

Fauna



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The Marshes play a fundamental role in the migratory route between the Tyrhennian coast and hinterland; over 200 species of birds can be seen during the year.

The marshland offers exceptional opportunities for birdwatchers and nature photographers, especially during the spring migration.

The herons are a particularly important feature here, where they are concentrated in a large heronry, a veritable "city of herons" with thousands of birds consisting of the parents, and last year's immatures. This is the most important nesting colony in south-central Italy, both on account of the number of breeding pairs (about 1000) and the simultaneous presence of seven different species: Night Heron, Little Egret, Squacco Heron, Cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Great White Egret and Purple Heron.

Among the mammals, as well as the invasive Coypu or Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*), the Harvest Mouse ([Micromys minutus](#) [2]), the smallest European rodent, deserves special mention because of its naturalistic and bio-geographical interest.

The Fucecchio Marshes can boast a particularly numerous and well acclimatised population and is the recognised southernmost limit for the species.



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Though perhaps less studied, the microfauna is just as rich and important. In a long term study (lasting several years) Prof. Arnaldo Bordoni found over 1000 species of Coleopterans. Like for the flora, the area offers an extremely important shelter for marsh-loving beetles associated with colder climates, the same species that occur in the peat bogs of central-north Europe.

Finally, we should also mention the recent spread of the Red Swamp Crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*), another "alien" species introduced from the American continent.

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Links:

[1] <http://zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/Componenti/imgpadu4.jpg>

[2] <http://zoneumidetoscane.it/en/harvest-mouse>

[3] <http://zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/Componenti/imgpadu3.jpg>