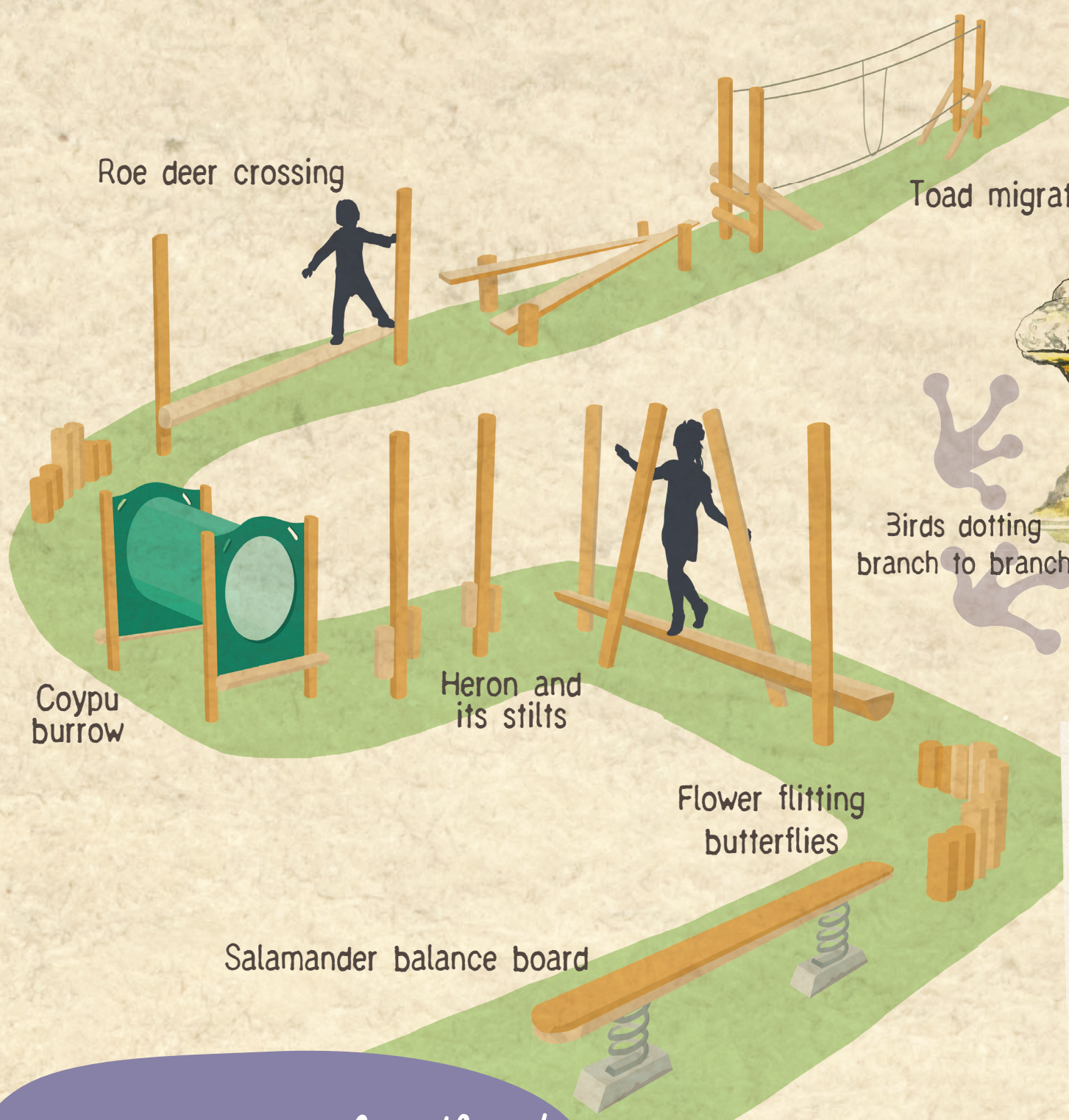


WETLANDS ADVENTURE



Fitness trail

■ Discover about wetland animals and their movements!



Follow the trail without touching the ground!

Useful information

- Maintenance:
Saint-Aquilin Town Hall
Tel. +33 (0)5 53 54 12 43
- Area for use by children aged 3 to 12 years, under the supervision and responsibility of parents or accompanying adults.



Wetland area, fragile area

■ You are entering a wetland, an environment that is invaluable to our biodiversity.

Take the opportunity to recharge your batteries and discover about the species living here.

Ecological functions of wetlands

■ Wetlands perform great services both for humans and for the other surrounding habitats:



Hydrological function: they act as sponges, storing water in wet periods and releasing it in dry periods.



Physical and biogeochemical function: they constitute natural filters and process minerals and organic matter, helping improve water quality. They capture and store carbon dioxide, thus constituting carbon sinks.



Reservoir of biodiversity: they provide a habitat for specific plants and animals that have adapted to the wetland environment.

What is a wetland?

Wetlands are **transitional areas between solid ground and open water**. They are typified by:

- The constant or temporary **presence of fresh, brackish or salt water,**
- **water-saturated soil,**
- the presence of **plant and animal species characteristic** of wet environments (reed beds, amphibians, etc.).

Iris pseudacorus



Alytes obstetricans



World Wetlands Day



■ This is celebrated on **2nd February** every year to commemorate the signing of the **Convention on Wetlands** on 2nd February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

This nationally coordinated event relies on local environmental organisations and associations to **raise awareness and show the general public** all the riches of these habitats.

The **Syndicat Mixte du Bassin de l'Isle** is responsible for managing this wetland in collaboration with the municipality. Its tasks include research, diagnostic and maintenance work on the wetlands as well as educating people and raising their awareness of them.



Journée mondiale
des zones humides



FITNESS TRAIL

ANIMALS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS



Coypu burrow



Myocastor coypus



Uncontrolled movement

Human activities have, whether deliberately or not, led to the movement of species from other countries.

Some have acclimatized successfully to their new environment, competing with local species.



Originating from South America, it was introduced to Europe for its fur in the 19th century. By digging tunnels for its burrow on the banks of watercourses, it weakens them and speeds up their erosion.

Orconectes limosus



Pest



Procambarus clarkii

Austropotamobius pallipes



Protected

Spiny-cheek crayfish, recognisable by their reddish colour, are in fierce competition with white-clawed crayfish, which are now very rare and a protected species.

FITNESS TRAIL

ANIMALS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS



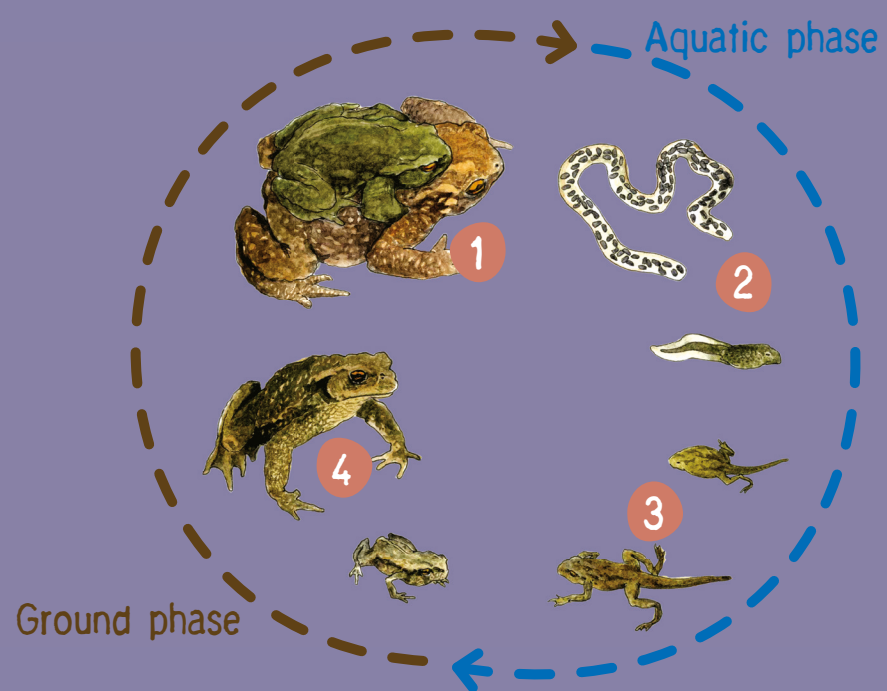
Toad migration



Bombina variegata



Risky movement



Toads, like frogs, are “amphibians”. They are capable of living in different environments depending on their stage of development. In order to change their environment, they often have to cross roads, which are deadly dangerous to them!



- 1 Mating (late winter)
migration to bodies of water
- 2 Spawning
- 3 Tadpole (spring)
2 - 3 months' metamorphosis
- 4 Imago (= adult, early summer)
migration to woodland



Bufo bufo



Rana temporaria



Pelophylax sp.



“Toad tunnels” can be put in place to prevent amphibians from being crushed on the road.

FITNESS TRAIL

ANIMALS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS



Balance of the salamander



Salamandra Salamandra



Limited movement

■ The salamander is classed as an “amphibian” (= living in different environments) but is distinguished from frogs and toads (= anurans) by the presence of a tail and the fact it spends all its adult life on land. Its movements are slow and not very agile but its colour deters predators!



Salamander larva



Mating takes place on land. The female only goes into the water at the end of the embryonic phase to deposit the larvae. The larvae are formidable aquatic predators! Metamorphosis occurs after 4.5 months of aquatic life.



Triturus marmoratus

Lisotriton helveticus



■ Salamanders are grouped under the order “Urodela”, which also includes newts, but these only spend part of the year on land.

FITNESS TRAIL

ANIMALS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS



Heron and its stilts



Ardea cinerea



Adapted movement



■ The heron is a “stilt walker” as it has long legs that are particularly well-adapted to moving about in an aquatic environment. Many bird families are stilt walkers, such as storks, cranes and egrets.



Its dagger-like beak is ideal for harpooning large prey. It feeds mainly on fish but can also be found in grassland between seasons, hunting for rodents.



Charadrius dubius



Actitis hypoleucos

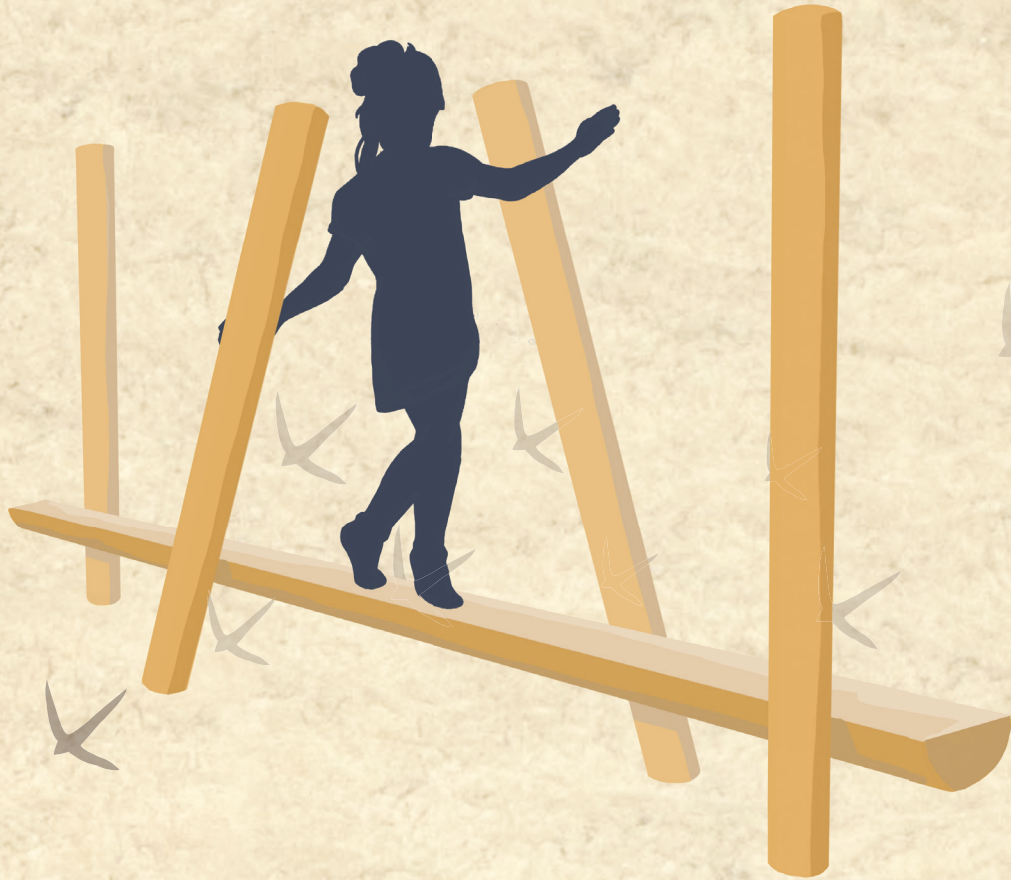
■ There are over 200 species of little stilt walkers, known as “waders”. They are commonly found in marshes, wetlands or on the seashore.

FITNESS TRAIL

ANIMALS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS



Birds dotting branch to branch



Cinclus cinclus



Food-related movement



The wetland offers a varied diet for many passerine birds living in the region or coming from habitats nearby (village, forest, grasslands). They thus help control species that are harmful to agriculture or market gardening.



*The dipper is recognisable by its dark plumage and white throat.
It feeds mainly on aquatic invertebrates which it catches in rivers by diving into or walking on the water.*



Motacilla cinerea

Emberiza schoeniclus

Motacilla alba

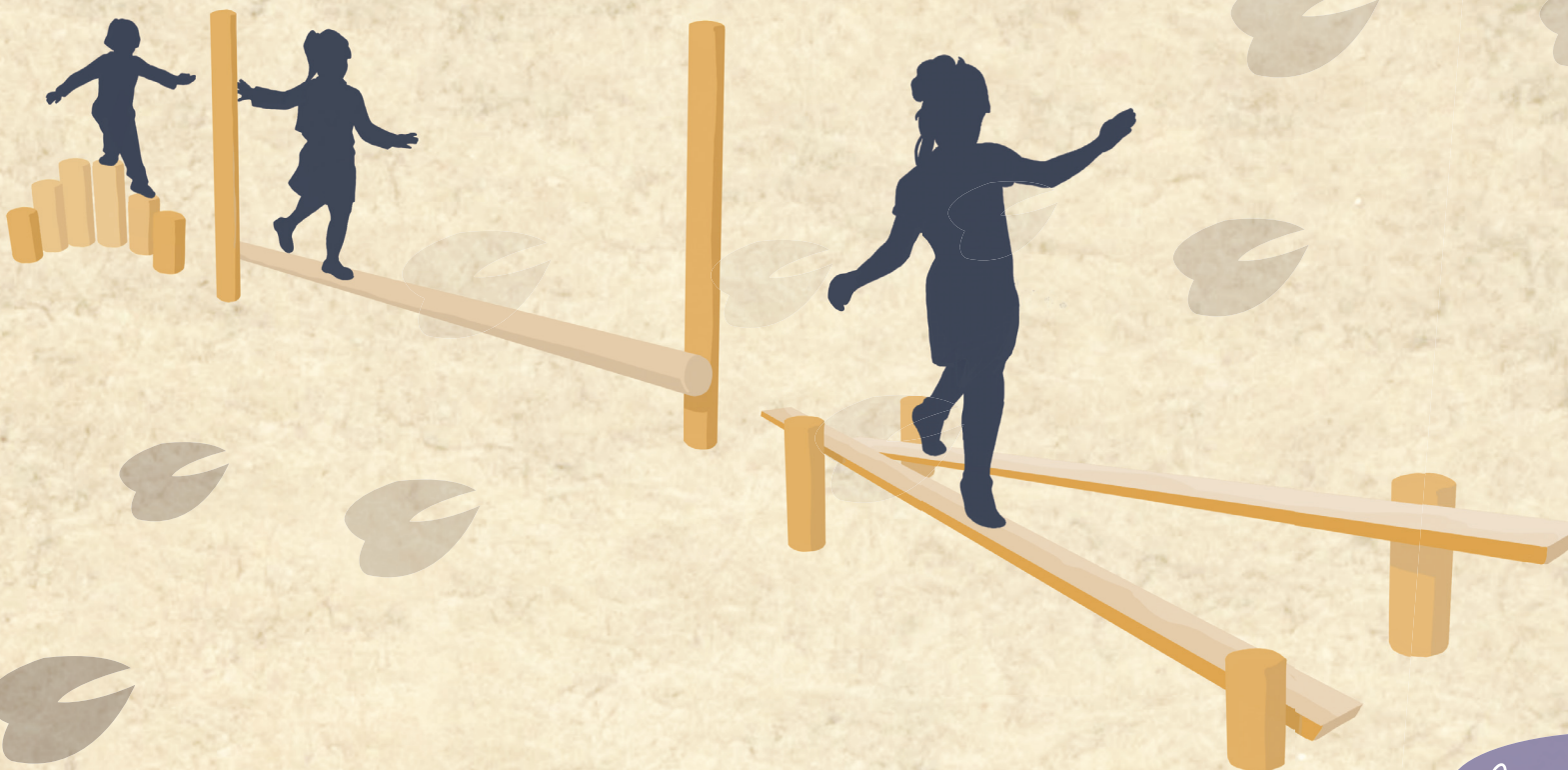
The passerine family includes over half of all birds worldwide, with more than 64,000 species! Some are specific to wetlands.

FITNESS TRAIL

ANIMALS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS



Roe deer crossing



Capreolus capreolus



Movement between different environments



Deer and its fawn

■ Large mammals like roe deer may occasionally visit the wetland to drink and feed. Their size and agility allow them to have a habitat extending over several types of environment: forest, grassland and wetland.



Roe deer are superb at running and jumping. They can also swim very well but only do so when necessary or when threatened.



Meles meles



Sus scrofa



Cervus elaphus

■ The forest around Saint-Aquilin is home to several large mammal species. They tend to keep a low profile, rarely approaching the village and only at night.

FITNESS TRAIL

ANIMALS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS



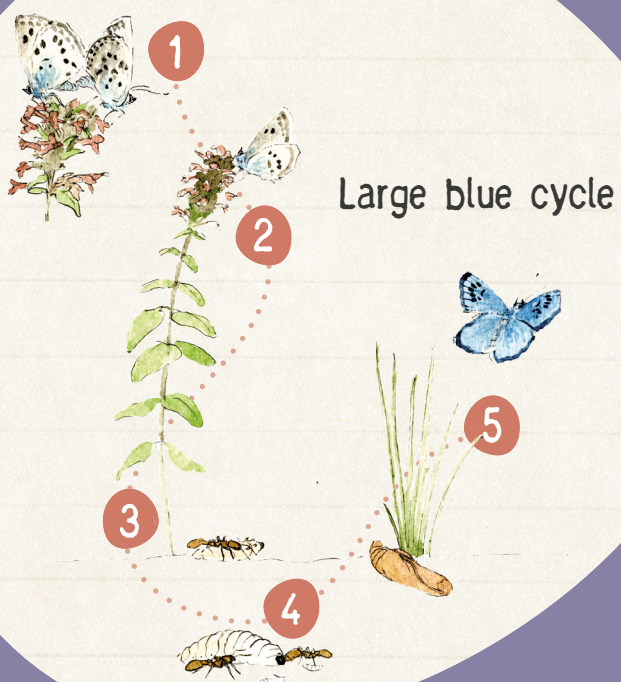
Flower flitting butterflies



Phengaris arion



Movement in order to pollinate



Butterflies are part of the “lepidoptera” family. They feed on flower nectar using their proboscis, pollinating the flowers as they do so.



- 1 2 **Mating and egg laying (spring)**
200 eggs on wild thyme, near an ant colony.
- 3 **Caterpillar**
It eats the wild thyme flowers then drops to the ground.
- 4 5 **Caterpillar-chrysalis-butterfly**
The caterpillar attracts an ant which takes it to the ant nest. It then feeds on ant larvae until it metamorphoses into a butterfly.

Lycaena dispar



Melanargia galathea



Aglais io



Butterflies are often associated with certain plants as the caterpillar feeds on them to grow before its metamorphosis.