

Kingfisher

Regno: fauna

Birds

 [martinpesca.jpg](#) [1]

Kingfisher - *Alcedo atthis*

The only representative of our fauna of a vast group of small fish-eating birds, the Alcedinidae, which dive vertically to spear their prey.

The bright colours, turquoise above and orange below, are partly chemical in origin and partly physical, i.e. due to refraction of light.

Straight, swift flight usually just a short distance above ground level. It hovers, but less frequently than the majority of congeneric species. Usually it looks for prey from a perch which offers a good view of the water.

As occurs in terns, the male tries to win the favours of the female by offering her a fish. It lives in practically all fresh water habitats, from the plains to the mountains, as long as there are small fish and the water is clear enough to see them.

Sometimes its presence can be limited by the scarce availability of suitable nesting sites. In fact the species needs small, vertical walls of sand or mud (it generally uses river banks) where it digs a 60cm to 1m long tunnel, where it lays its eggs at the end but without any lining material.

The young are fed on fish, which are provided bigger and bigger as they grow, as well as insects. In Italy the species is normally resident, but outside the breeding season the adults can shift erratically and the young disperse.

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Links:

[1] <http://zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/martinpesca.jpg>