

Ficus carica

The Common Fig

Ficus carica is a deciduous small tree or shrub that produces sweet, chewy fruits. Evidence of this plant's cultivation dates from the 10th millennium BCE.

Figs are pollinated by wasps. Female wasps enter the fig, pollinate the flower inside, lay their eggs, and then end their life cycle.



Malva sylvestris

Common Mallow

Common Mallow is an herbaceous perennial. Historically, the plant was used to create a yellow dye. Some people think the seed pods resemble cheese wheels, and the plants are therefore sometimes called cheeses.

The plant is commonly found in disturbed soil.



Castanea sativa

Sweet Chestnut

Sweet Chestnuts are long-lived deciduous trees, and their fruits have been eaten by humans for a very long time- the first known charcoal remains date back to 850 BCE. Scientists think that the plant survived the last ice age in groves along the Black Sea Coast.

The plant is commonly found in weathered soils.



Onobrychis viciifolia

Common Sanfoin

Common Sanfoin is a perennial herbaceous legume that blooms in spring and fall. Seed pods have spikes which help them travel on animal fur and pant legs. The plant is a natural medicine against nematodes in the guts of small ruminants.

The plant is commonly found in grasslands, meadows, and fields.



Ecballium elaterium

Exploding/Squirting Cucumber

This poisonous relative of the cucumber produces fruits that distribute their seeds by squirting them out in a stream of water when placed under pressure.

This trailing herbaceous gourd is common in hot dry areas with disturbed soil.



Pancratium maritimum

Sea Daffodil

The Sea Daffodil is a bulbous perennial common to the Black Sea region. Flowers bloom August to October. Sea Daffodils do not self-pollinate, and are reliant upon a Hawk Moth, which only flies when winds are under 2m/second.

This flower requires full sunlight and well drained soil, commonly seen on sandy beaches and coastal dunes.



Tadorna ferruginea

Ruddy Shelduck

The Ruddy Shelduck is a primarily nocturnal migratory bird with a wingspan of up to 70 cm. Mated pairs form a lasting bond, and care for young together.

The duck is most commonly found in inland bodies of water such as lakes, rivers, and reservoirs. European populations are falling.



Fulica atra

Eurasian Coot

The Eurasian Coot reaches wingspans of up to 80 cm, and similar birds are found all over the world.

Coots breed in freshwater lakes and ponds, and can be very territorial during breeding season. Coots have also been known to lay their eggs in the nests of other Coots, if they are no longer able to maintain a nest themselves.



Himantopus himantopus

The Black-winged Stilt

These stilts breed in marshes, lakes, and ponds (including brackish habitats) and eat mainly insects and crustaceans. They can reach 38 cm tall, and their legs make up 60% of their height!

Warming weather in Southern Europe is drying out their habitats, causing them to seek new ground.



Recurvirostra avosetta

Pied Avocet

The Pied Avocet is a migratory bird with a wingspan of up to 80 cm. They nest on open ground atop a mound of vegetation.

They forage for crustaceans and insects in shallow brackish water or mud flats, often by scything their bills from side to side in the water, a technique unique to avocets.



Charadrius dubius

Little Ringed Plover

These small migratory birds breed on gravel near fresh water. Both males and females incubate the eggs. The yellow eye ring is a key identifying feature.

They forage for food in muddy areas, eating mostly insects and worms.



Vanellus vanellus

INorthern Lapwing

This migratory bird reaches a wingspan of 87 cm. It has the shortest legs of all lapwings. It eats primarily insects and other invertebrates.

It is a wader and breeds in cultivated land, or other short vegetation landscapes. It is sometimes found in mixed flocks with Golden Plovers and Black-headed Gulls.

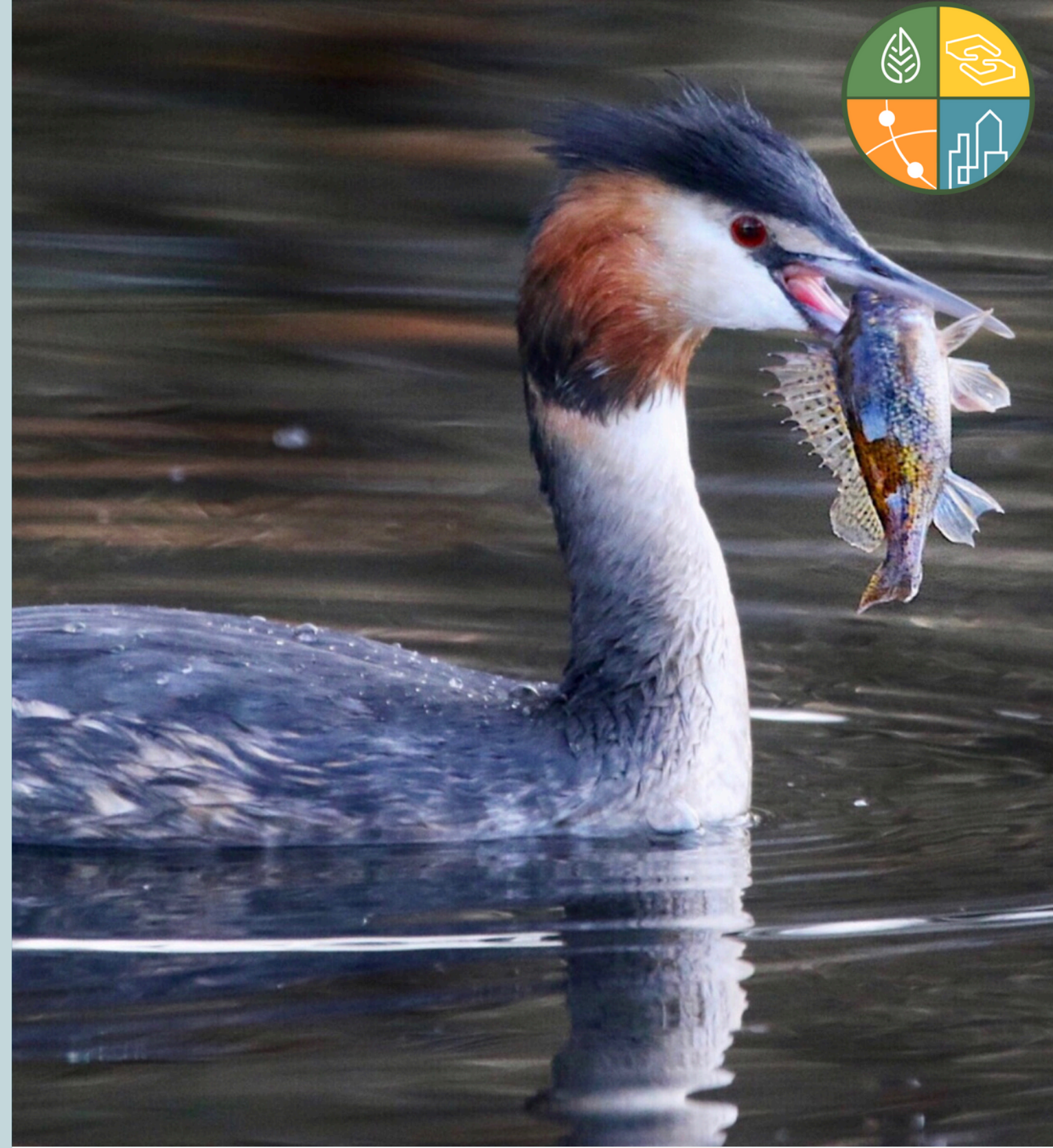


Podiceps cristatus

Great Crested Grebe

This Grebe is known for its elaborate courtship displays, which include synchronized dances. It is one of the largest “Old World” Grebes, with wingspans up to 73 cm. It is a swimmer and diver, capable of hunting fish underwater.

These Grebes typically breed in vegetated sections of freshwater lakes.



Muscicapa striata

Spotted Flycatcher

This small bird reaches only 14.5 cm in length. Spotted Flycatchers can often be found perched conspicuously, making short sallies to catch nearby insects.

These birds are often found in deciduous woodlands, parks, and gardens. This flycatcher can recognize foreign eggs, and is unlikely to fall prey to Cuckoos.



Falco tinnunculus

Eurasian/Common Kestrel

There are multiple subspecies of this predatory bird. Wingspans reach up to 82 cm, smaller than many other birds of prey.

This diurnal low-land bird prefers fields, shrublands, and marshes, but is quite adaptable. Kestrels hunt by hovering in the air before diving for their prey.



Tringa ochropus

Green Sandpiper

The Green Sandpiper is actually dark brown! It bobs its tail when nervous, and has a steep flight path when disturbed.

Breeding grounds include wet forests and marshlands and is rarely found mixed with other species. It feeds primarily on small mud invertebrates, and can be found in more vegetated freshwater bodies than other waders.



Lanius collurio

Red-backed Shrike

This carnivorous migratory bird can be up to 18 cm long and eats insects, frogs, small birds, rodents, and lizards. It is known for its storage system - it impales its prey on thorns or barbed wire until ready to eat.

This bird is typically found in open areas with scattered trees and bushes, and hunts from a perch.



Cecropis rufula

European Red-rumped Swallow

This swallow builds nests on mountains, in sea cliffs, and on buildings and forages over open areas. It breeds in open hilly landscapes. They do not generally form large breeding colonies.

They hunt insects, and have also been known to take advantage of grass fires, which flush insects out of hiding.

