

# Ponds an environment WORTH PRESERVING

In the interest of conserving ponds and the species which live in them, four ponds (including the forest pond in front of you) were created when the Maison du Grand Site visitor centre was built. They were soon colonised by large numbers of wetland species.

## A RICH BUT FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT

Ponds, which can be permanent or temporary, collect rain water and runoff in a hollow of impermeable soil. These small areas of water, earth and lush vegetation are the last refuge for large numbers of species (marsh frog, tree frog, newt, dragonflies)...

True or false?

### PONDS ATTRACT MOSQUITOES.

In theory, no: too many mosquitoes is a sign of ecological imbalance in the pond. Under normal circumstances, the pond would be teeming with predators such as diving beetles, whose food of choice is mosquito larvae!

### I SAW A VIPER IN THE POND!

That would be unusual here! However, you might see the viperine snake which has similar patterns and colours, but is not dangerous to humans.

### IS A TOAD A MALE FROG?

No. They are two different species which cannot breed together. Unlike the frog, the toad is a land-dweller and only enters the pond to breed.

### ARE THERE FISH IN A POND?

Not naturally, no. If fish are introduced, they eat the tadpoles and other larvae so the pond loses its ecological value.

### DRAINAGE, MOSQUITO CONTROL, URBANISATION, DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL SILTING UP...

Ponds, and wetlands in general, are disappearing (more than half of them have been lost over the last 50 years). However, they are sites of high biodiversity with endangered species which are unique to these environments.

### PONDS ARE ALSO AT THE MERCY OF INVADERS!

Chief among these is the American crayfish, which arrived in 1880 and is now classified as a "pest".

POND  
under threat



#### THE INVENTOR OF THE TUBA - THE WATER SCORPION

A ruthless predator for the pond's residents, it has a caudal tube which enables it to breathe as though through a snorkel and remain motionless, but always on the alert, under the water.



#### A DRAGON IN THE POND

The pond's star attraction! The marbled newt, a species of great interest in terms of natural heritage, was not found here before the 4 ponds were built (following the construction of the car park and the Maison du Grand Site de France). It arrived and established itself here the following year.



#### BETTER THAN FLY-PAPER

The Mediterranean tree frog is a small, 5-cm-long amphibian with soft, and often apple green, skin. Its deep sonorous "cra-a-ar" call resounds on warm evenings. It feeds on a range of invertebrates, particularly diptera (flies).



#### A DANCER OVER THE WATER

The copper demoiselle is a delicate damselfly which thrives in ponds and clear streams.



#### IT WALKED ON WATER

Thanks to its impermeable bristles and the surface tension of the water, this little creature, known as a water strider, can walk and glide across water.



\* Illustrations: Ph. Martin