

Broken balances? Let's put nature back together!

*Equilibri in frantumi?
Ricomponi la natura!*



Many animal species live in the Tuscan Archipelago. Some of them, however, are risking extinction.

SCOPOLI'S SHEARWATER (*Calonectris diomedea*) YELKOUAN SHEARWATER (*Puffinus yelkouan*)



CARING PARENTS

Shearwaters are seabirds. They live long and come ashore only to reproduce, nesting in cliff crevices and hollows. In the summer, on moonless nights, the cliffs echo with their chants similar to laments while they return to their nests. They feed exclusively on fish and squid that they hunt flying for hundreds of kilometers. Very attached to the place where they are born, their return there to find a faithful companion. They never leave their one egg, which they brood on continuously for nearly two months. When the chick is born they follow him lovingly, trying to protect him from their biggest threat: the Black Rat.

ONLY FISH FOR LUNCH

There are just over a hundred breeding pairs in the islands of Tuscany. They differ from common gulls for their red beak, smaller size, much less aggressive personality, and the fact that they feed exclusively on fish and shellfish caught on the surface or discarded from fishing vessels. At reproduction time, they prefer isolated cliffs, where they arrange themselves in compact colonies to protect their chicks from the threats of predators. In the winter, almost the entire population leaves Tuscany and flies away to move temporarily to the Atlantic coast of Morocco.

AUDOUIN'S GULL (*Larus audouinii*)



DARTFORD WARBLER (*Sylvia undata*)



A SMALL BIRD WITH A LONG TAIL

These minute birds of the Mediterranean brush have a characteristically tawny colored chest and a very long tail, often held vertically. For nesting, they prefer thick undergrowth of heather, rosemary, and rock rose. They lay three or four eggs in early spring and, in just over a month, the chicks are able to fly away. They spend the first few days after fledging with their parents, who keep feeding them with insects caught in flight. This is a sedentary species, although during the winter part of the population migrates toward North Africa, before returning to the breeding areas.

A SINGING GECKO

An elusive small sized gecko with camouflage colors. It lives mainly in the islands and on the coasts of the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Seas, sheltering under pieces of bark, piles of stones and in small cavities. It has a set of leaf-shaped suction pads under its toes that help it cling to rocks and tree trunks. Its tail, especially if grown back, is flared, and - like other geckos - it is active at night, when it goes in search of small insects, making sounds as a sign of alarm or to interact with other geckos.

EUROPEAN LEAF-TOED GECKO (*Euleptes europea*)



COMMON WALL LIZARD (*Podarcis muralis*) ITALIAN WALL LIZARD (*Podarcis sicula*)



SPORTING DIFFERENT COLORS

They are the most frequent lizards in Archipelago, also common in urban environments. It's hard to tell them apart: a distinctive feature of the Common Wall Lizard is dark spots on the lower parts, especially of the throat. They may remain inactive during the winter, but in the spring it is not uncommon to see males fight each other for territory. On the islands and islets of the Archipelago there are populations with different colors and ornamentations, like spots and streaks.

MAJOR THREATS

The threats that can jeopardize the survival of these species: loss of suitable habitats, food shortages, competition with more aggressive animals, predators introduced by man. These include the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*), which is the species that has caused the most extinctions in the world.



BUT ALL IS NOT LOST!

We can still help our friends not to leave the archipelago forever and make it so that other species, like the European Storm Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*), go back to nesting.



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