



## AMPHIBIANS

Learn more about the amphibians in the beautiful nature surrounding Areias do Seixo.



### ◆ Iberian water frog (*Pelophylax perezi*)

The Iberian water frog is the most abundant amphibian in Portugal. It can be seen and specially heard in ponds, lakes, streams and all other bodies of water. They can grow up to 7 cm in length and the males are slightly smaller than the females. Its dark green colour and protuberant eyes are an identifying feature of this species.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Feeds on: insects, other small invertebrates

Season: all year round, specially conspicuous between March and July



### ◆ Mediterranean tree frog (*Hyla meridionalis*)

The Mediterranean tree frog is an exotic looking amphibian, reminding us of a tropical frog more than a European species. It inhabits ponds, creeks, lakes and even swimming pools. It is native from the Mediterranean region, and currently it is threatened by the invasive species of the Louisiana red-swamp crayfish, which predate it and compete with it for habitat. It is identifiable by its song and it can be spotted attached to high leaves near ponds, pools and other bodies of water.

Degree of Difficulty: 7

Colour status: Green

Feeds on: insects, other small invertebrates

Season: all year round, specially conspicuous between March and July



### ◆ Common toad (*Bufo bufo*)

The common toad is a large tail-less amphibian, the largest in Portugal. It presents a brown and textured skin and it can grow up to be 21 cm long. It is a widespread species all over Europe and it occupies many different habitats that range from pine forests gardens, and to have one in your garden can be very useful in eliminating insects, so consider yourself lucky if this happens to be the case. Its skin segregates a vary nasty flavour for its predators, but unfortunately for it, hedgehogs and a number of snakes have adapted to ignore this, so they become part of the menu. If its not predated a common toad can live up to be 40 years.

Degree of Difficulty: 7

Colour status: Green

Feeds on: insects and other small invertebrates

Season: All year round, specially conspicuous between March and July



### ◆ Red swamp crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*)

The red swamp crayfish is a crustacean, with intense red coloration that can reach 15 cm in length. It is an invasive species in Portugal, introduced across the border in Spain in the 70's, it has managed to spread all through the Iberian Peninsula within 30 years. It has a very short maturation period which means that it can reproduce very early on, creating a great advantage when in competition with local crayfish. It feeds on small invertebrates and all small microorganisms, plants or animals that it finds in the water. It breathes underwater but it can come out occasionally to find other pools and to connect with each other. Here in the pond they are conspicuous until the first egrets come, than they feast on the crayfish, the most abundant food source in the pond, and the new generation will only hatch the following year.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Feeds on: small microorganisms, algae, and small invertebrates

Season: between April and September



### ◆ Garden snail (*Helix aspersa*)

A very common and widespread species, the garden snail is the typical snail you will find in a Portuguese garden. The shell of the garden snail is generally spherical in shape with a short spire and a 'wrinkled' surface. It is pale brown or yellow in colour, and is marked with a number of broken dark bands that give the shell a blotched appearance. The thickened lip around the large opening, or 'aperture', of the shell is white in colour. The shell can grow to be 3,5 by 4 cm and here in the garden it is predated by birds, hedgehogs, common toads and several other predators. It feeds on debris that it finds in the ground, transforming the invisible into edible.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Feeds on: debris

Season: between March and September