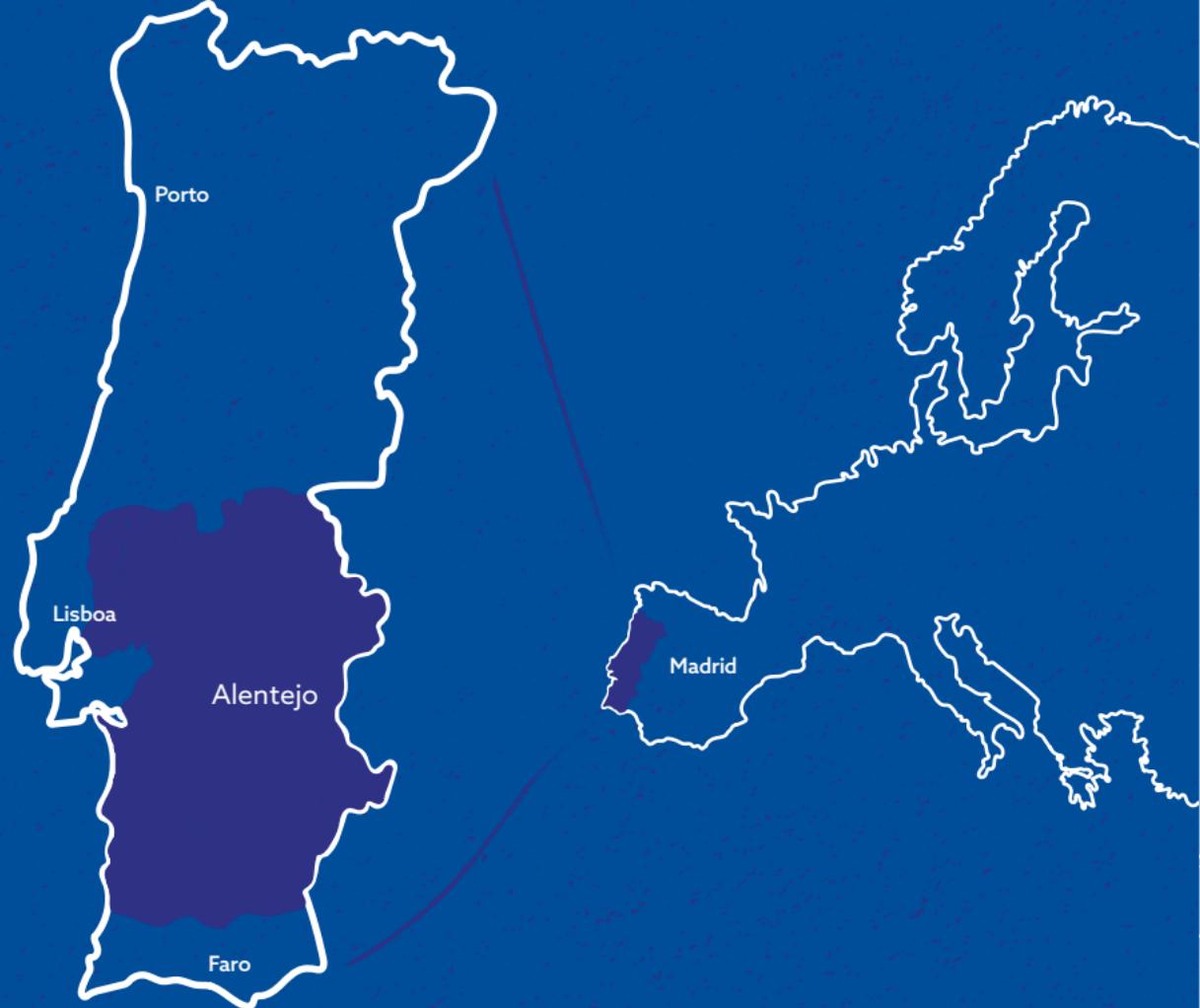


CORK COUNTRY

ALENTEJO

NATUUR · WATER · LAND · LUCHT

visit
Alentejo
Portugal



ALLEN TEJO

CORK
COUNTRY

The Alentejo makes up almost a third of Portugal and delivers postcard views in every direction. Its famous *Montados* (cork forests) compete only with its olive groves, sandy beaches, vineyards and nature reserves.

The region, less than an hour from Lisbon, gets its name from *além* and *Tejo*, which translates to "Beyond the Tejo", as the Tejo River borders the Alentejo to the north. The vast and varied landscapes of the Alentejo are home to the largest cork forests in the world.

From endless plains to country roads, hill towns to unexpected mountains, caves to coves, cycling to surfing, the Alentejo is an ancient, wild and wonderful world waiting to be explored.





ALENTEJO





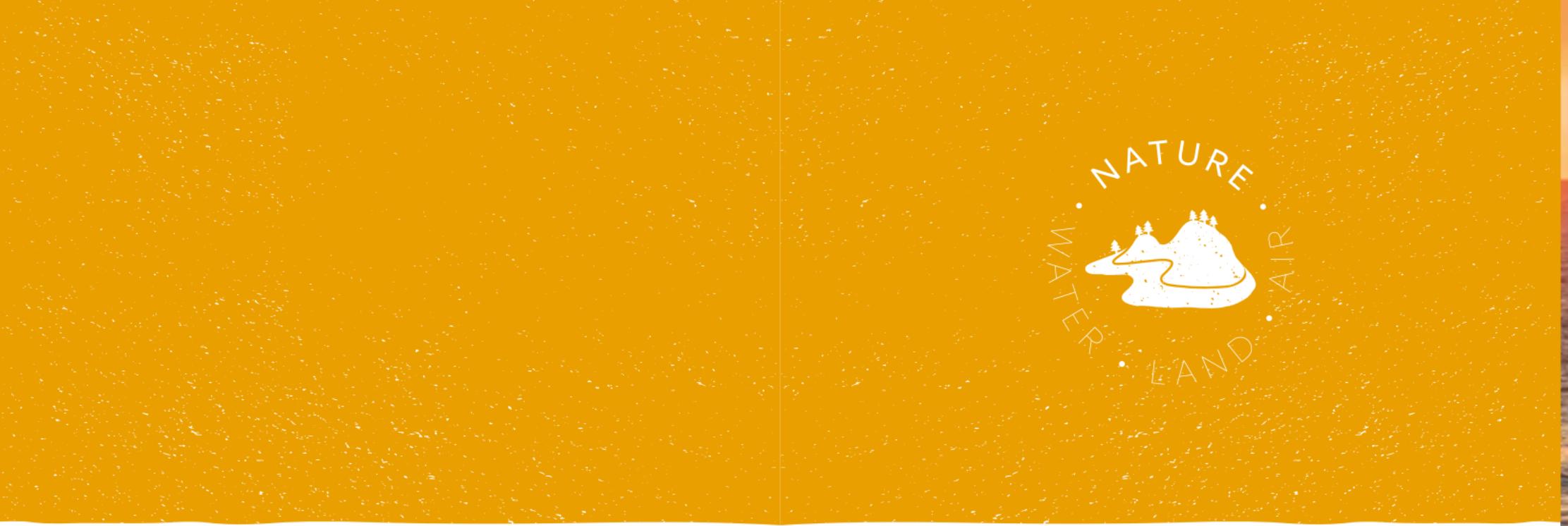
ILHA DO PESSEGUEIRO BEACH

RIDING THE ALENTEJO'S WAVE

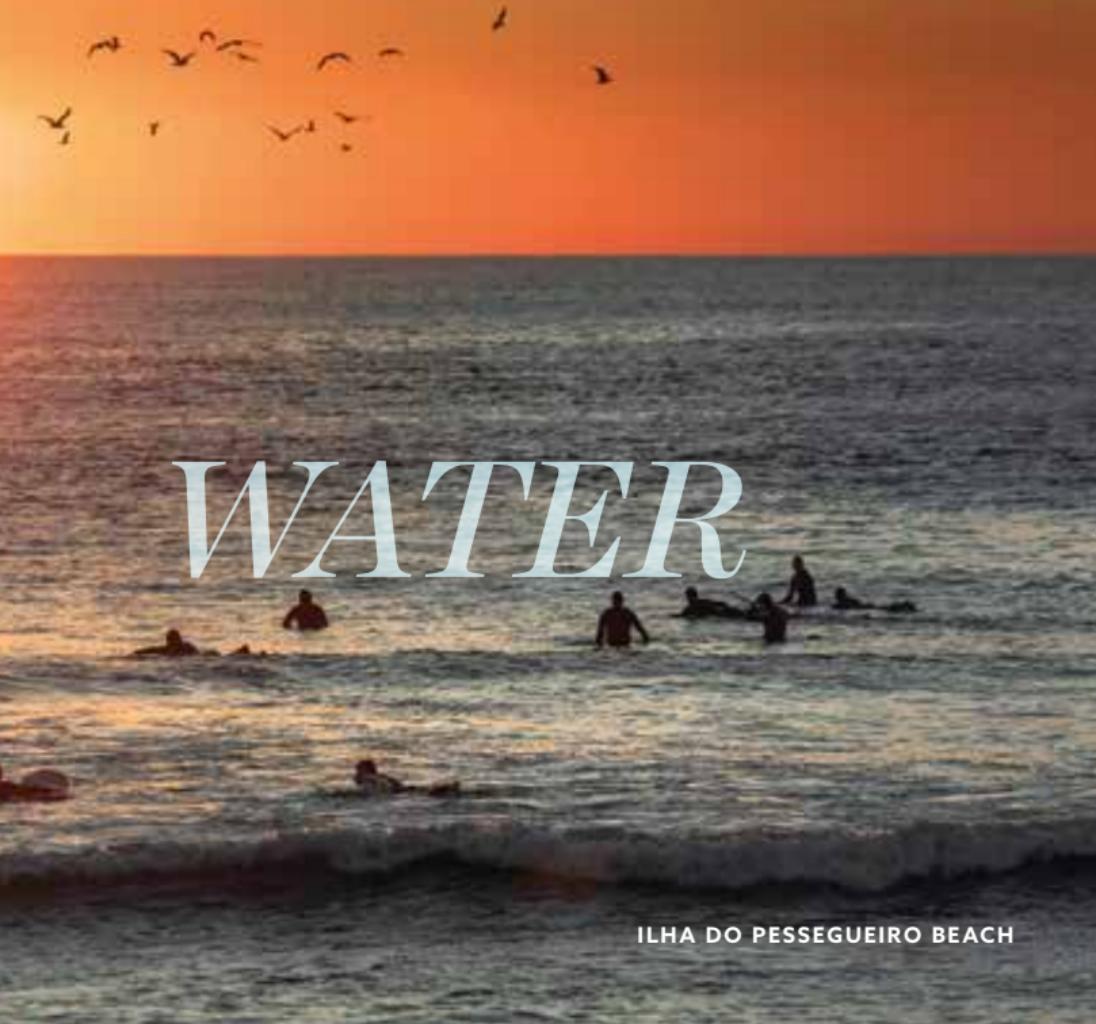
The Alentejo's unspoiled coast stretches along the Atlantic and is known for its miles of sandy beaches, ocean swells, hidden coves, sea cliffs and surfing. Framed by dunes, the sky and little else — there isn't a better place to unplug and relax.

The Alentejo has more than 50 miles of beaches to explore. The Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina Nature Park is a protected nature park, with dunes, small towns and clean Atlantic waters with plenty of places to explore.

There is no shortage of beaches with waves for surfing and bodyboarding, including São Torpes, Vieirinha, Aivados, Malhão and Zambujeira do Mar. Or, head to Carvalhal beach, Melides or the Santo André lagoon for kitesurfing and windsurfing.



ALENTEJO



ILHA DO PESSEGUEIRO BEACH



ALAMAL WALKWAY (GAVIÃO)

RIVERS AND LAKES

In the heart of the Alentejo, flowing rivers beckon you to magical places. Enjoy a perfect day on the banks of the rivers Tejo or Guadiana, where you can choose between the Tapada Grande, Alamal, Monsaraz, Mourão, Amieira and Santa Clara beaches.

Hit the water for diving or swimming, or rent a jet ski, stand up paddle board or kayak at Montargil Reservoir. Sail by starlight on the Great Lake of Alqueva, the largest man-made lake in Europe; fish, paddle and hike at the Vale do Gaio; or water-ski at Maranhão.

In or out of the water, you set the pace in the Alentejo.



CASTRO VERDE BIOSPHERE RESERVE





ALENTEJO



THE ALENTEJO ON FOOT

If you want to explore the Alentejo step by step, we offer thousands of miles of self-guided trails.

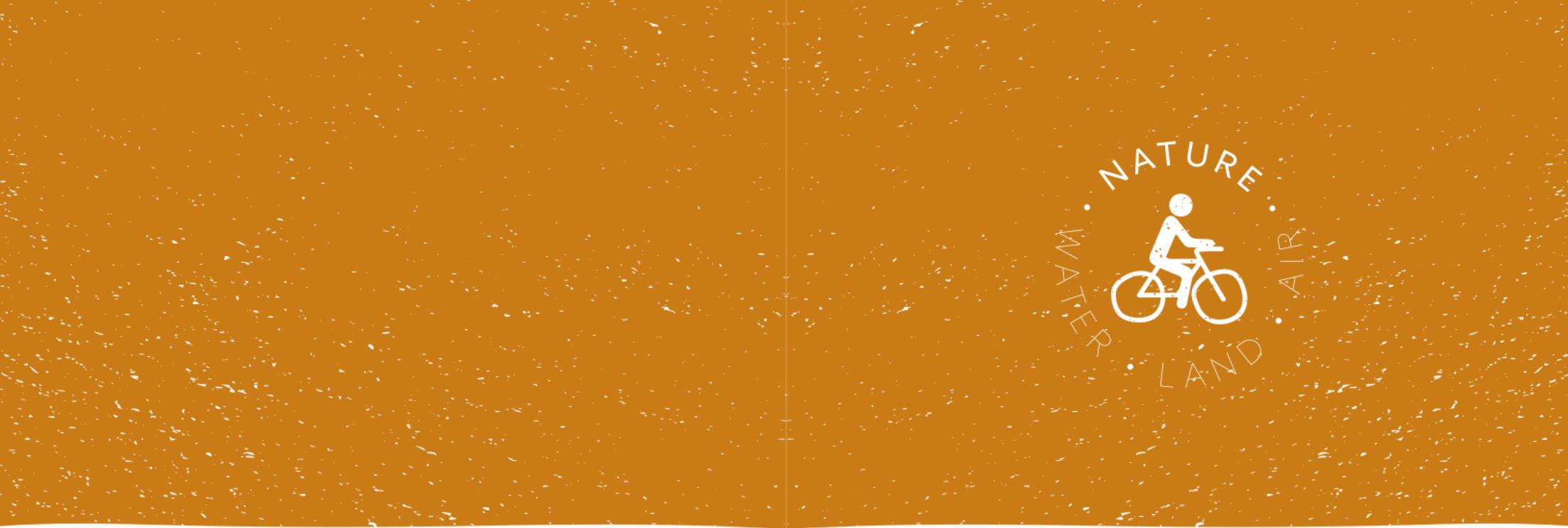


TRAILS

Choose a route along the 200 miles of the Feel Nature routes to discover magical landscapes such as the Portas de Ródão Natural Monument. Follow the blue curves of the Tejo River or look skyward for Bonelli's eagles, griffon vultures, black vultures and kingfishers.

Travel the TransAlentejo trails and go back to the time of ancient gods, or climb to the highest point of the Central Alentejo, the Serra de Ossa.

And, come see the protected and beloved Atlantic Coast, where the Rota Vicentina (Walking Route and Trail in Costa Vicentina) is a bucket list must. There are epic miles of hiking here, including the Trilho dos Pescadores (Fishermen's Trail) and the Caminho Histórico (Historical Way), certified as one of the Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe. The Camino of Santiago blends history and landscapes into one unforgettable experience.



ALENTEJO



BIKE RIDING

Plains that go on as far as the eye can see, tree-lined roads, olive groves, greenways, bike paths and nature trails. Everything invites you to explore the Alentejo on two wheels. You'll find bike service centers and info outposts along the way.

If you like a smooth ride along rail trails, follow sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Atlantic Coast Route EuroVelo 1 to discover greenways leading to Évora and Montemor-o-Novo.

The first section begins at the Chafariz d'El Rei, in Évora, and connects with the Arraiolos and Mora cycle paths, for a 30-mile ride.

The second section goes from Montemor-o-Novo to the Torre da Gadanha rail crossing.

At Monfurado, see ageless farms along the trails — all surrounded by the beauty of cork forests. Here, farmers and naturalists work together for conservation.

Take the new Rota Vicentina mountain bike trails for miles along the coast.

But if you can't resist the mix of dust, mud and adrenaline, Serpa has a mountain bike center with nearly 100 miles of marked trails along wild borderlands.



NOUDAR CASTLE (BARRANCOS)



ALENTEJO



CAMPINOS (CATTLE HERDERS)

HORSEBACK RIDING

In the Alentejo, horses are part of the culture, and you can enjoy the ancient riding traditions while exploring on horseback.

From Comporta's sands to the cool shade of the *Montados* (cork forests), horseback riding is a great way to take in the Alentejo's landscapes.

And, anyone who loves horses must visit the Coudelaria de Alter do Chão. The national horse farm, set on 2,000 acres of rolling countryside, is dedicated to the breeding of Alter Real purebred and Lusitano horses. King D. João V founded the stables in 1748 to breed horses for the royal riding school.

To the northwest, on the fertile *lezírias* (river plains) of the banks of the Tejo, the *Campilos* (cattle herders) herd horses, cows and bulls. Dressed in bright red vests and green caps, the *Campilos* work on horseback, using a *pampilho* or long pole to herd cattle as they have for centuries. The Companhia das Lezírias is a great stop to learn about the Lusitano horse.



ALENTEJO



MONTADO (CORK FOREST)



THE SADO ESTUARY NATURE RESERVE

The Alentejo's parks and nature reserves are the perfect way to discover the towns of the Alentejo, with whitewashed houses reflecting the colors of nature. Start by heading to the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve, which you can explore on foot, or by bike, canoe or even in a traditional wooden Galeões do Sal boat.

Here, where the Sado meets the sea, you can explore rice fields, salt marshes, rare plants and coastal dunes.

At Carrasqueira's stilt pier, near Comporta, rambling wooden docks rise on poles and give visitors a front-row view of the colorful fishing village.

More than 200 bird species call these waters home, as do local dolphins, which thrive in these calm waters.

CAIS PALAFÍTICO DA CARRASQUEIRA (STILT PIER)
AT ALCÁCER DO SAL

LAGOAS DE SANTO ANDRÉ E DA SANCHÁ NATURE RESERVE

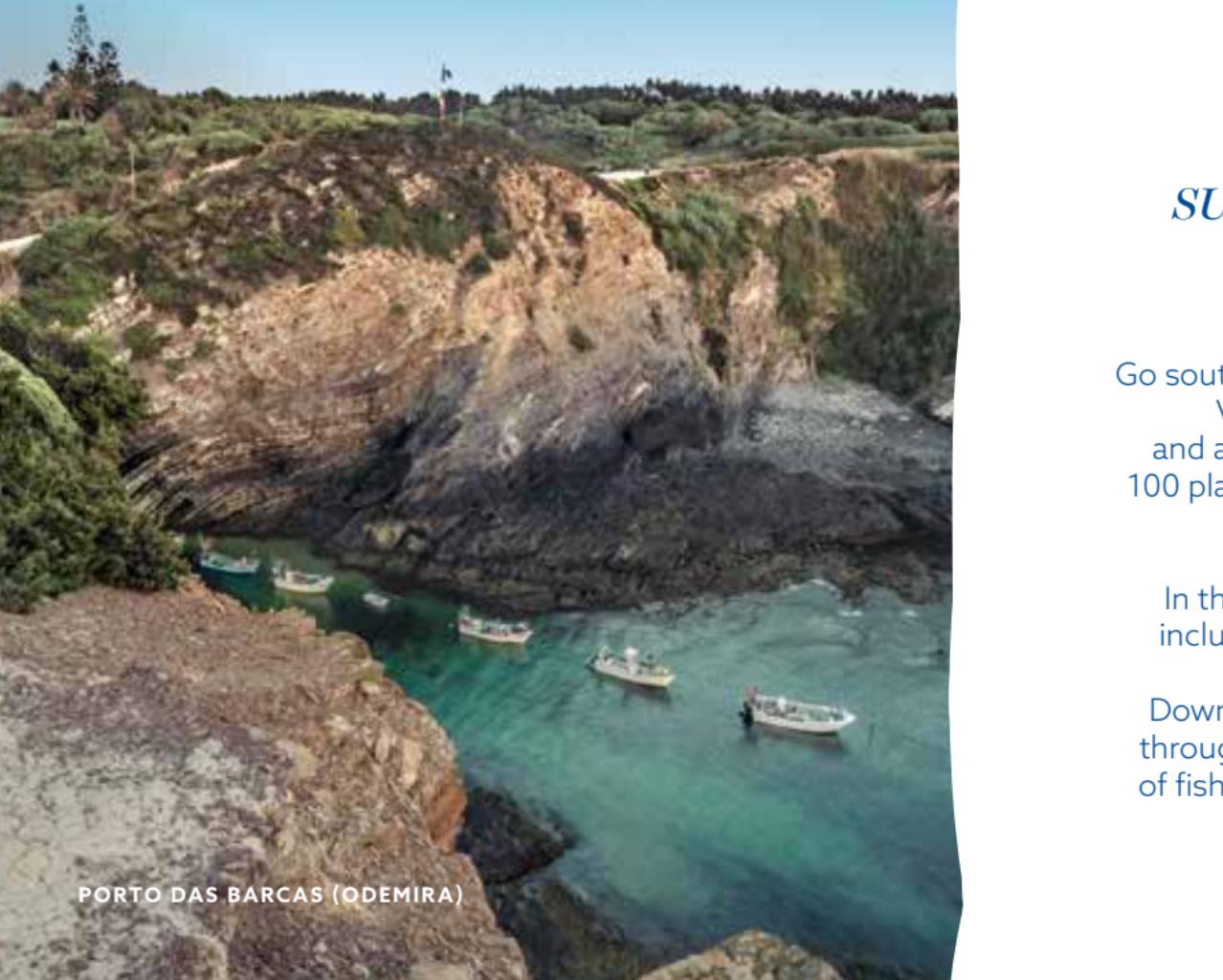
At this coastal reserve, you find many species of birds, ponds and endless views over blue waters and golden sands.

Set on the sea, the waters of the Lagoas de Santo André and Sanchá Nature Reserve give shelter to species such as eels and the *pardelha* loach, one of the rarest fish in Portuguese waters.

And the dunes welcome thousands of migratory birds, especially the red-crested pochard flamingo and little tern. Follow their lead and enjoy the Alentejo coast.



FLAMINGOS



SUDOESTE ALENTEJANO E COSTA VICENTINA NATURE PARK

Go south, into the enchanting Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina Nature Park. With a unique geology and about 30 distinct habitats, it is home to more than 100 plant species that are only found here, some of which were once thought to be extinct.

In the high cliffs, many bird species make their nests, including the only storks in the world that live in cliffs.

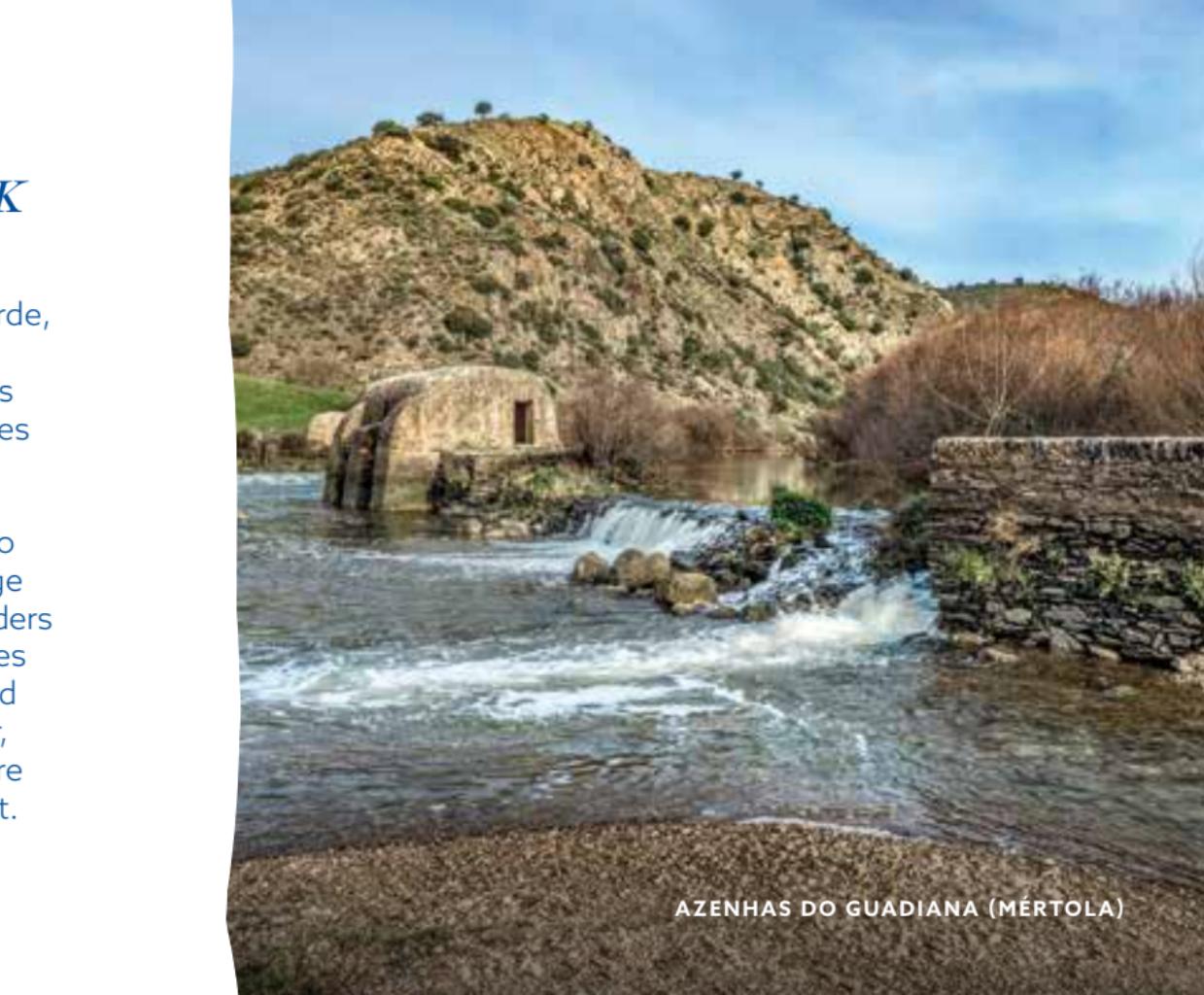
Down below, in the immense blue of the Atlantic, stroll through quaint fishing villages to discover a huge variety of fish, as well as otters that make their home in the sea.

PORTO DAS BARCAS (ODEMIRA)

VALE DO GUADIANA NATURE PARK

Inland from the Atlantic, head east, visiting Castro Verde, a World Biosphere Reserve with plains dominated by fields where grain, fallows and natural grasslands are occasionally interrupted by vineyards, olive groves and oak forests.

At the Vale do Guadiana Nature Park, enjoy the Pulo do Lobo gorge, a 112-foot waterfall in a narrow gorge of the River Guadiana. The river's path gradually meanders south. Here, you can follow one of the walking routes and perhaps see some of the hundreds of protected species who call this home. You may also see deer, golden eagles, black vultures, bustards or even a rare Iberian lynx drinking at the River Guadiana at sunset.



AZENHAS DO GUADIANA (MÉRTOLA)



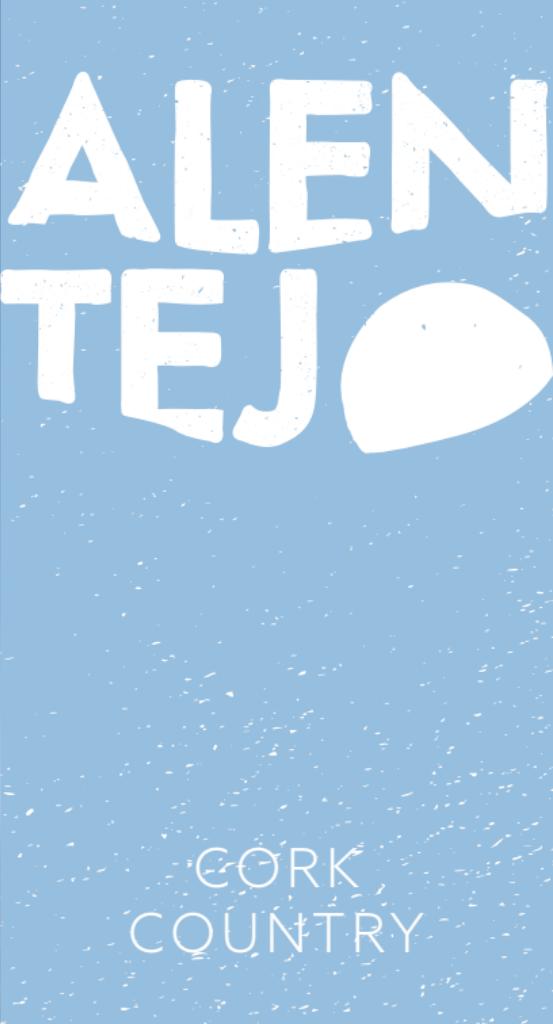
ROMAN BRIDGE AT PORTAGEM (MARVÃO)

CONSERVATION LANDS OF THE ALTO ALENTEJO

Along the River Guadiana in the Alto Alentejo, the Naturtejo Geopark and the Serra de São Mamede Nature Park offer rare natural and historic landscapes. Here, massive cliffs track the shore and guide the landscape, and ancient standing stones like the Meada Menhir dot the landscape.



SKYDIVE





ALENTEJO





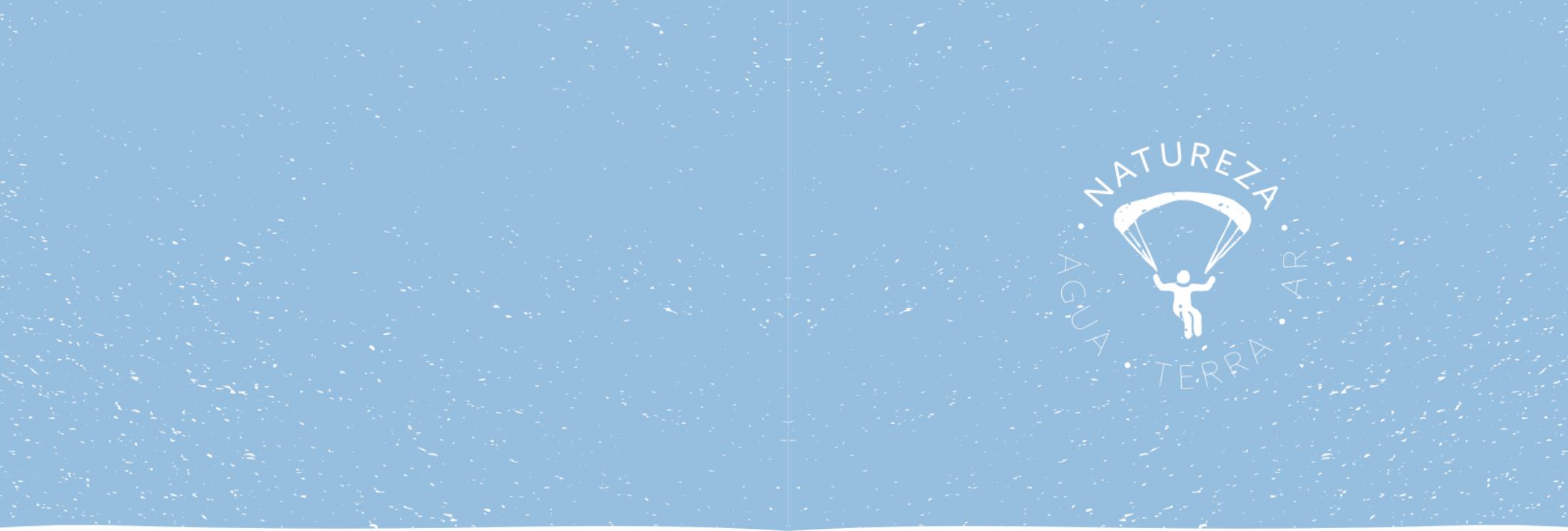
STORKS AT THE ESTUÁRIO DO SADO NATURE RESERVE

BIRDING

Eu Ouvi Um Passarinho (I heard a bird) is a traditional Alentejo song, and the Alentejo sky is a symphony of thousands of birds. Look for rare species such as the Iberian imperial eagle, the great bustard, the kestrel or the roller in the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve. Along the Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina Nature Park you may find rare species such as the little bustard, stone-curlew, Thekla's lark and Richard's pipit.

Along the coast, Cape Sines and Cape Sardão are great places to watch seabirds such as sandwich terns and shearwaters.

And, with birds come birders from distant lands, making Alentejo a stage for bird observation. If you want to hear the sky sing, just fly south.



ALENTEJO





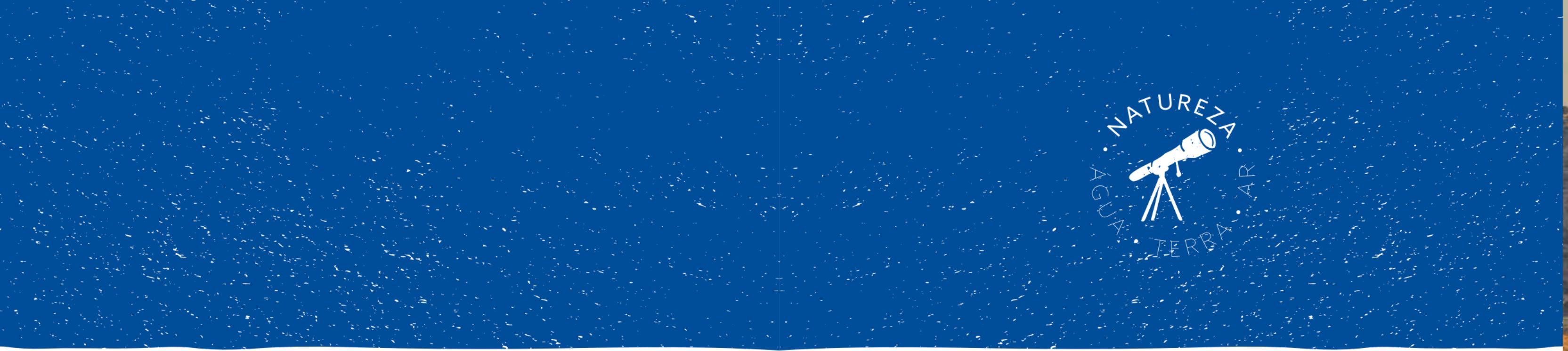
HOT AIR BALOON FLIGHT

SKY ADVENTURES

In the Alentejo's endless sky, adrenaline is in the air, and all are welcomed to a sky with no limits.

The Alentejo is one of the best ballooning spots in Europe, with sweeping plains and great visibility. Head for the Monsaraz and Beja areas where you can soar over the plains, hills and the Montados (cork forests) throughout the year.

In the skies over Évora or Ferreira do Alentejo, you can skydive or skysurf everyday, year-round.



ALENTEJO



ALQUEVA LAKE



SEEING STARS

As the sun goes down, thousands of stars emerge over the Great Lake of Alqueva.

This is the time to enjoy the magical spectacle of the Dark Sky Alqueva Reserve, stretching from Redondo to Mértola. When night comes, crickets begin their songs, villages dim their lights and the universe is yours to enjoy. This is one of the best night sky viewing spots on the planet.

Discover the mysteries of the Milky Way from the shore, a canoe or houseboat — with a glass of the local wine in hand. Spend the night in the company of the Universe.



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