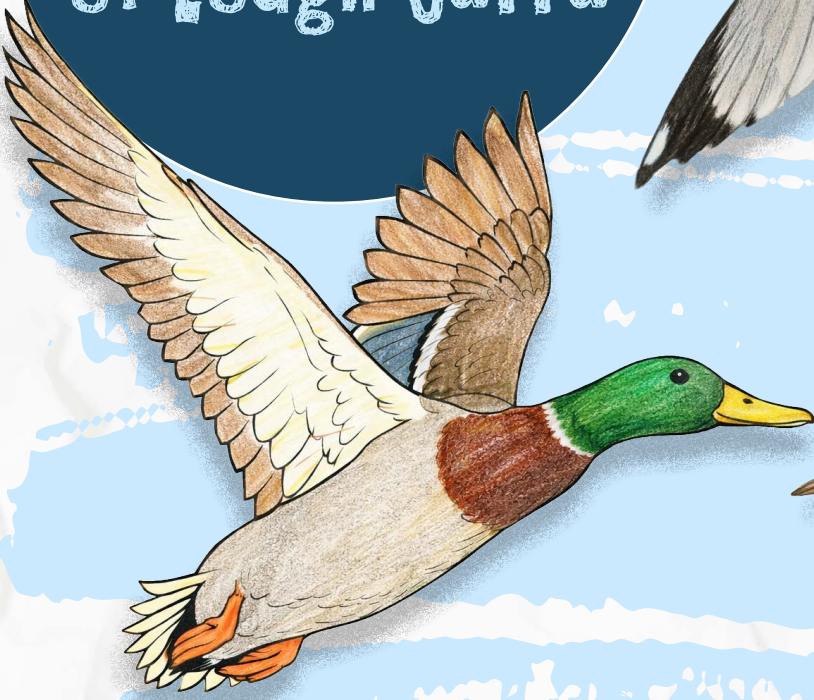


Lough Carra's YOUNG EXPLORERS



Funded by
An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



LOUGH CARRA'S UNIQUE COMBINATION OF FRESHWATER, WETLAND, AND TERRESTRIAL HABITATS ATTRACTS A MULTITUDE OF BIRD SPECIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT AT LEAST 140 SPECIES AND ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE COUNTRY'S BREEDING BIRD SPECIES OCCUR HERE. THE LAKE IS DESIGNATED AS A SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA) UNDER THE EUROPEAN UNION'S BIRDS DIRECTIVE, REFLECTING ITS IMPORTANCE FOR BIRD CONSERVATION AT BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

DOTTED WITH ISLANDS, REEDBEDS, AND MARSHY SHORES, LOUGH CARRA PROVIDES AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR BOTH RESIDENT AND VISITING WATERBIRDS, WITH THE LAKE BEING AN IMPORTANT WINTERING GROUND FOR SPECIES SUCH AS THE WHOOPER SWAN AND THE GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.

WITH THIS RICH MOSAIC OF HABITATS, THE LAKE SHOULD BE A BUSTLING BREEDING SITE FOR OUR WATER-BIRDS. HOWEVER, EXTENSIVE RESEARCH OVER THE PAST FIFTY YEARS TELLS A WORRYING STORY OF DECLINE OF THE WATERBIRDS THAT BREED IN THE LOUGH CARRA CATCHMENT. PERHAPS MOST CONCERNING IS THE CATASTROPHIC DROP IN THE DUCK POPULATION, PARTICULARLY THE MALLARD, WHOSE NUMBERS HAVE PLUMMETED BY UP TO 90%.

ONE CAUSE OF THIS DECLINE HAS BEEN THE ARRIVAL OF THE PREDATORY, NON-NATIVE AMERICAN MINK WHICH TAKES THE CHICKS AND EGGS OF OUR WATERBIRDS. UNDER THE LOUGH CARRA LIFE PROJECT, THE NPWS (NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE) IS IMPLEMENTING CONTROLS ON THE AMERICAN MINK POPULATION AROUND LOUGH CARRA AND REDUCING THE GREY CROW NUMBERS. SINCE THESE CONTROL MEASURES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE WE HAVE STARTED TO SEE A GRADUAL INCREASE IN THE BREEDING DUCK AND SWAN POPULATIONS.

HOWEVER, OTHER FACTORS SUCH AS LOSS OF BREEDING AND FEEDING HABITATS DUE TO DRAINAGE AND CHANGES IN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECLINES IN LOUGH CARRA'S BIRDLIFE.

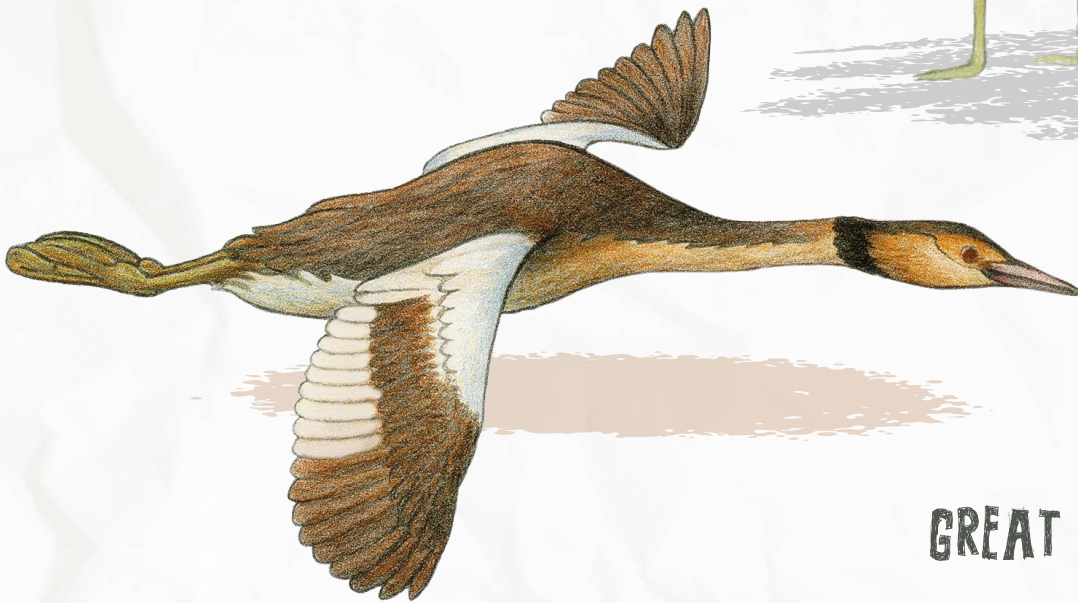


Lough Carra's
YOUNG EXPLORERS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BIRDS OF LOUGH CARRA

1

COMMON GULL

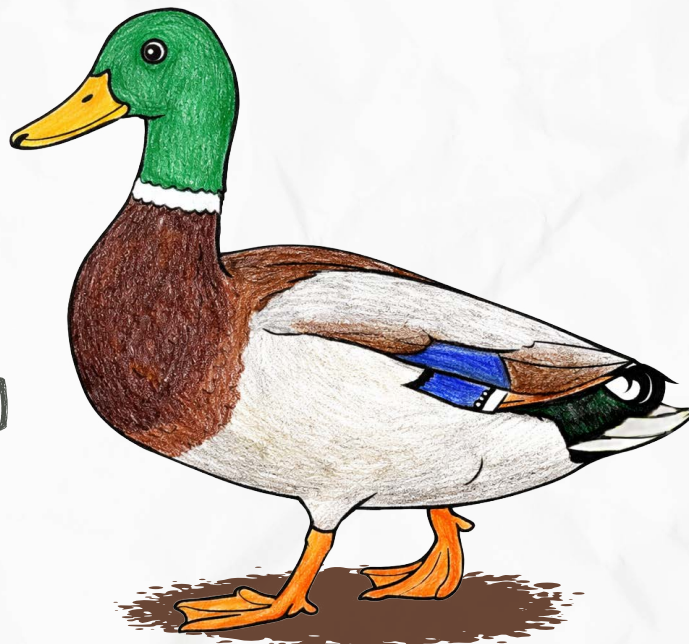


2

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

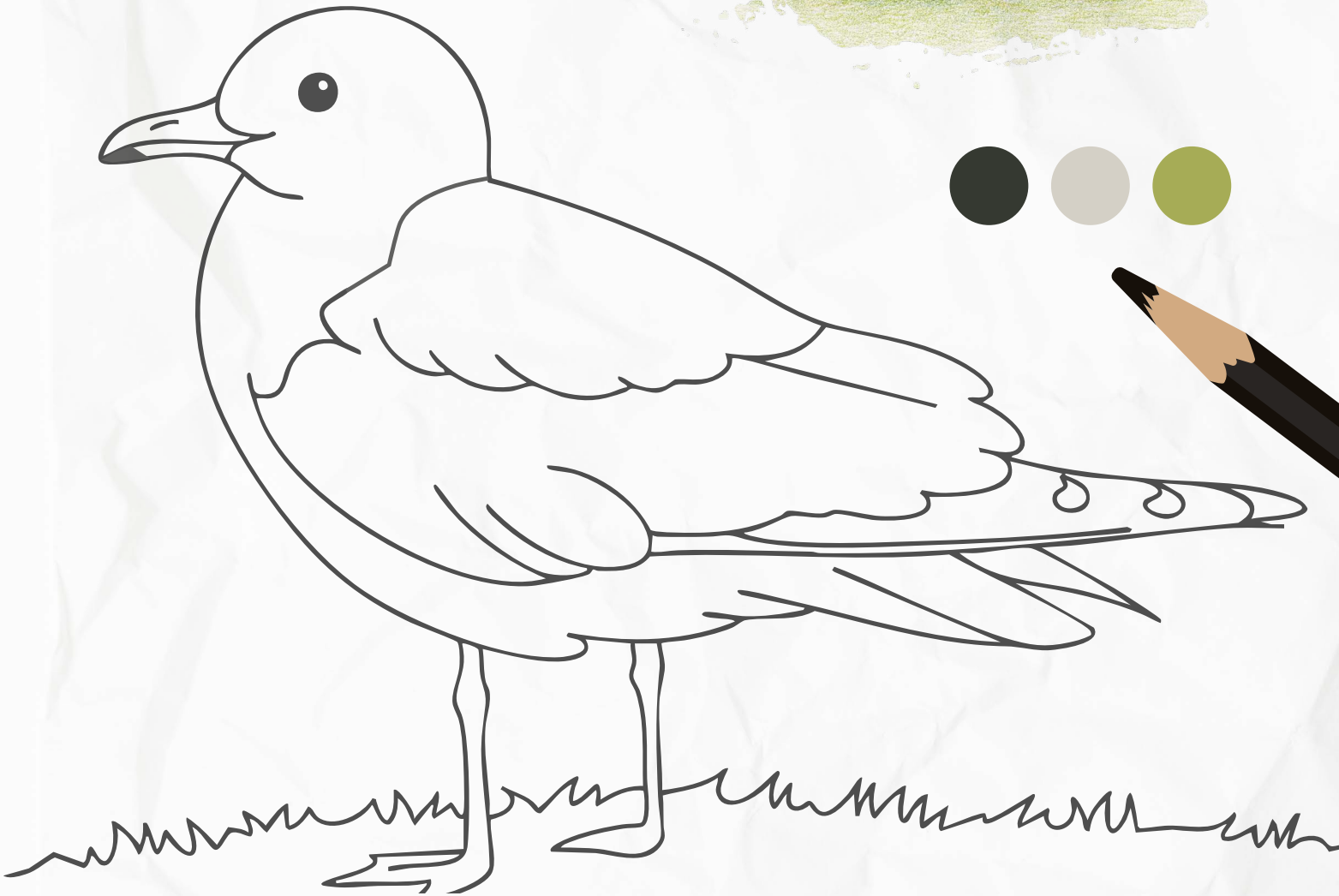
3

MALLARD



COMMON GULL

(IRISH NAME: FAOILEÁN BÁN)



DID YOU KNOW

THE COMMON GULL HAS GREENISH LEGS AND A YELLOW BILL. IT FEEDS ON WORMS, INSECTS, FISH AND MOLLUSCS. THESE BIRDS ARE THE MAIN REASON THAT LOUGH CARRA IS A SPECIAL PROTECTED AREA (SPA) WHICH MEANS THEIR HABITAT MUST BE PROTECTED.



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PURPLE HAIRSTREAK

(IRISH NAME: FOITHEACH MÓR)

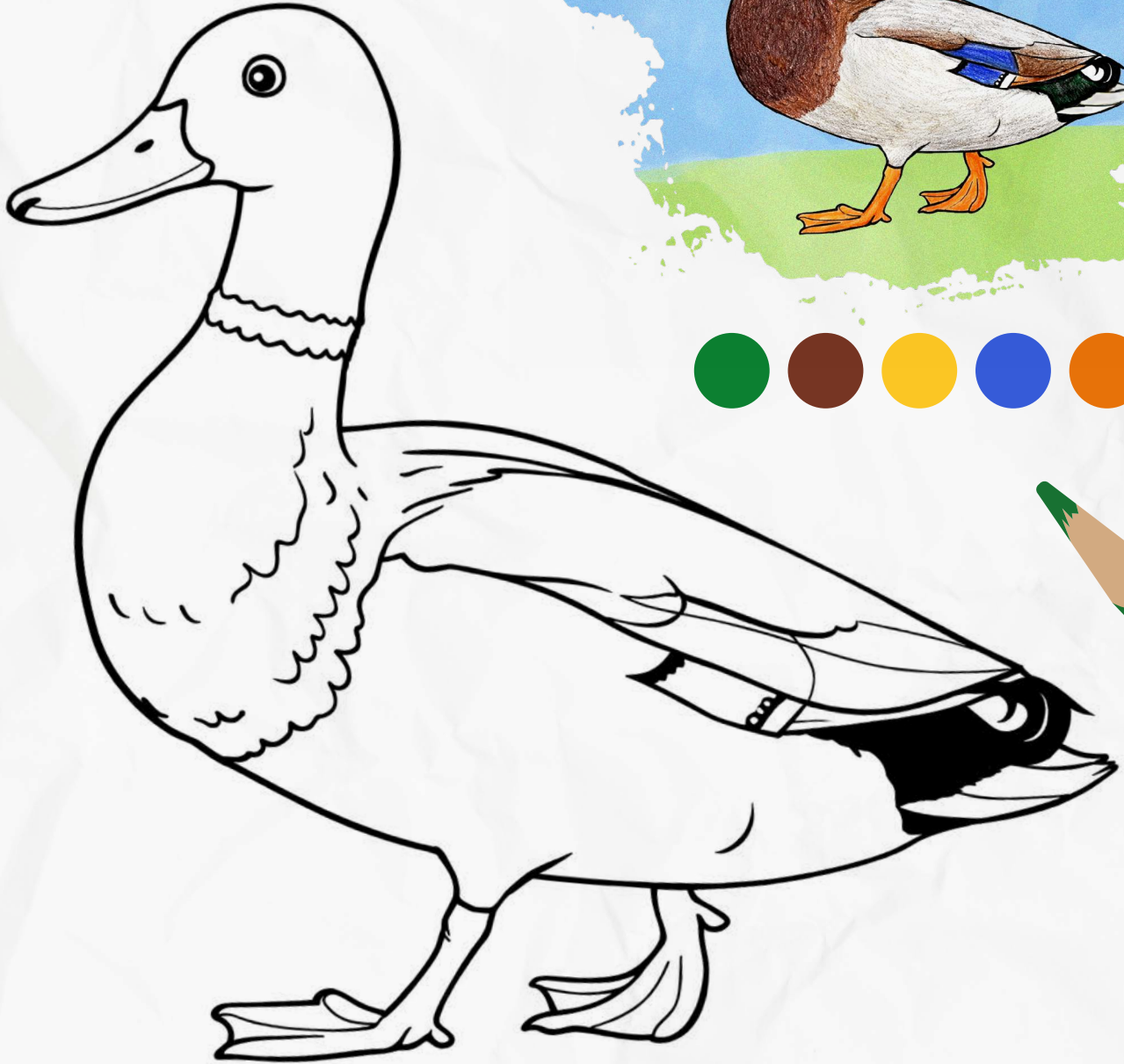
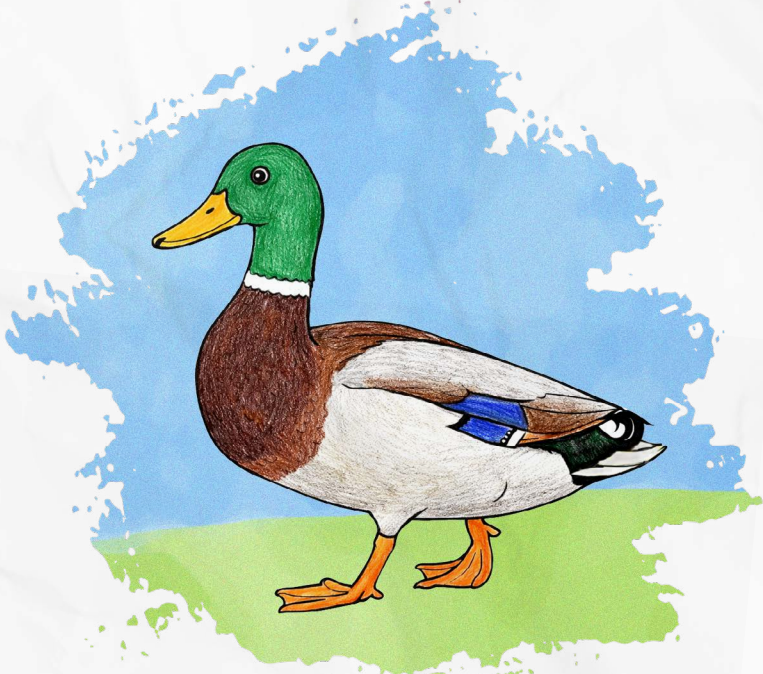


DID YOU KNOW

THE GREAT CRESTED GREBE HAS A LONG NECK, POINTED BEAK AND FEATHERS ON ITS HEAD. THEY DIVE UNDER WATER TO FEED MAINLY ON FISH BUT ALSO ON OTHER CREATURES. THEY NEST IN THE REEDBEDS AT LOUGH CARRA FROM APRIL - JUNE. CHICKS OFTEN TRAVEL ON THEIR PARENTS BACK.

MALLARD

(IRISH NAME: LACHA FHIÁIN)



DID YOU KNOW

MALE MALLARD DUCKS HAVE IRIDESCENT (SHIMMERING) GREEN HEADS. THE FEMALES ARE MOTTLED BROWN WITH A BRIGHT BLUE FEATHER ON THEIR SIDE. MALLARD DUCKLINGS ARE ABLE TO SWIM AND FIND FOOD VERY SOON AFTER HATCHING.

BIRDS OF LOUGH CARRA (WORD SEARCH)

M C A L R H M M A L L A R D O P T Z M N
V O K G S B P E S E V J E C I I Y L C N
D O U O C O M M O N G U L L H M H G M N
G T J B A A C O L E R P S A R K W A U M
A R B H L G S P U I F W U Y R K V D T B
Y W E U U A Q O Y W T A Z S S R E W E Z
Y B H A S Z C D R D Z T T U F F N A S P
Y P K O T V P K O X L I L G W Q E L W X
K Z T M O C W Y H C Z J J E Y R M L A W
S M U N E P R D H E O Y V Q G F U D N E
C O F N M Z E E G L A M Q G Q R P E K M
L O T H G P X R S F Q D M K O W E J W E
R R E E D E B Y S T A P E O Q M K B I W
H H D Y V F V P E W E K W D N T B Y E T
U E D C Y D M Q F Y A D K T G T H J J B
R N U X T S C B K O E N G T N U E M T O
B J C H W F V W C T G G E R K H L R C A
A H K Q J D E V N C I L Z Y E U B L N R
S F W M R G M Q I Y G K K M F B Z E S O
H N X N M G Q T H K H I W V H Z E N F H

FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS IN THE PUZZLE.

WORDS ARE HIDDEN → AND ↓ AND ↘

GREAT CRESTED
GREBE

LITTLE GREBE

TUFTED DUCK

WHOOPER SWAN

COMMON GULL

MALLARD

COMMON TERN

GADWALL

MOORHEN

MUTE SWAN

BLACK-HEADED
GULL COOT



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