

## **The humid meadows**

As the water level rises, the forest gives way to the wet meadow: an environment characterized by the variability of the water depth, which reaches only a few centimetres, with areas of low and interrupted herbaceous vegetation alternating with areas covered by dense hygrophilous vegetation.

The plant community of the wet meadow consists mainly of loads. This habitat represents a fundamental refuge area for the waterfowl, in particular for the waders, so called for their characteristic way of feeding by immersing the beak in the mud to catch preys such as molluscs and other invertebrates.

The wet meadow is also an ideal breeding site for amphibians, reptiles such as the marsh turtle and aquatic insects and marshes such as carabid beetles, fireflies and mosquitoes.

In order to restore ecological balance and increase biodiversity, new wet meadows have recently been created in Campotto. Currently, a bladder load has been developed, which should evolve dynamically towards a load less dependent on water dominated by spondicular load, a plant known for its use in chair cushioning.

If left to a natural evolution, the wet meadow would slowly turn, due to the accumulation of debris and suspended particles, into a hydrophilic forest: constant attention by man is therefore essential, with control measures such as the mowing of the vegetation and the maintenance of an appropriate water level, especially in the summer months.

## THE BUTTERFLIES OF THE HUMID MEADOW

In the collective imagination the colourful butterflies are, together with the flowers, an obligatory component of the ideal and idyllic natural landscape.

The colours, the flight, the extraordinary metamorphosis make the butterflies the best known, loved and admired insects.

Butterflies are an order of insects, whose name of Greek derivation means "scaled wings", very rich in species with more than 165,000 entities described in the world.

The diurnal butterflies are distinguished from the nocturnal butterflies, because they have thin antennae ending with a clavate enlargement, show bright and showy colours, fly by day and when they rest keep the four large wings open or closed to book

upwards.

Their caterpillars eat both herbaceous plants and parts of trees and shrubs. The diurnal butterflies are decreasing in number and their decrease means environmental degradation, threatened almost everywhere by the destruction of their habitats.

In the Campotto Oasis there are about 50 species of diurnal butterflies and most of them are found in the humid meadows. Most of the butterfly larvae nourish herbaceous plants (like legumes, grasses, and crucifers).

None of the entities found in the Argenta valleys can be considered harmful to agricultural crops in the surrounding fields. Much greater are the benefits deriving from their presence, as pollen insects or as food for both larvae and adults for secondary consumers.