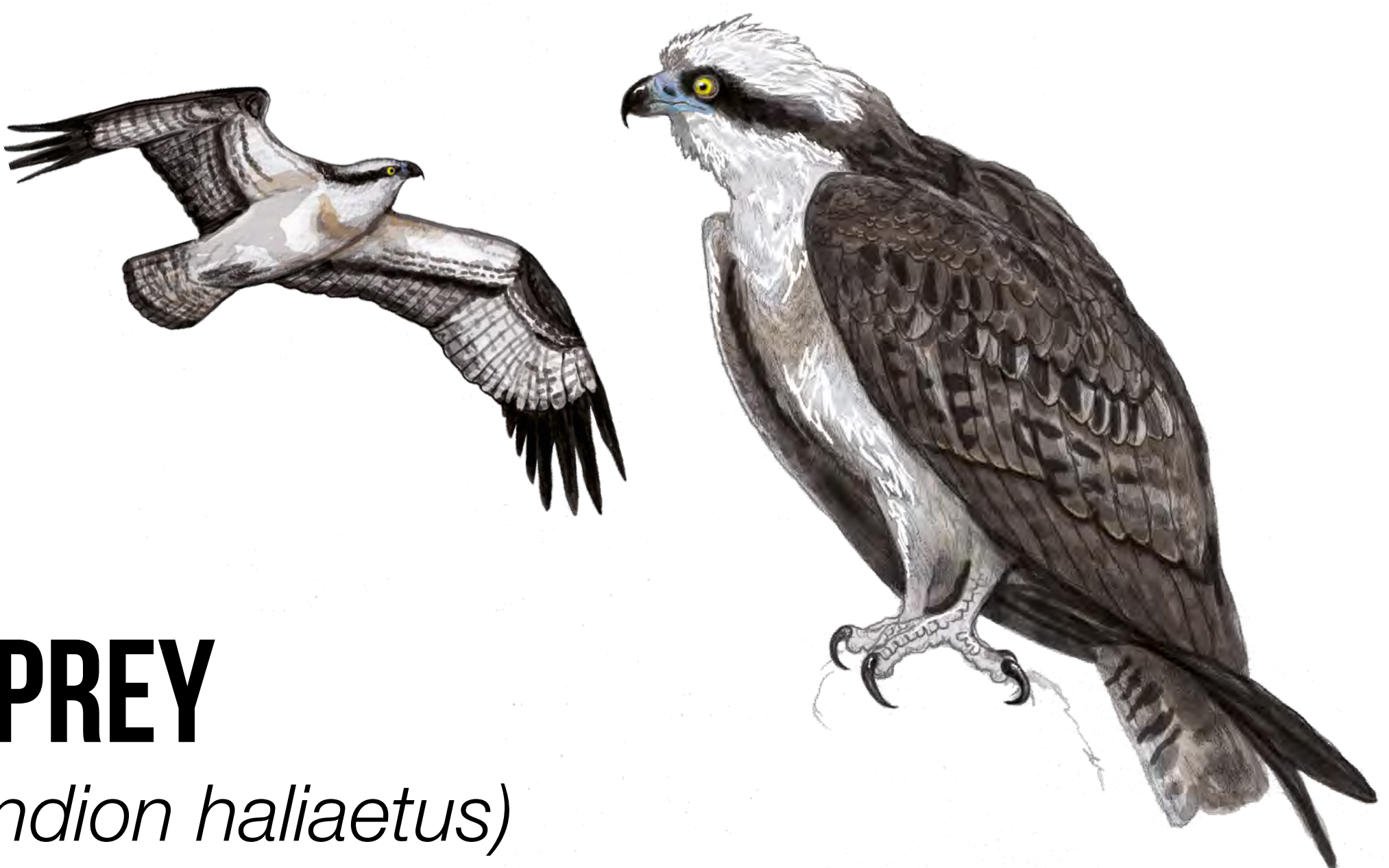




BLACK-WINGED STILT

(*Himantopus himantopus*)

Summer visitor, breeds in the Balearic Islands. Emits shrill calls when threatened. Catches small invertebrates in water or mud. The nest is a depression covered with vegetation.



OSPREY

(*Pandion haliaetus*)

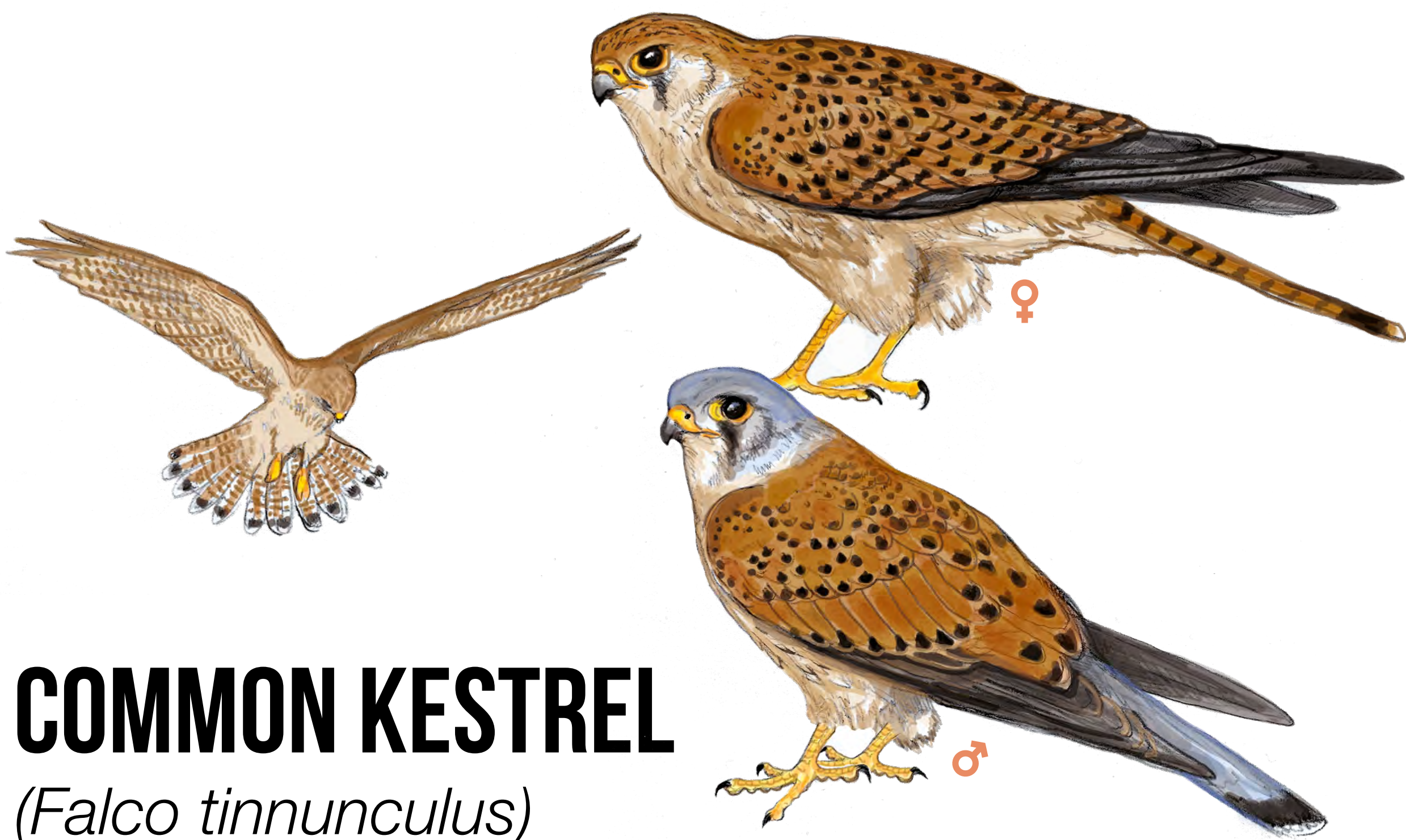
Resident. Catches fish by diving from the air. Can be observed both at sea and in reservoirs and coastal lagoons. Nests on coastal cliffs. Builds large nests made of branches.



WESTERN MARSH HARRIER

(Circus aeruginosus)

Resident. A common raptor found in coastal lagoons and ponds, which soars with its wings in a V-position. Its long legs allow it to catch the chicks of other birds among marsh vegetation.



COMMON KESTREL

(Falco tinnunculus)

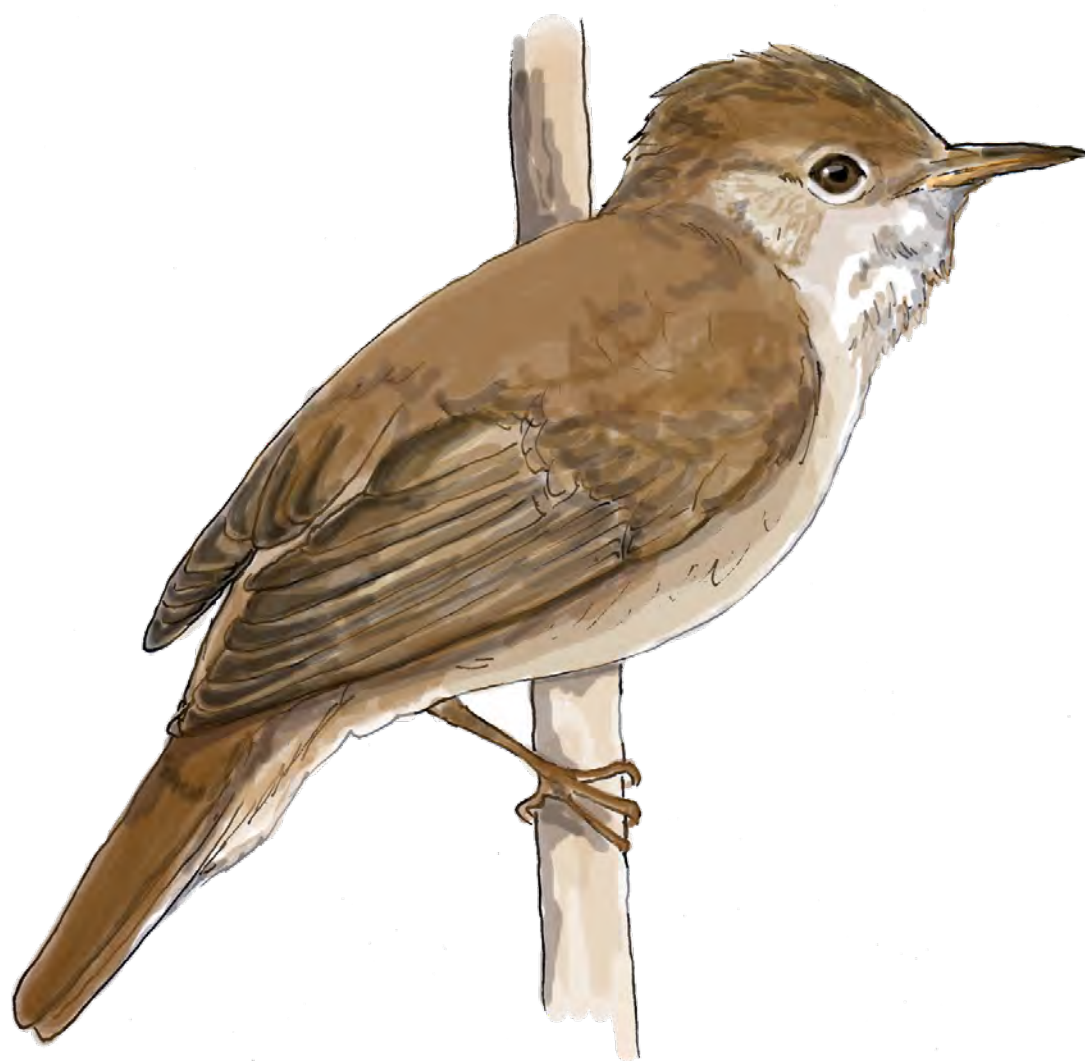
Resident. Searches for prey while hovering with its tail fanned out, inspecting the ground. Feeds on small vertebrates and insects.



CETTI'S WARBLER

(Cettia cetti)

Resident. Difficult to see but very audible thanks to its powerful song. Feeds on insects. Nests are built by the male, low to the ground, amid dense vegetation.



EURASIAN REED WARBLER

(Acrocephalus scirpaceus)

Summer visitor. Lives among reeds and rushes; easier to hear than to see. Diet based on insects and other small invertebrates.

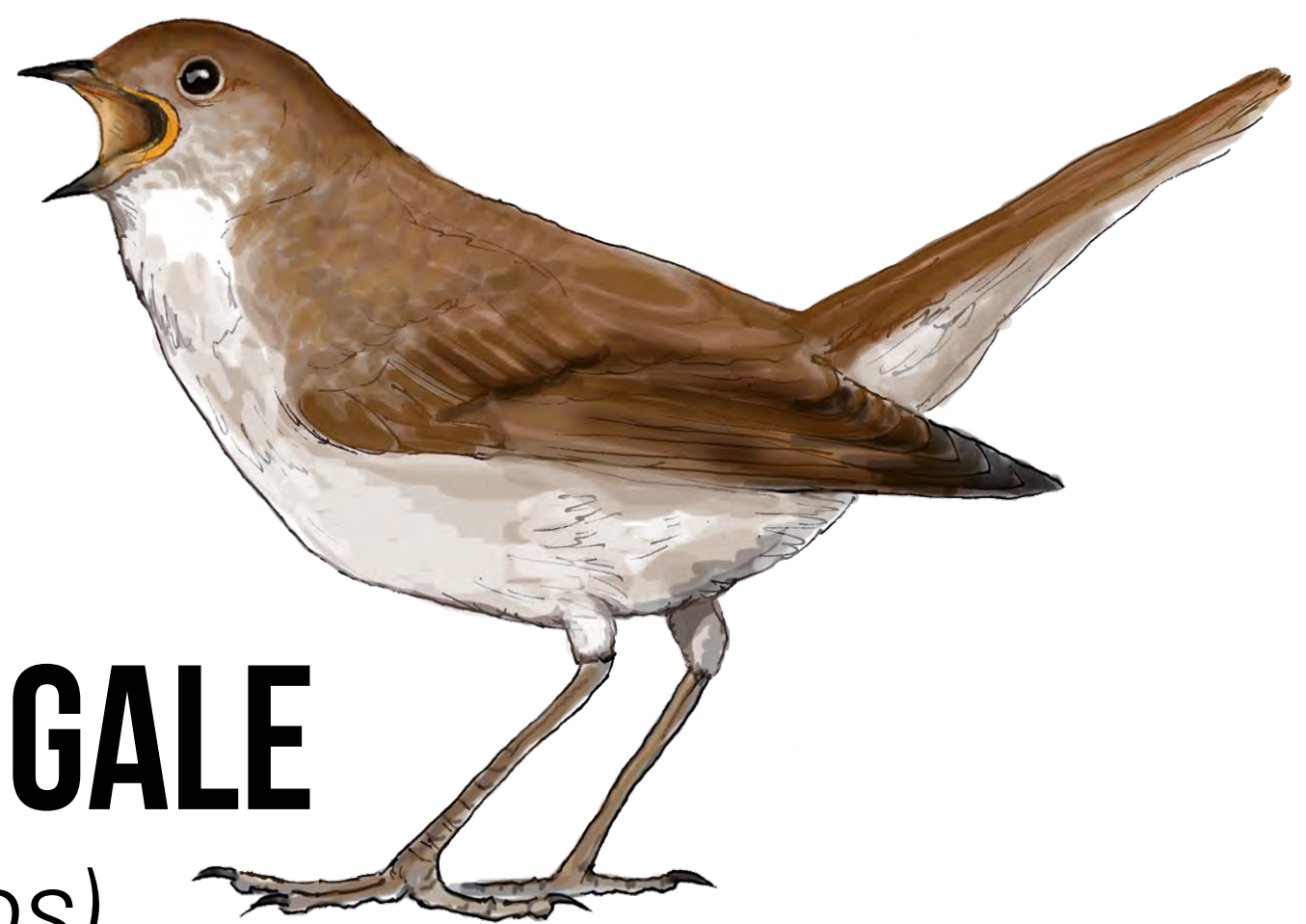




SARDINIAN WARBLER

(Curruca melanocephala)

Resident. Can be observed in shrubs, making short flights. Feeds on small insects, as well as fruit in autumn and winter. One of the most common birds, found even in urban areas.

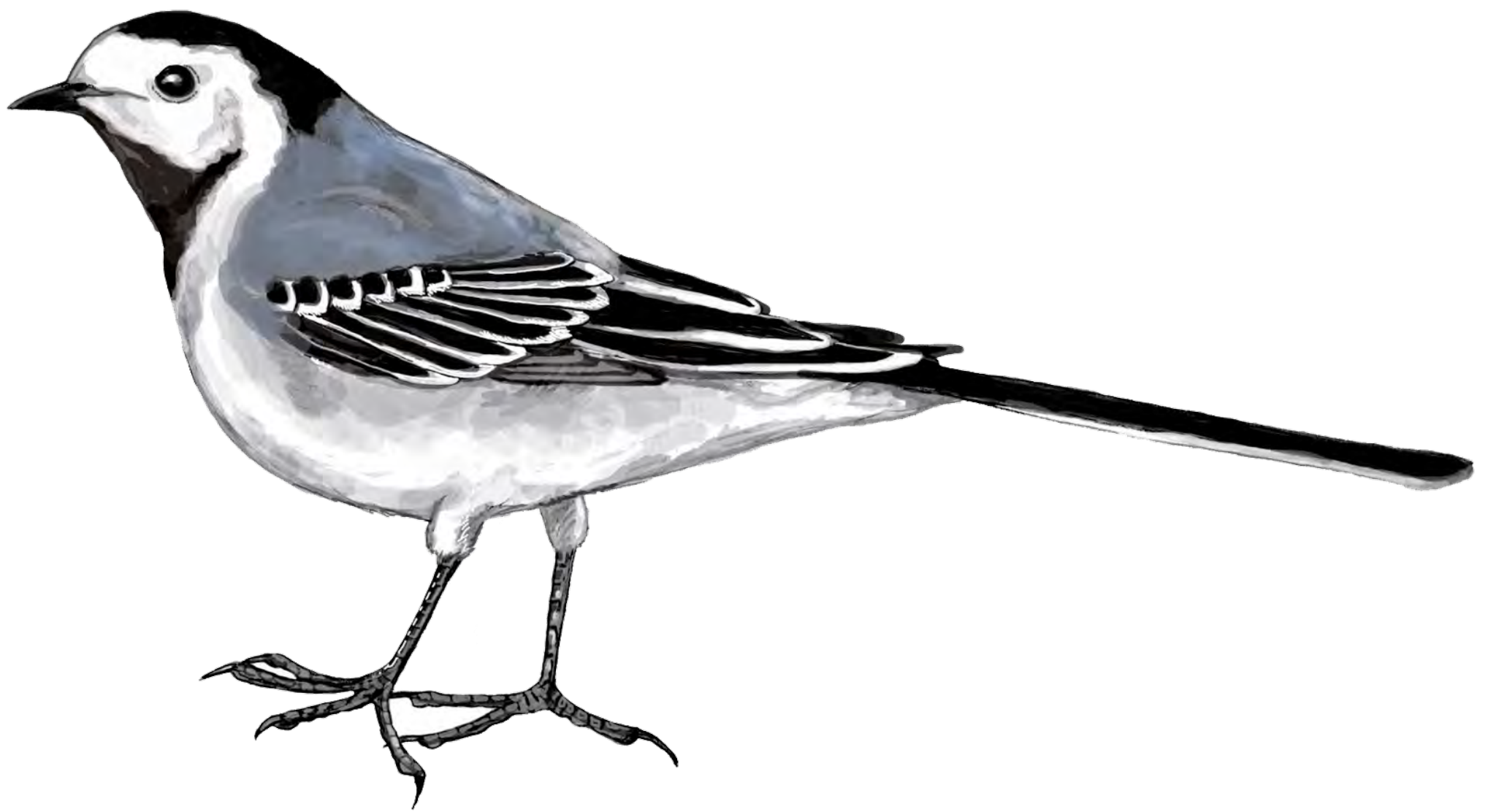


COMMON NIGHTINGALE

(Luscinia megarhynchos)

Summer visitor. Its powerful song, which it also emits at night, is very melodic. Feeds on insects captured in flight or found among vegetation or on the ground.





WHITE WAGTAIL

(Motacilla alba)

Winter visitor. Prefers waterlogged areas and road edges, moving its long tail up and down. Feeds by pecking small insects from the ground. Sleeps in communal roosts.



COMMON KINGFISHER

(Alcedo atthis)

Winter visitor. Small bird that feeds on fish, tadpoles and insect larvae which it catches in water, launching itself like an electric-blue projectile.



TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

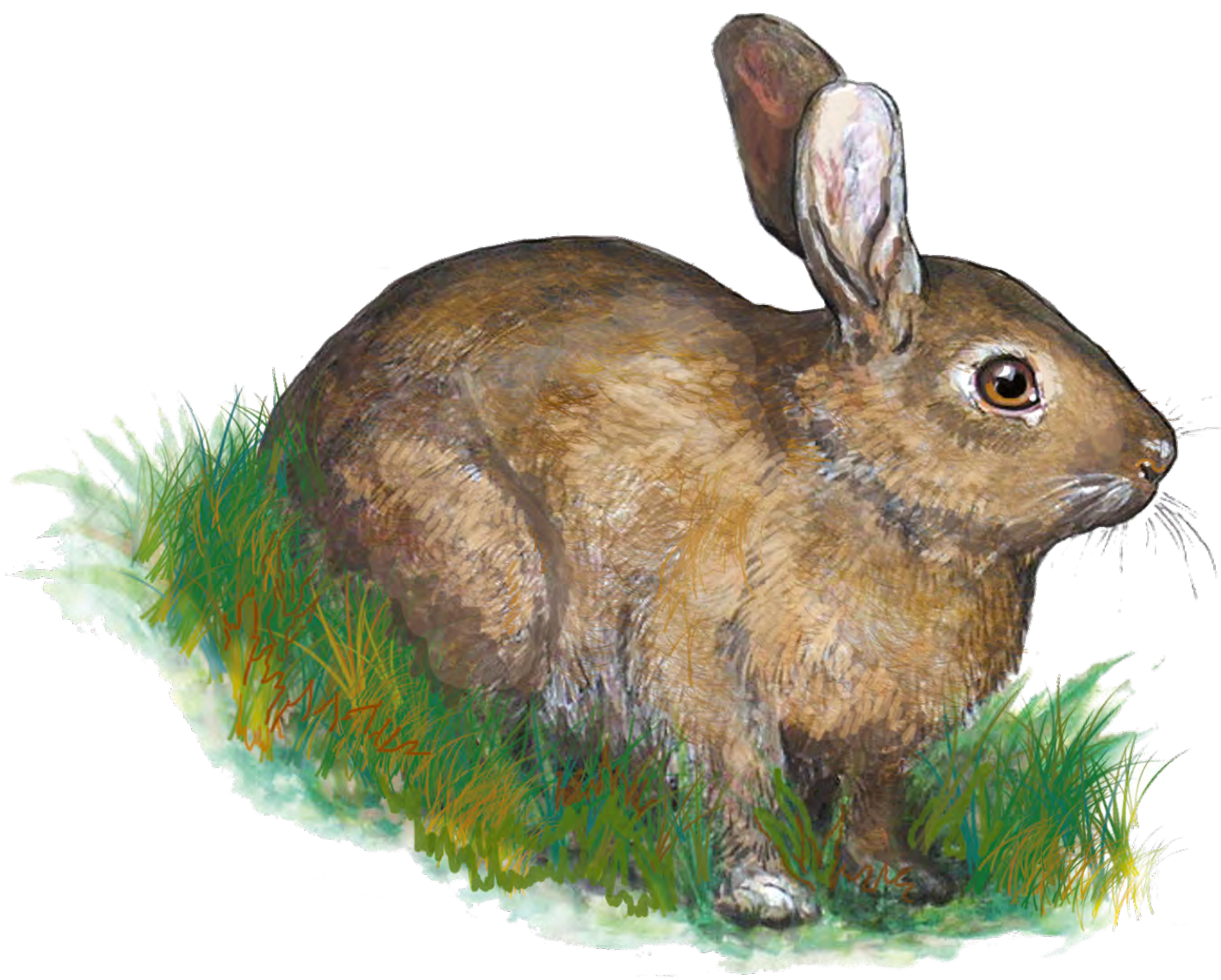
THE INCONSPICUOUS FAUNA



ALGERIAN HEDGEHOG

(Atelerix algirus)

The only hedgehog species living in the Balearic Islands. When threatened, it curls up into a ball of spines. It's primarily nocturnal. Feeds on insects, snails, fruits and carrion.



EUROPEAN RABBIT

(Oryctolagus cuniculus)

A shy animal which moves in small hops, unless fleeing when it runs. Builds burrows. Feeds on plants and fruits. Mainly active at dusk and during the night.





COMMON PIPISTRELLE

(Pipistrellus pipistrellus)

One of the most common bats. Rapid flight, changing direction quickly. Takes shelter in crevices, both in roofs and tree trunks. Feeds on mosquitoes, small moths and other insects that it catches in flight.



KUHl'S PIPISTRELLE

(Pipistrellus kuhlii)

Similar to the Common Pipistrelle, differing only in small details that are only visible up close. It's also an excellent insectivore and has learned to hunt insects attracted to streetlights.



AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

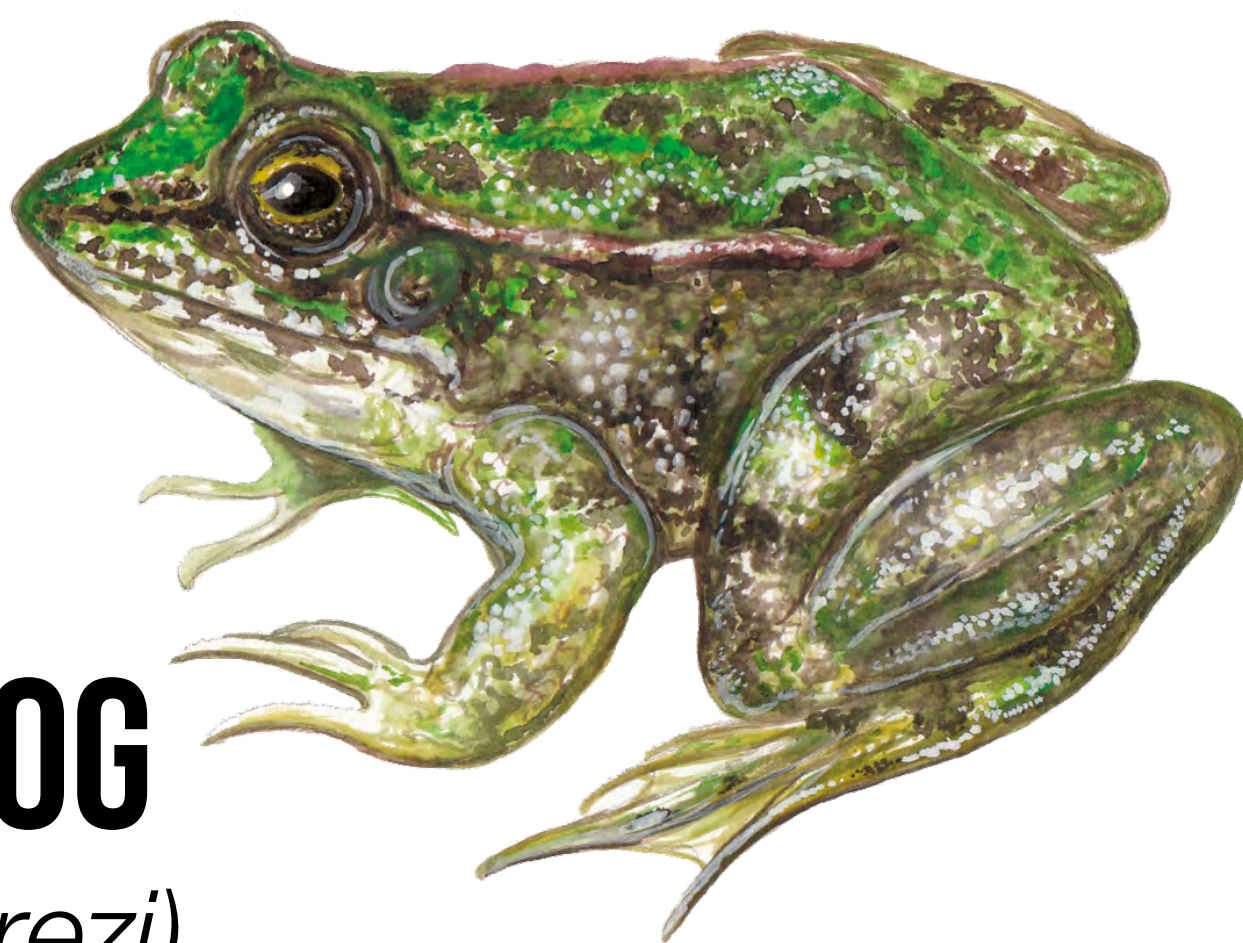
SURVIVORS FROM THE PAST



BALEARIC GREEN TOAD

(Bufotes balearicus)

The males, which are smaller, emit a high-pitched vibratory call that resembles that of an insect. Comes out at night to feed. Only submerges in water to mate, producing long gelatinous cords with fertilized eggs.

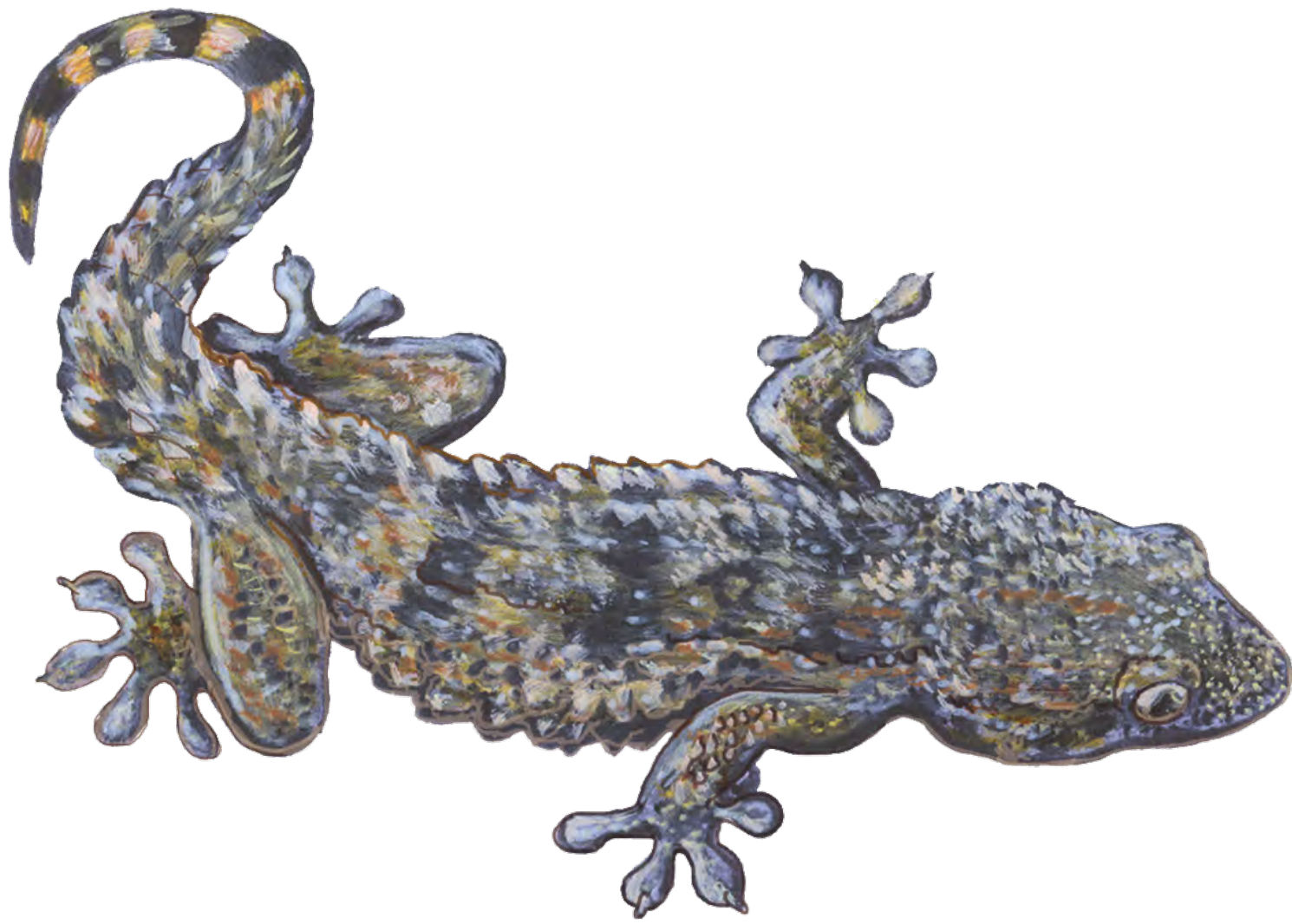


PEREZ'S FROG

(Pelophylax perezi)

Found in any waterlogged area, stream or pond. Good swimmer. Its colouration ranges from green to brown, with or without dorsal spots. The characteristic call of the male can be heard from a long distance.





COMMON WALL GECKO

(Tarentola mauritanica)

Its colouration changes depending on the surface on which it is found. Lives in rock crevices, under stones and logs, becoming active at night to hunt insects. During the day it sunbathes but hides quickly when it becomes aware of our presence.



VIPERINE WATER SNAKE

(Natrix maura)

A snake that is adapted to aquatic environments. Swims quickly by undulating its body. Preys on fish and frogs. It rests on the shore, out of the water, and is completely harmless.



INVERTEBRATES

THE GREAT FORGOTTEN ONES

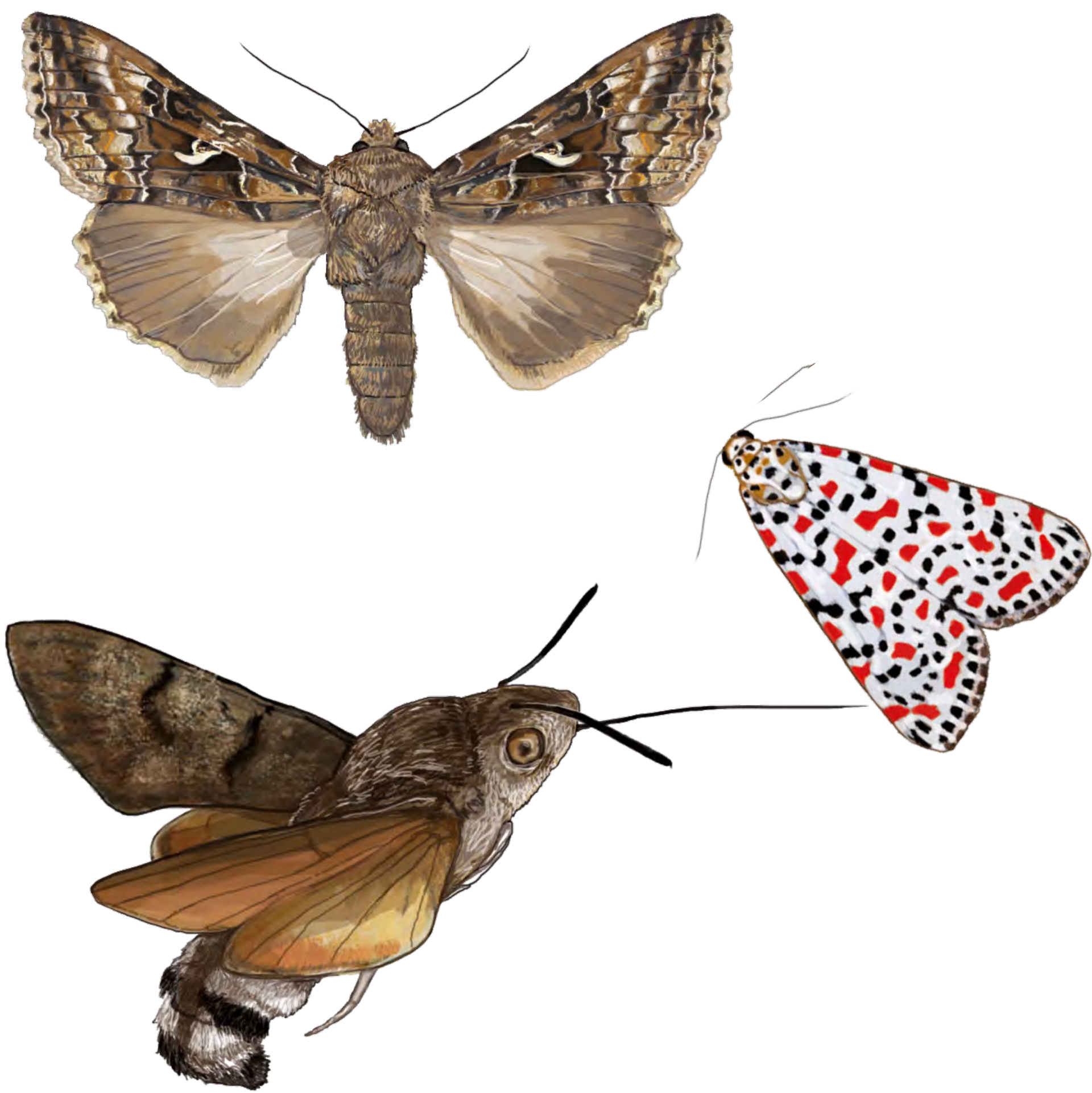


DIURNAL BUTTERFLIES

(Rhopalocera Lepidoptera)

Flying over vegetation and sipping from flowers, we can observe several butterfly species such as the **Speckled Wood** (*Pararge aegeria*), the **Old World Swallowtail** (*Papilio machaon*), the **Painted Lady** (*Vanessa cardui*), the **Cleopatra** (*Gonepteryx cleopatra*), the **Small White** (*Pieris rapae*), or the small but beautiful **African Common Blue** (*Polyommatus celina*).





NOCTURNAL BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

(Heterocera Lepidoptera)

Despite being called ‘nocturnal’, as they are not true butterflies, many of them have diurnal habits, such as the **Hummingbird Hawk-Moth** (*Macroglossum stellatarum*), the **Silver Y moth** (*Autographa gamma*), or the **Crimson-Speckled Flunkey** (*Utetheisa pulchella*). Their respective caterpillars live on their specific food plants.





DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

(Odonata)

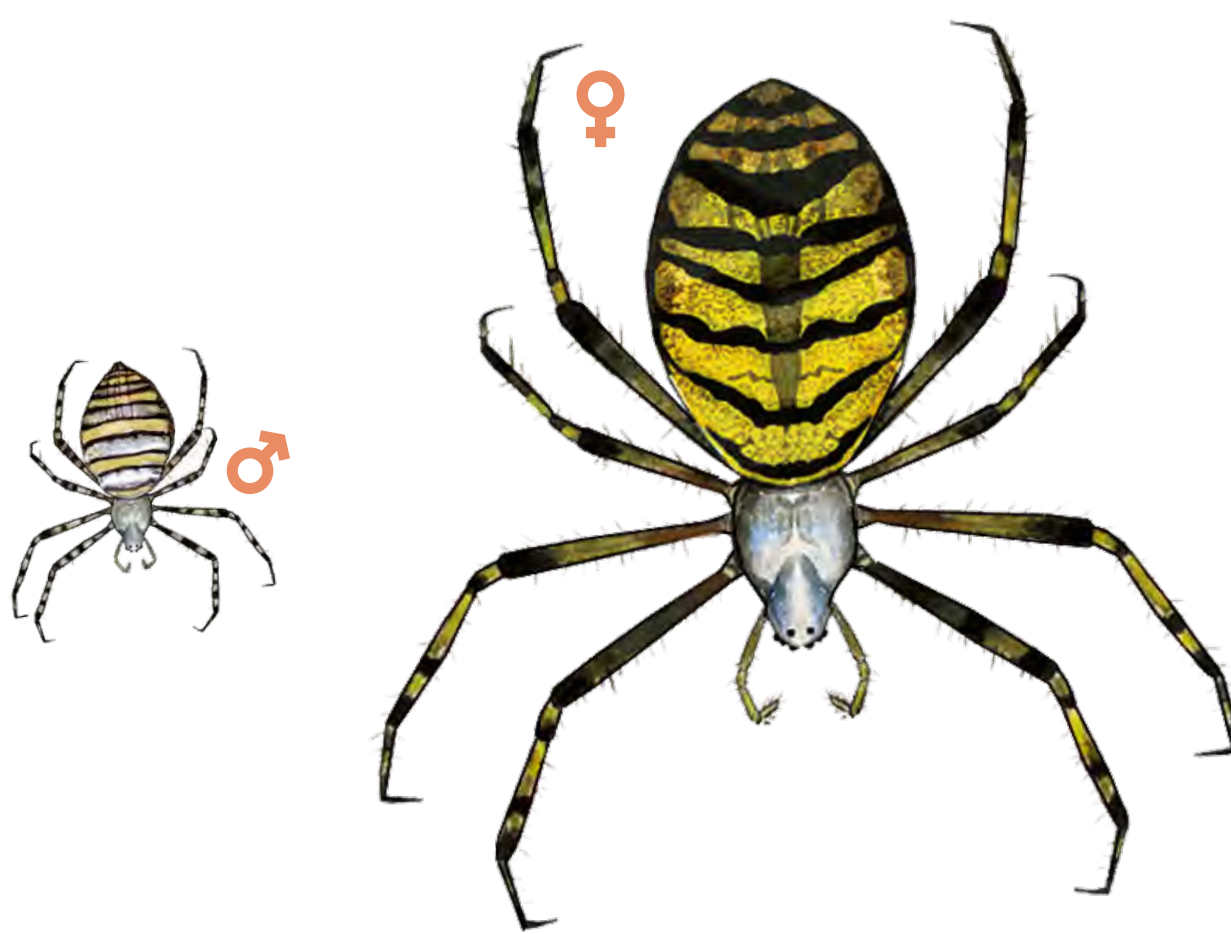
Flying over the water surface or remaining on the lookout on vegetation, we can see the **Emperor Dragonfly** (*Anax imperator*), the **Common Darter** (*Sympetrum striolatum*) and the **Scarlet Dragonfly** (*Crocothemis erythraea*). The **Blue-Tailed Damselfly** (*Ischnura elegans*) is much smaller and more delicate.





AQUATIC BEETLES

Gyrinus beetles move quickly in groups on the water surface. However, others come to the surface to collect air before submerging again. Some species are predatory, and others are vegetarian.

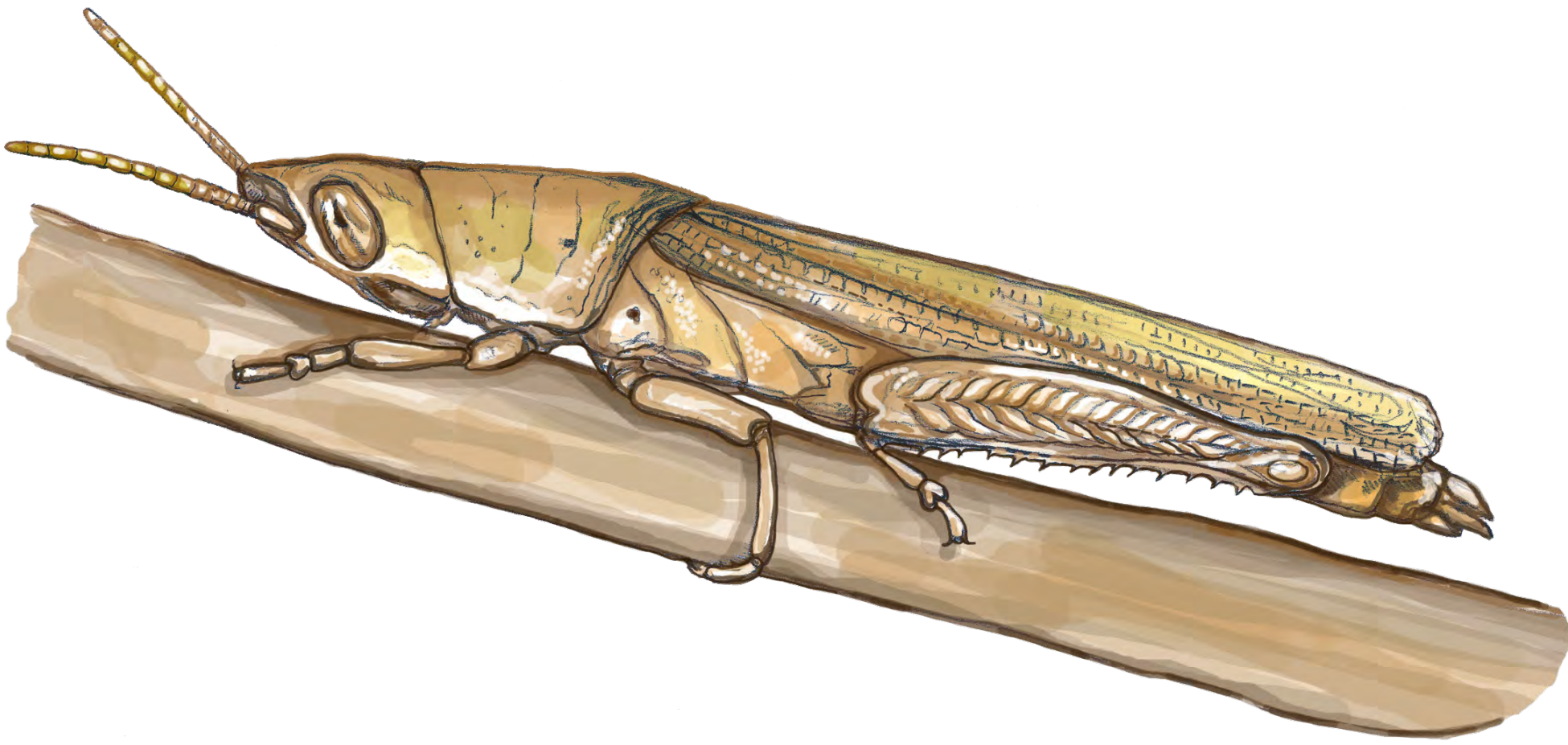


TIGER SPIDERS

(Argiope trifasciata and A. bruennichi)

Weave a large and resistant web. The specimens usually seen are females, while males are tiny and normally found hidden in the corners of the web. They are harmless.

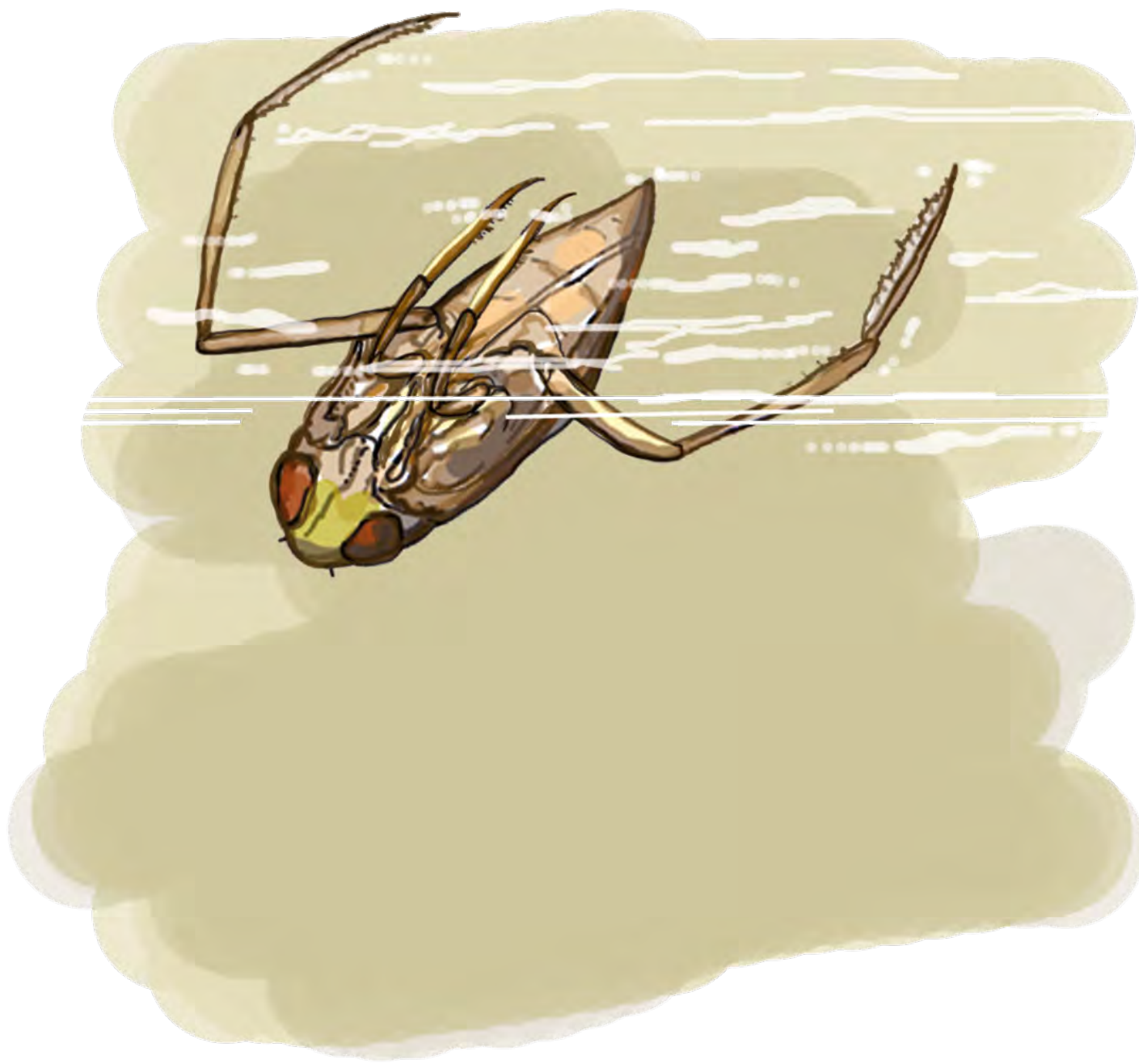




ALBUFERA GRASSHOPPER

(Tropidopola cylindrica)

Relies on its camouflage. If it feels threatened, it displays a reddish colouration on the inner part of each femur

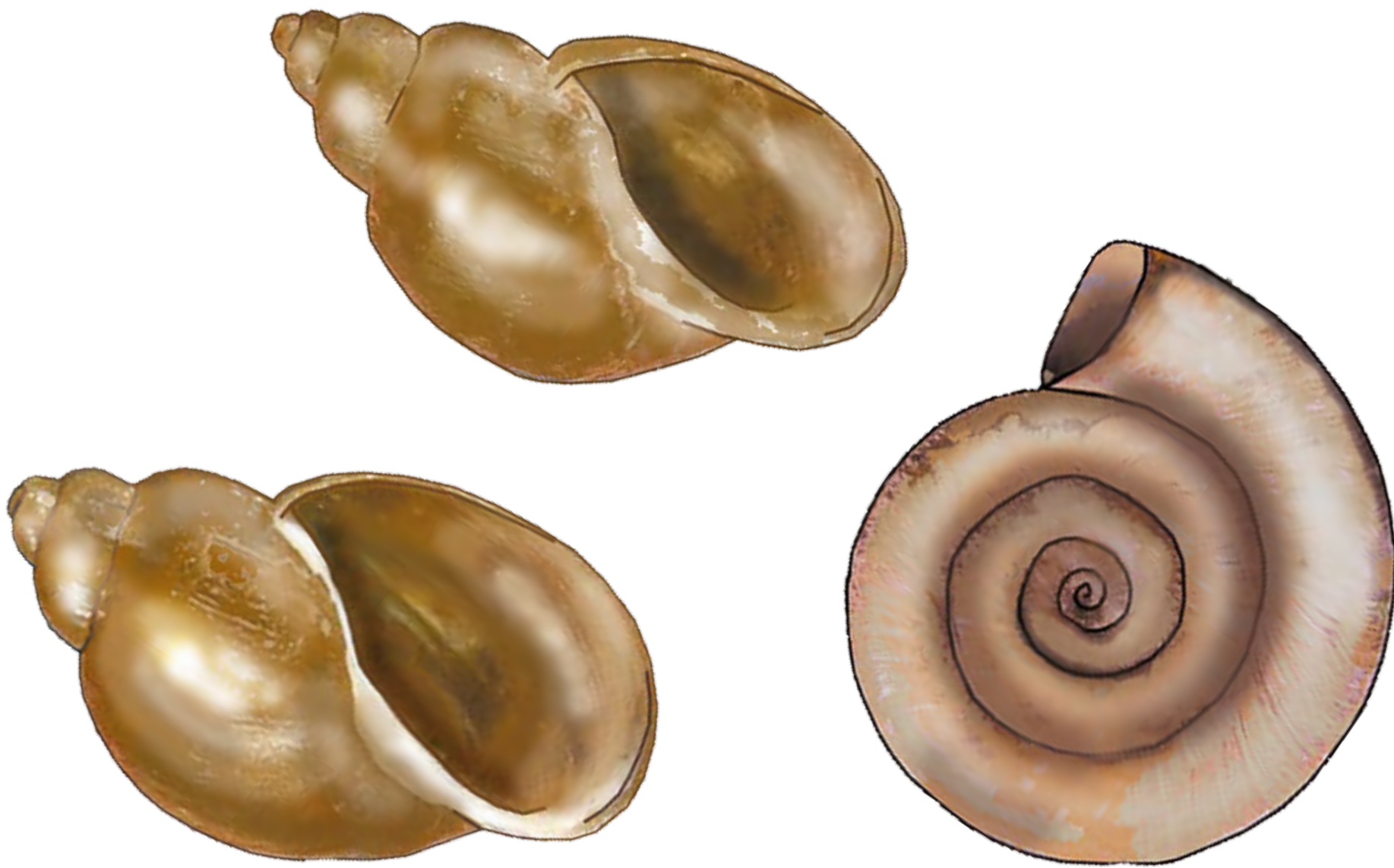


BACKSWIMMER

(Notonecta maculata)

Common in all types of reservoirs, ponds and coastal lagoon channels. Absorbs fluids from other insects it preys on. Swims on its back.





🌈 AQUATIC SNAILS

There are two types: those that breathe using gills and terrestrial snails that have adapted to the aquatic environment and live submerged. Some can become a plague. They feed on algae and plants.



🌈 LAGOON COCKLE

(Cerastoderma glaucum)

This bivalve is typical of sandy coasts, where it lives buried under the sand and feeds by filtration. The valves have distinct rays with convex ribs.

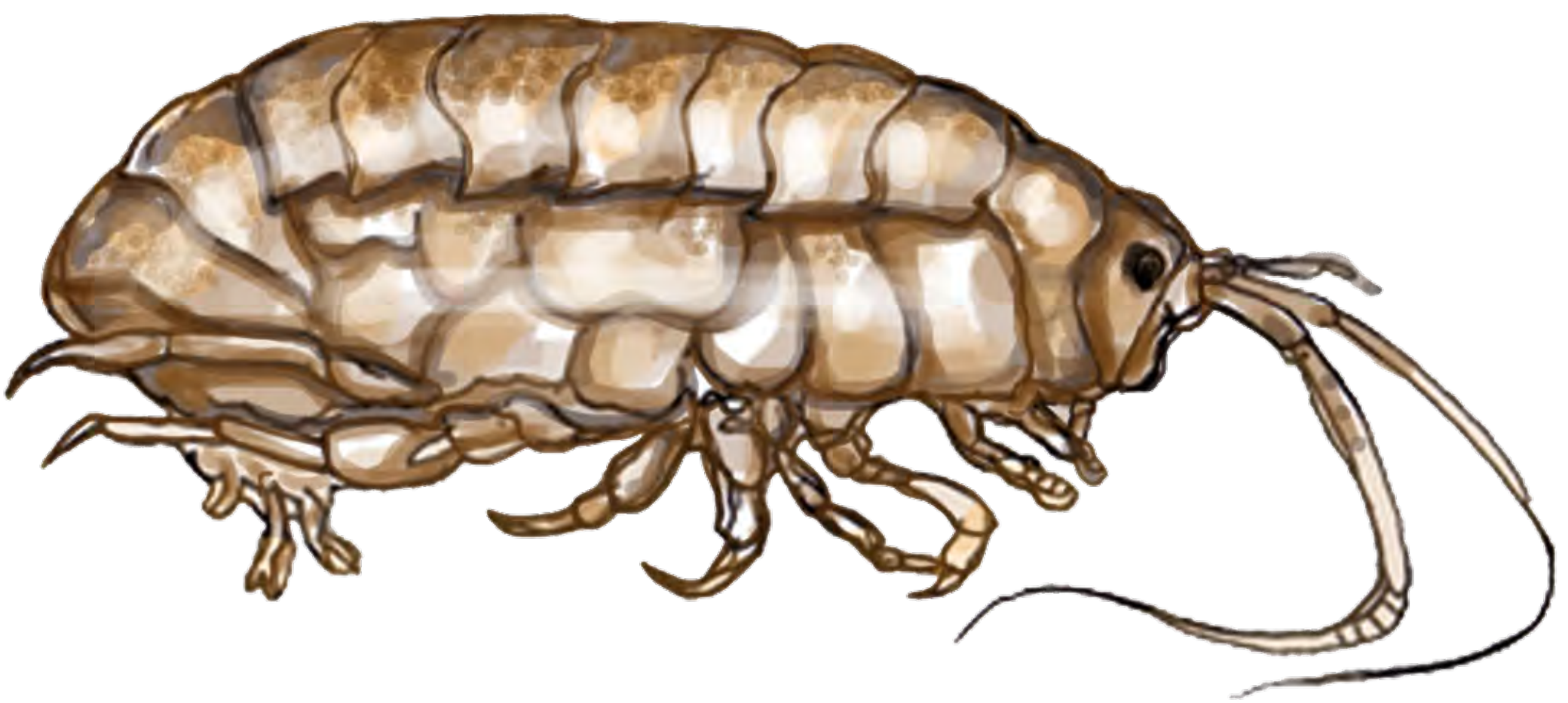




GROOVED CARPET SHELL

(Ruditapes decussatus)

Has very variable colouration, with bands and lines. Lives buried, excavating galleries. Found on sandy shores and at the bottom of marshes.

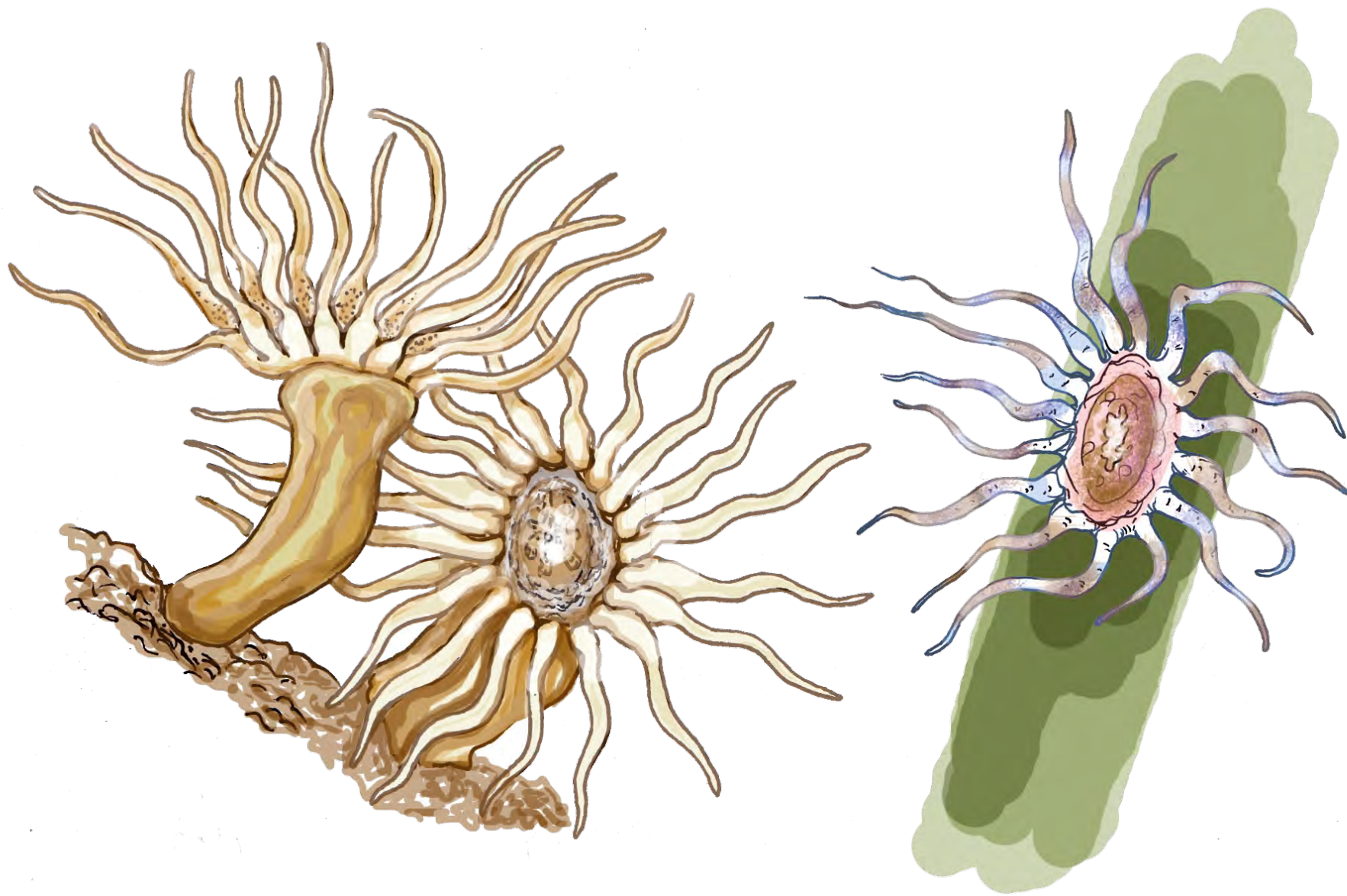


SAND HOPPER

(Talitrus saltator)

Found among the remnants of Posidonia seagrass and sand accumulated on the shore. Moves by jumping. Feeds on algae. As sea levels rise, it colonises inland areas.





BROWN SEA ANEMONE AND COMMON ANEMONE

(Aiptasia diaphna / Bunodeopsis strumosa)

The brown sea anemone lives attached to the substrate, and forms colonies in shallow water. The smaller common anemone lives on plants and algae and buries itself in the seabed in winter.



BRYOZOAN

(Zoobotyron verticillatum)

Forms large colonies creating a bush-like structure that serves as a refuge for many other organisms. Found in shallow waters, on hard substrates and floating objects. Feeds by filtering plankton.

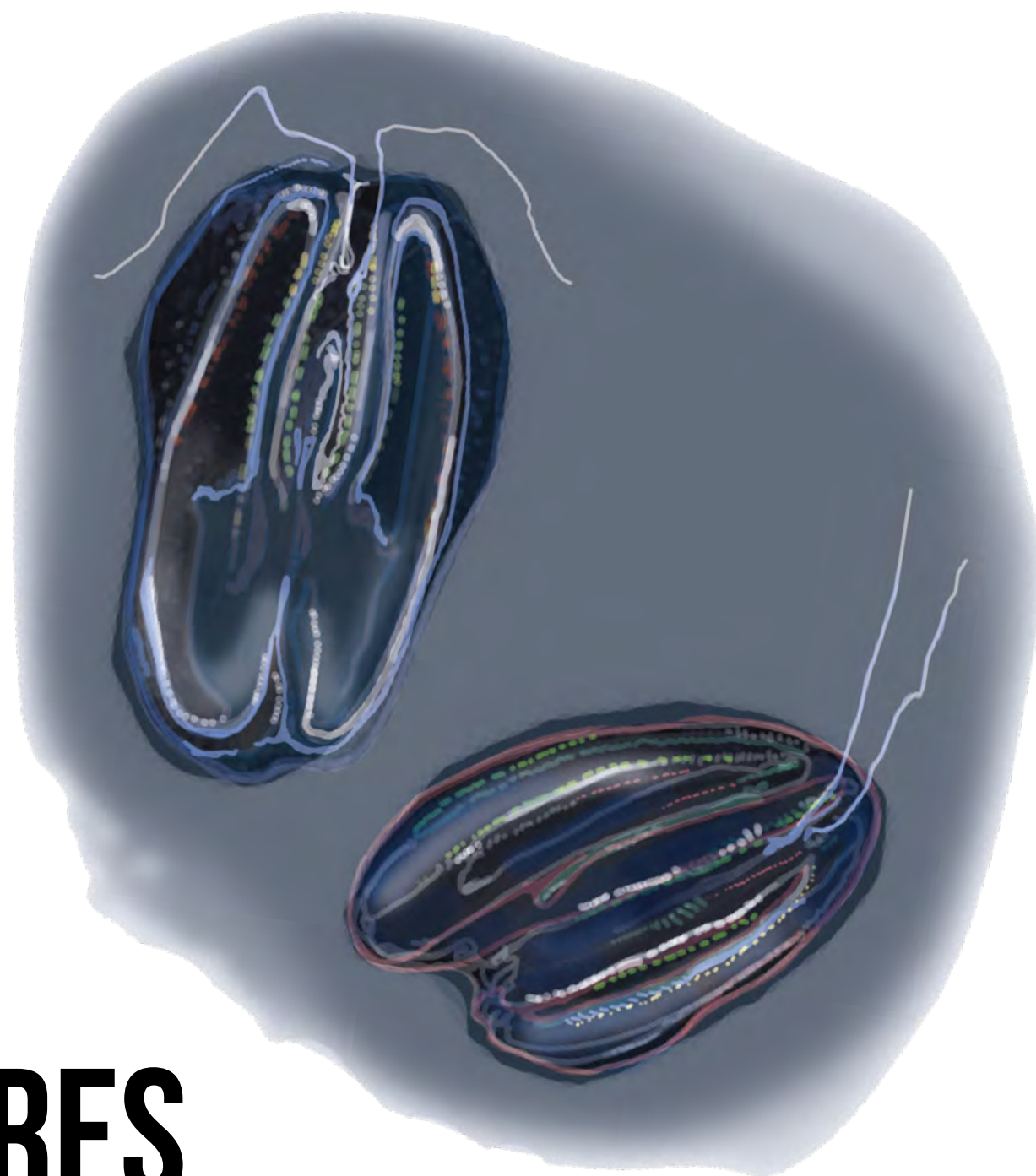




ELEGANT ENCRUSTING WORM

(Hydroides elegans)

This orange worm lives inside a white and brittle calcareous tube. Forms colonies on hard substrates. Lives in shallow waters, tolerates high temperatures and pollution.



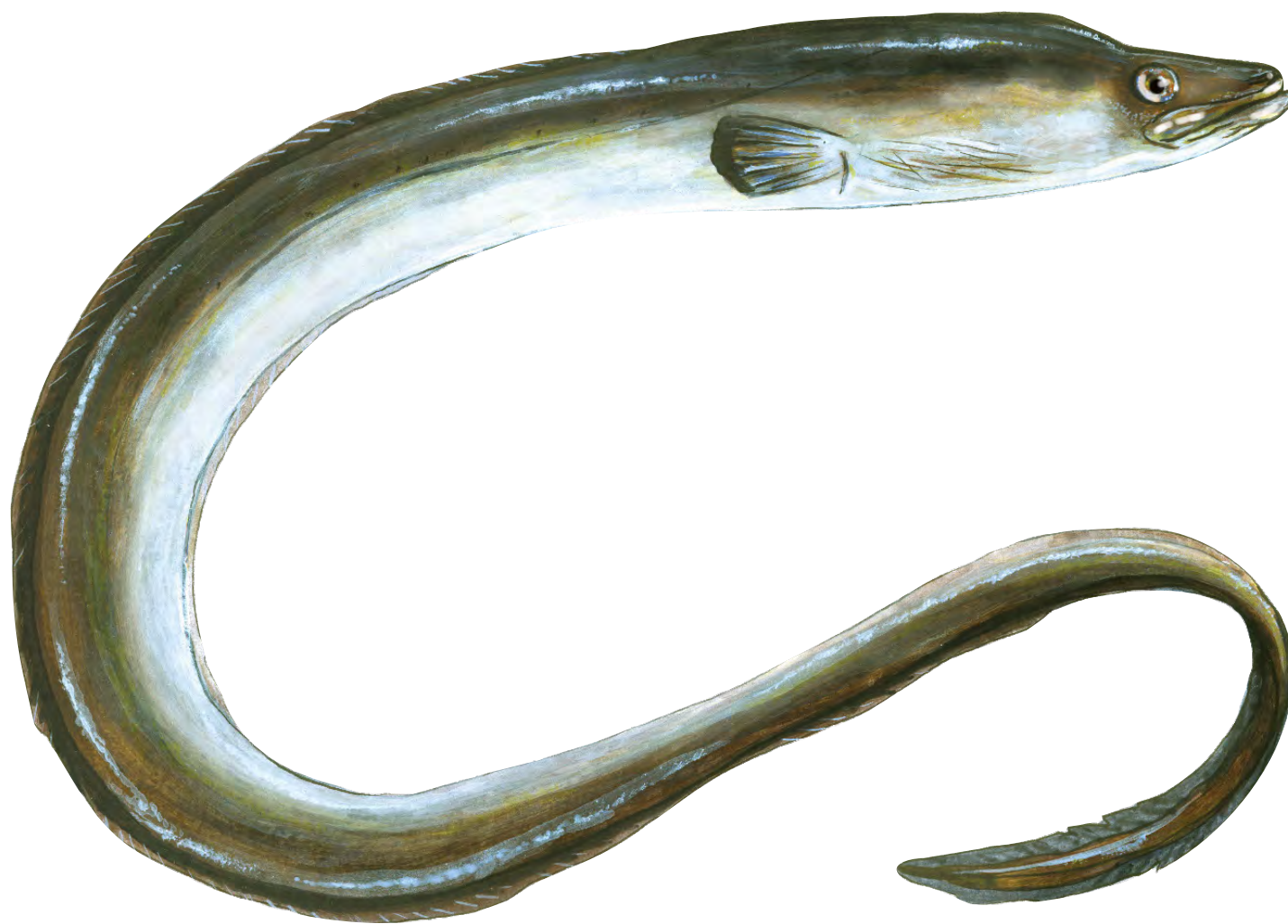
CTENOPHORES

Marine species with a gelatinous texture, which translucent and bioluminescent. They feed on plankton. Currents transport them to the shore, sometimes entering brackish waters.



FISH

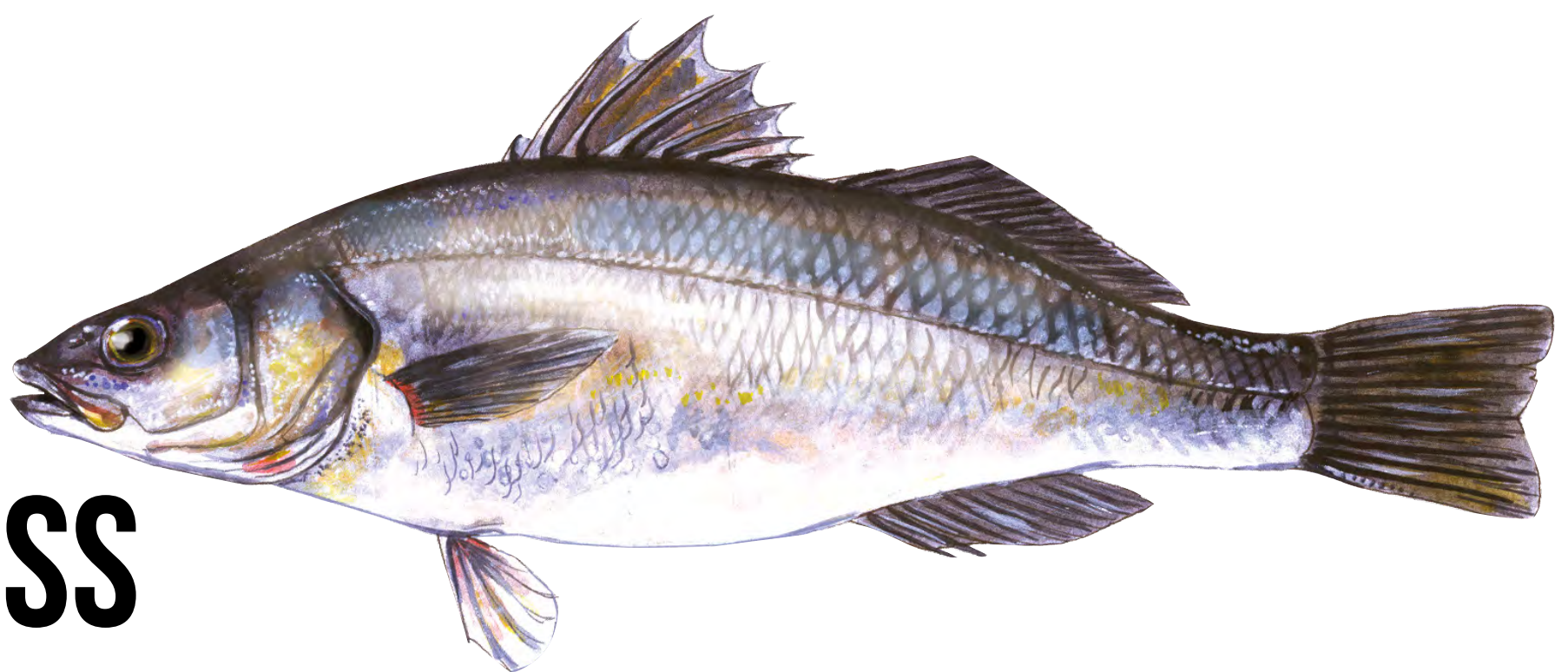
THE SUBMERGED VERTEBRATES



EUROPEAN EEL

(Anguilla anguilla)

Snake-shaped. Born in the Sargasso Sea, in the Atlantic. It reaches our waters in the form of a small eel that enters estuaries, streams and marshes to feed on insects, worms and other fish. To reproduce, it returns to the place where it was born.

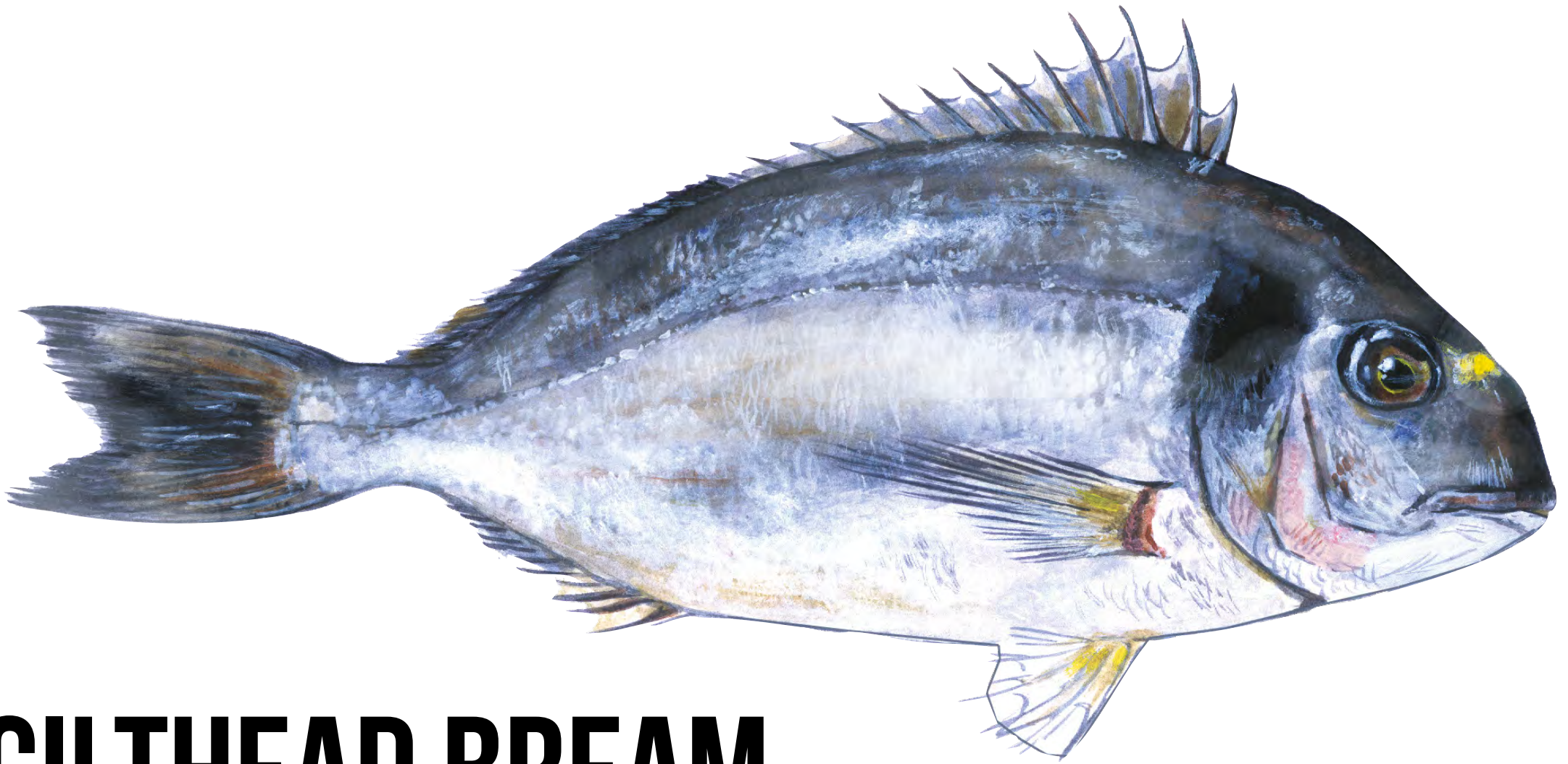


SEA BASS

(Dicentrarchus labrax)

Related to groupers. It preys on crustaceans, worms and other fish. Juveniles tend to gather in groups in shallow waters or near the shore.

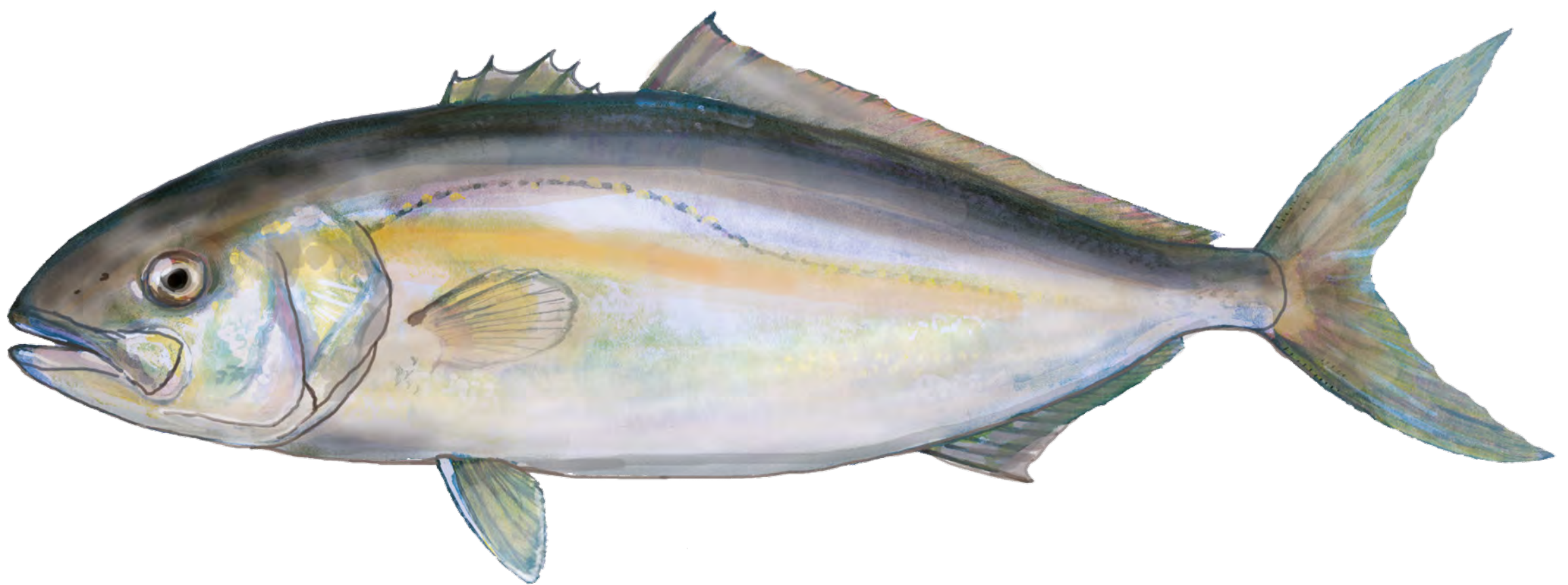




GILTHEAD BREAM

(Sparus aurata)

Inhabits the seabed, particularly when sandy, entering estuaries and marshes. It breaks the shells of molluscs with its hard teeth.



GREATER AMBERJACK

(Seriola dumerili)

A large, predatory fish. Juveniles enter marshes and estuaries to devour other fish.

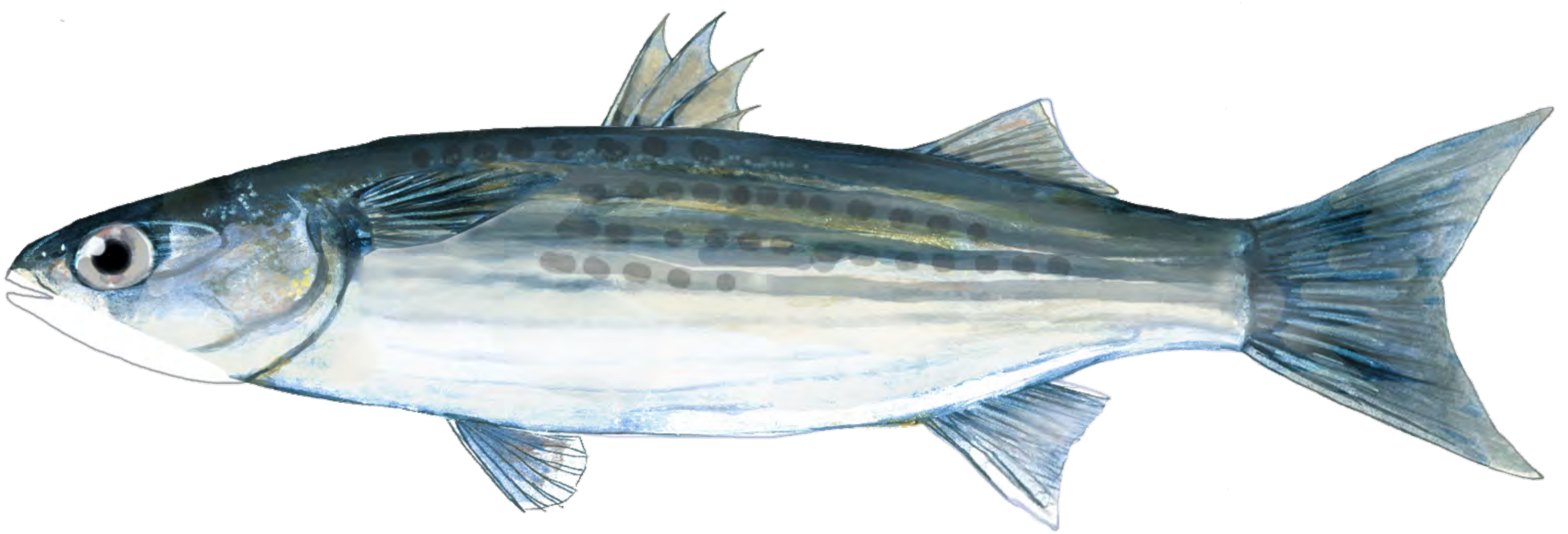




BLACK-STRIPED PIPEFISH

(Syngnathus abaster)

Related to seahorses. Lives among vegetation at shallow depths.



COMMON MULLET

(Mugil cephalus)

Typical fish of port areas and marshes, which enters estuaries through canals and tolerates slightly salty water. Tends to swim in groups.





BIG-SCALE SAND MELT

(Atherina boyeri)

Travels near the surface in groups and is a common prey of predatory fish.



BLACK GOBY

(Gobius niger)

This is the largest goby in the Mediterranean. It usually lies on shallow bottoms, hiding quickly in holes and cracks.



FLORA. THE VEGETATION THAT CREATES THE LANDSCAPE

COMMON REED

(Phragmites australis)

It can reach up to 3 metres in height and is crowned by a large inflorescence where the spike-shaped flowers are. It is very characteristic of wetlands.

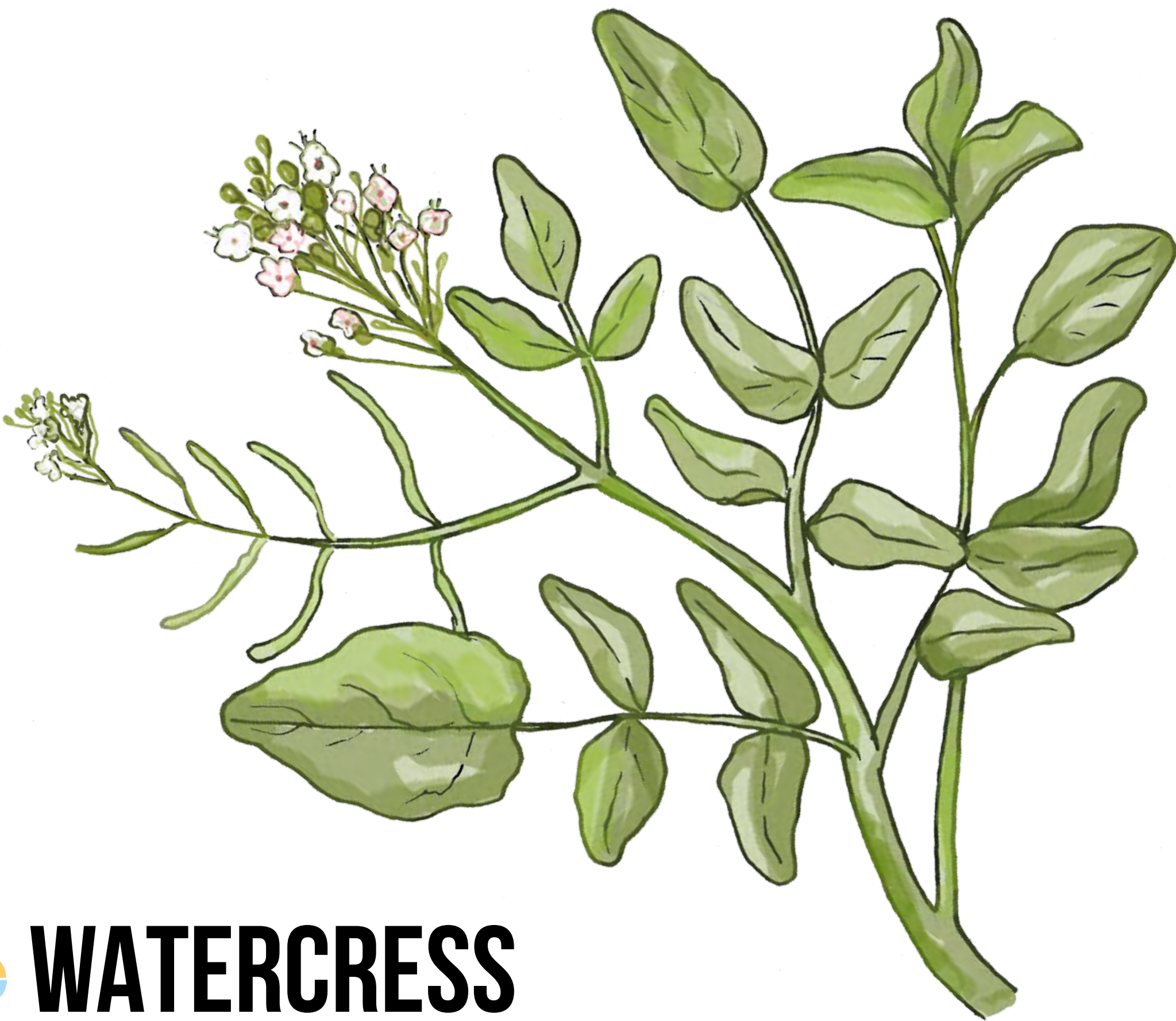


SWAMP SAWGRASS

(Cladium mariscus)

Typical of wetlands, where it can cover large areas. The stem is triangular rather than cylindrical. The spikes are small.





WATERCRESS

(Nasturtium officinale)

Grows underwater, forming a mass of stems and leaves. The flowering is elongated with tiny white flowers.

EURASIAN WATER-MILFOIL

(Myriophyllum spicatum)

Lives submerged in both fresh and brackish water. The leaves are plume-shaped and surround the stem. The flowers, which look like spikes, emerge on the surface.





CATTAIL

(Typha domingensis)

Typical wetland plant with very long and narrow leaves and a characteristic cigar-shaped flower.



FENNEL PONDWEED

(Potamogeton pectinatus)

Aquatic plant with a filamentous appearance. It forms a dense mass. Many species of insects and the common frog take refuge in it or use it as a platform for rest.



TAMARIND

(*Tamarix spp.*)

A typical tree of coastal and brackish areas with thin, wavy leaves that are very close together. The flowers grow in clusters.



SHARP RUSH

(*Juncus acutus*)

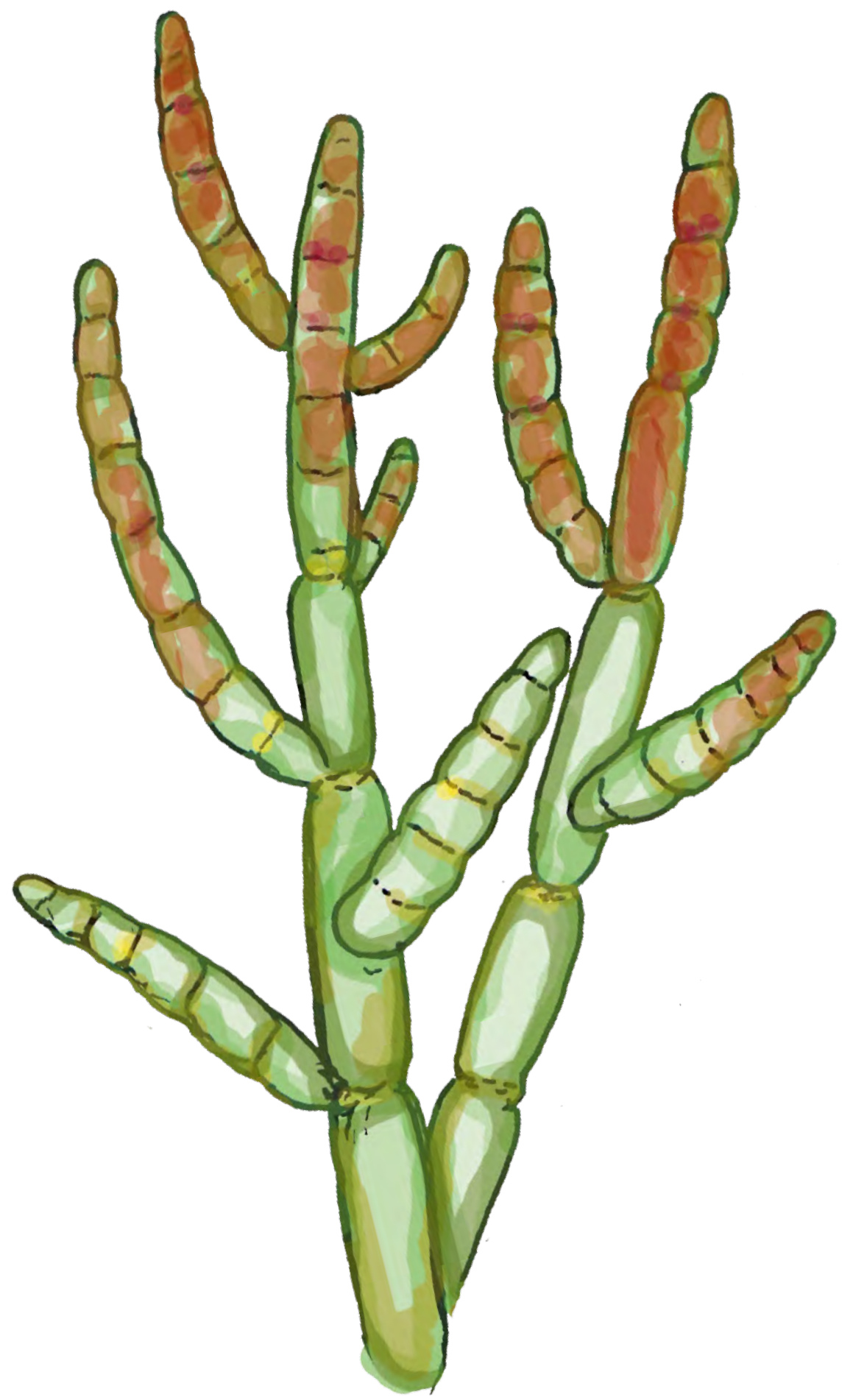
Has prickly leaves and stems. The inflorescence is located on the highest parts of the plant and is recognisable by its brown colour and capsule-shaped fruits. This plant is widespread in the wetlands of the Balearic Islands.



SALTWORT

(Sarcocornia fruticosa)

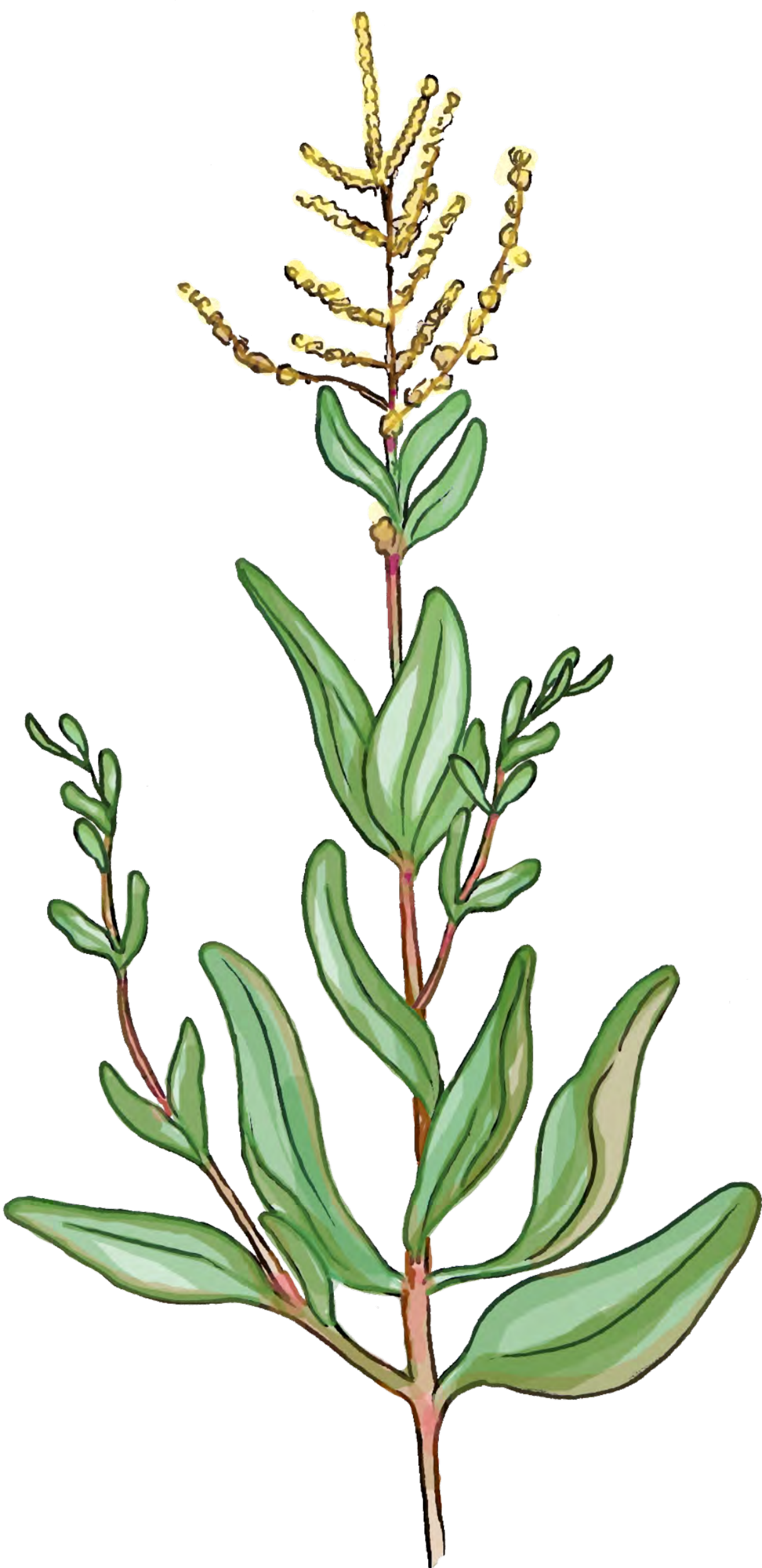
It forms a large part of the plant mass in salt marshes and brackish waters. The young stems are erect, with knots and have a fleshy texture that turns reddish. It retains saline water in its tissue.



SEA PURSLANE

(Halimione portulacoides)

This shrub lives on the coast and in brackish areas. It has a branched with a woody base and light green leaves with a somewhat greyish tinge.



LITTLE NEPTUNE GRASS (*Cymodocea nodosa*)



A submerged herbaceous plant. It lives in brackish or shallow marine waters, where it forms large underwater meadows that are ideal as a refuge for much aquatic fauna.



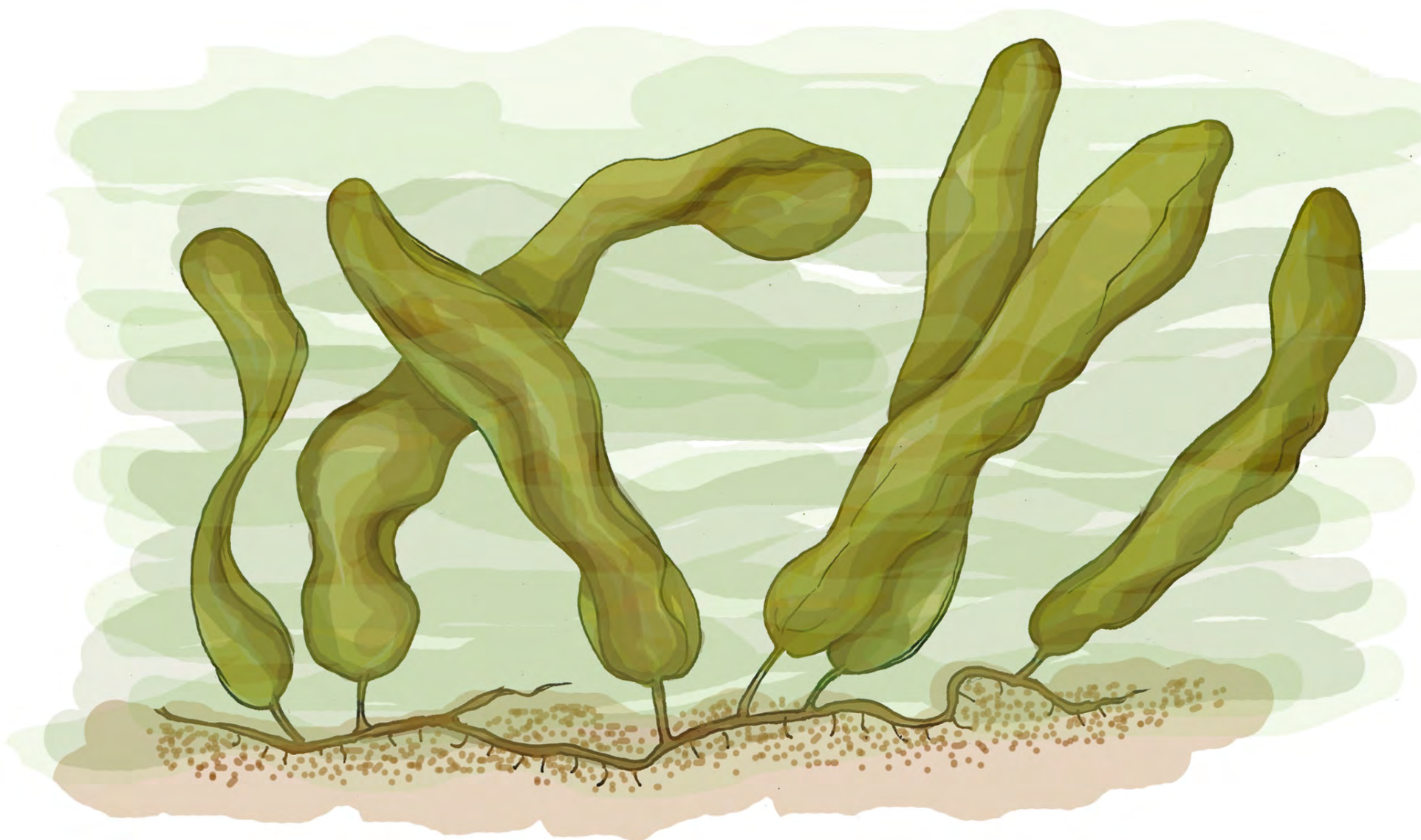
EVERLASTING (*Limonium* spp.)

These are coastal plants with a base of leaves on the ground and long, thin stems that branch out. The flowers are small, arranged in a row at the ends of the branches. There are many different species.



MIRROR ORCHID (*Ophrys speculum*)

The flowers of this orchid appear at the top of the main stem. It flowers in both winter and spring.



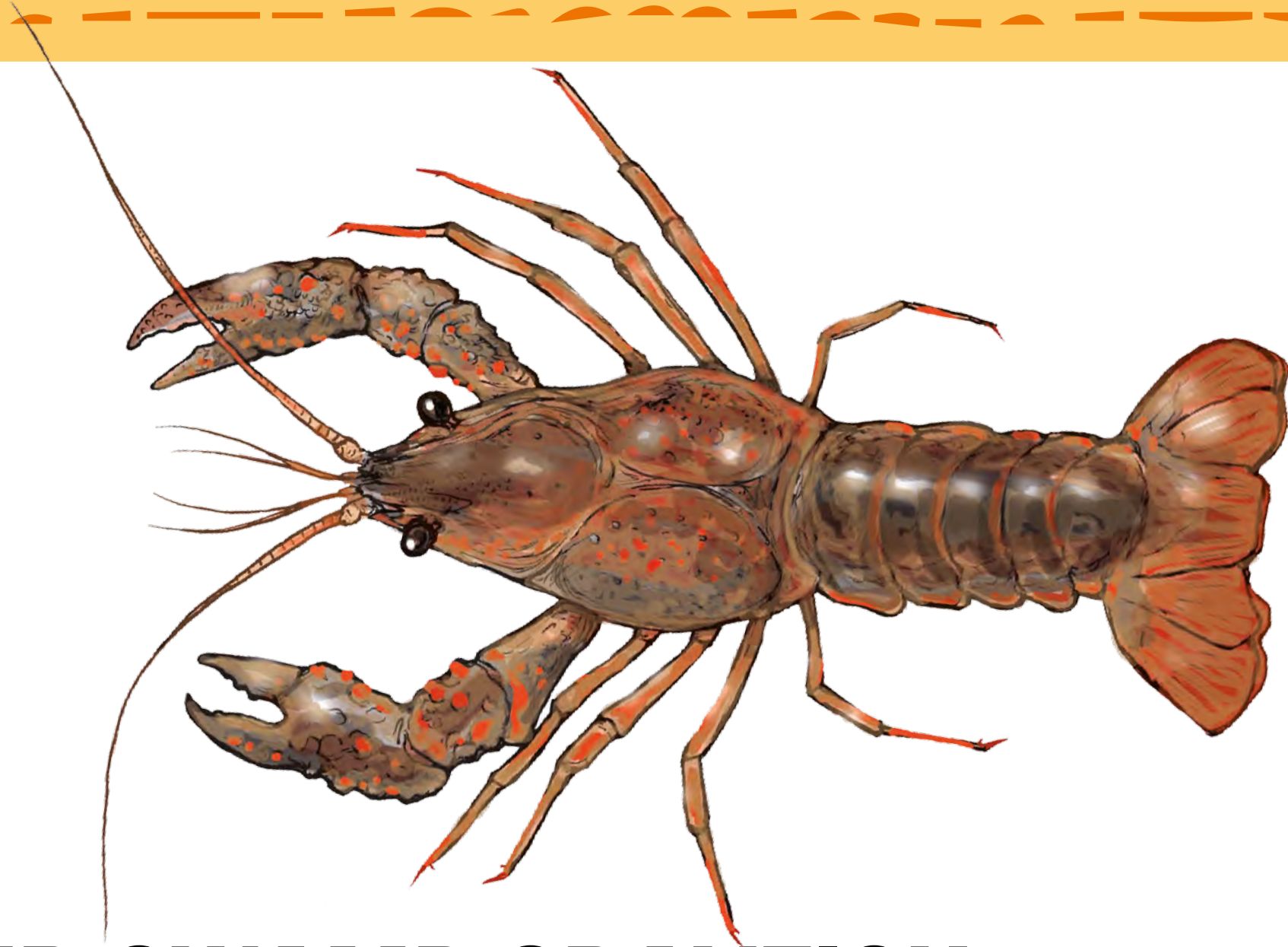
HARE'S EAR (*Caulerpa prolifera*)

Although it looks like a plant, it is a yellow-green alga that lives at shallow depths in both the sea and saltwater wetlands. It grows on soft bottoms and can cover large areas.



EXOTIC SPECIES

FOREIGN INVADERS



RED SWAMP CRAYFISH

(Procambarus clarkii)

Lives on muddy bottoms but can leave the water and travel long distances. It preys on small fish, tadpoles and insects, as well as carrion.



BLUE CRAB

(Callinectes sapidus)

Can grow to a large size. It preys on fish, other crabs, amphibians, and does not waste animal remains.





AUSTRALIAN TUBEWORM

(Ficopomatus enigmaticus)

A tube worm from Australia that has colonised wetlands in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. It forms large colonies in shallow water. It clogs channels, covers bottoms, and depletes planktonic food for other species.



DOMESTIC CAT

(Felis catus)

Feral and free-ranging cats prey on wild fauna. They access bird nests, hunt salamanders and insects, not necessarily for food.





ICE PLANT OR PIGFACE

(Carpobrotus edulis / acinaciformis)

This is a well-known fleshy garden plant native to South Africa. It is a low-growing creeper that spreads rapidly and is highly adaptable to poor soil conditions. It forms dense mats that can displace native vegetation.



COUCH GRASS

(Cynodon dactylon)

This is a common lawn grass native to North Africa and parts of Europe. It is not a problem in gardens but can become invasive if it spreads from discarded cuttings.





MYOPORUM

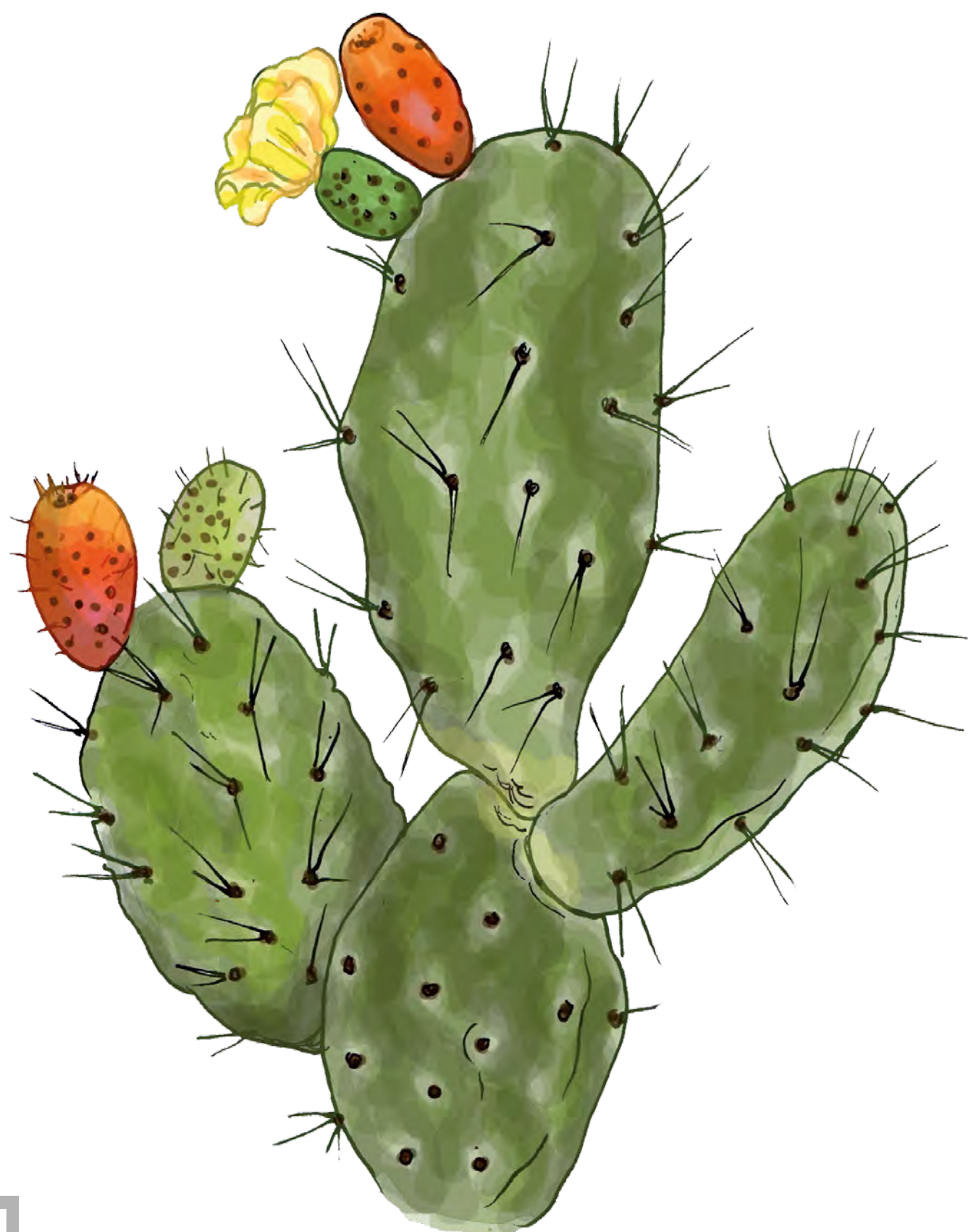
(*Myoporum sp*)

This is a shrub used for hedges and planting along roadsides. It grows quickly in almost any soil type and stays green all year round. It can become invasive by growing in streams, wetlands and open areas. It is native to Australia.

PRICKLY PEAR

(*Opuntia ficus indica*)

Native to Mexico, now is widespread in the Balearic Islands. It can grow quite large, with thorny blades, large flowers and edible fruit: the prickly pear. It spreads in the environment, displacing native vegetation.





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