

AZORES A NATURAL PORTRAIT

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Pedro Cardoso

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**Clara Gaspar, Paulo A. V. Borges, Pedro Cardoso,
Rosalina Gabriel, Isabel R. Amorim, António Frias Martins,
Francisco Maduro-Dias, João Mora Porteiro,
Luís Silva, Fernando Pereira**

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Tel./Fax 296 684 926 - Mobile Phone 913 461 799

Email veracor@veracor.pt

www.veracor.pt

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Os Montanheiros

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FOREWORD

CARLOS CÉSAR

President of the Government of the Azores

THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE AZORES

The biodiversity of the Azores, undoubtedly preserved by the Atlantic isolation of the archipelago, but also by successful environmental policies such as measures to protect the endemic flora and sustainable fisheries, awaits to be discovered by readers of this book.

The book "Azores - a natural portrait", by revealing all the marvellous multitude of life around us, whether it is a microscopic bacterium or a majestic sperm whale, tells us and to the world, that our region is a melting pot of life in an unstable balance: a unique and marvellous place that is important to preserve.

The fragility of endemic species, such as the waterclover (*Marsilea azorica*), reminds us of our responsibility as passengers of Earth and that we have an obligation to leave it undisturbed for future generations, and all contributions to this aim should be greatly appreciated.

For this reason, as president of the Government of a region with two World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, marine areas protected by the OSPAR Convention, dozens of Natura 2000 protected areas, several projects financed by the European LIFE+ programme, and many other certifications, I congratulate the authors of this publication and hope that its circulation will contribute to a deeper knowledge of our islands, also in a scientific perspective.

Further known, better understood in all its complexities, the Azores will certainly be more appreciated and praised.