

EUROPEAN RIVERS  
SUMMIT 2021

CRY ME A RIVER  
Álvaro Fonseca

GUARDA  
RIOS

COLETIVO GUARDA RIOS



# EUROPEAN RIVERS SUMMIT 2021

## CRY ME A RIVER Álvaro Fonseca

COLETIVO GUARDA RIOS



Suprabha Seshan

CRY ME A RIVER

An elegy for a wounded planet  
and a plea for its protection

New Internationalist 2015

Rivers are transport systems for trade, it is said.  
Rivers are beautiful, it is said.  
River-front property is costly, it is said.  
Rivers attract millions of tourists, it is said.  
You can't step into the same river twice, it is said.  
Rivers make great metaphors, it is said.  
Life is like a river, it is said.  
Riverlike, we flow, it is said.  
Rivers are the arteries of the planet, it is said.



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## GUARDA RIOS?

*Profession:*  
Riverkeeper

Mondego river basin  
2020

## GUARDA RIOS?

Riverside *bird species:*  
Kingfisher

Tagus river basin  
2019



- ⑧ Freixo | Ash  
*Fraxinus Angustifolia*
- ⑨ Veados | Deer  
*Cervus Elaphus*
- ⑩ Oliveira | Olive tree  
*Olea Europaea*
- ⑪ Javali | Wild boar  
*Sus Scrofa*
- ⑫ Garça-Real | Heron  
*Ardea Cinerea*
- ⑬ Salgueiro-Preto | Black willow  
*Salix Atrocinerea*
- ⑭ Guarda-Rios | Kingfishers  
*Alcedo Athis*
- ⑮ Raposa | Fox  
*Vulpes Vulpes*
- ⑯ Morcego-de-Água | Water bat  
*Myotis Daubentonii*



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## GUARDA RIOS

*Collective:* Artistic research and creation around riverside territories

*Project:* 1-2 week residencies in different river basins in Portugal (rural and/or depopulated regions) + exhibitions (since 2019)

Observation and interaction with places and people to access different but interlinked dimensions: biophysical, ecological, anthropological, aesthetic, subjective

Partnerships (hosts): local projects, townships, museums, artistic residency structures

*Activities:* field trips, walks, interviews, listening exercises, public events, gatherings, etc.

GUARDA RIOS: website, blog and social media

GUARDA RIOS is supported by:





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## ASSEMBLY AND EXPERIMENTING W/ DIFFERENT VESSELS (Apr-Sep 2021)



RAFT

Côa Museum  
(Anthropocene Forum)  
Jun 2021

## DYI DINGHIES



Tejo River residency  
Sep 2021





**Meeting with sheppard**  
(Miranda do Douro region)

November 2019  
Douro River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





Field recording  
(Angueira river)

May 2021  
Douro River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





**Meeting with 'Ti Jaime'**  
(boat builder, Arneiro)

May 2020  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Exploration with raft (Mértola region)

July 2021  
Guadiana River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





**Debate among local  
projects and activist  
groups  
(Mértola)**

**July 2021  
Guadiana River Basin**

**Coletivo Guarda Rios**





**Field research**  
(Cedillo dam reservoir)

**September 2021**  
**Tejo River Basin**

**Coletivo Guarda Rios**





## Convivial gathering (Vila Velha de Ródão)

September 2021  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios

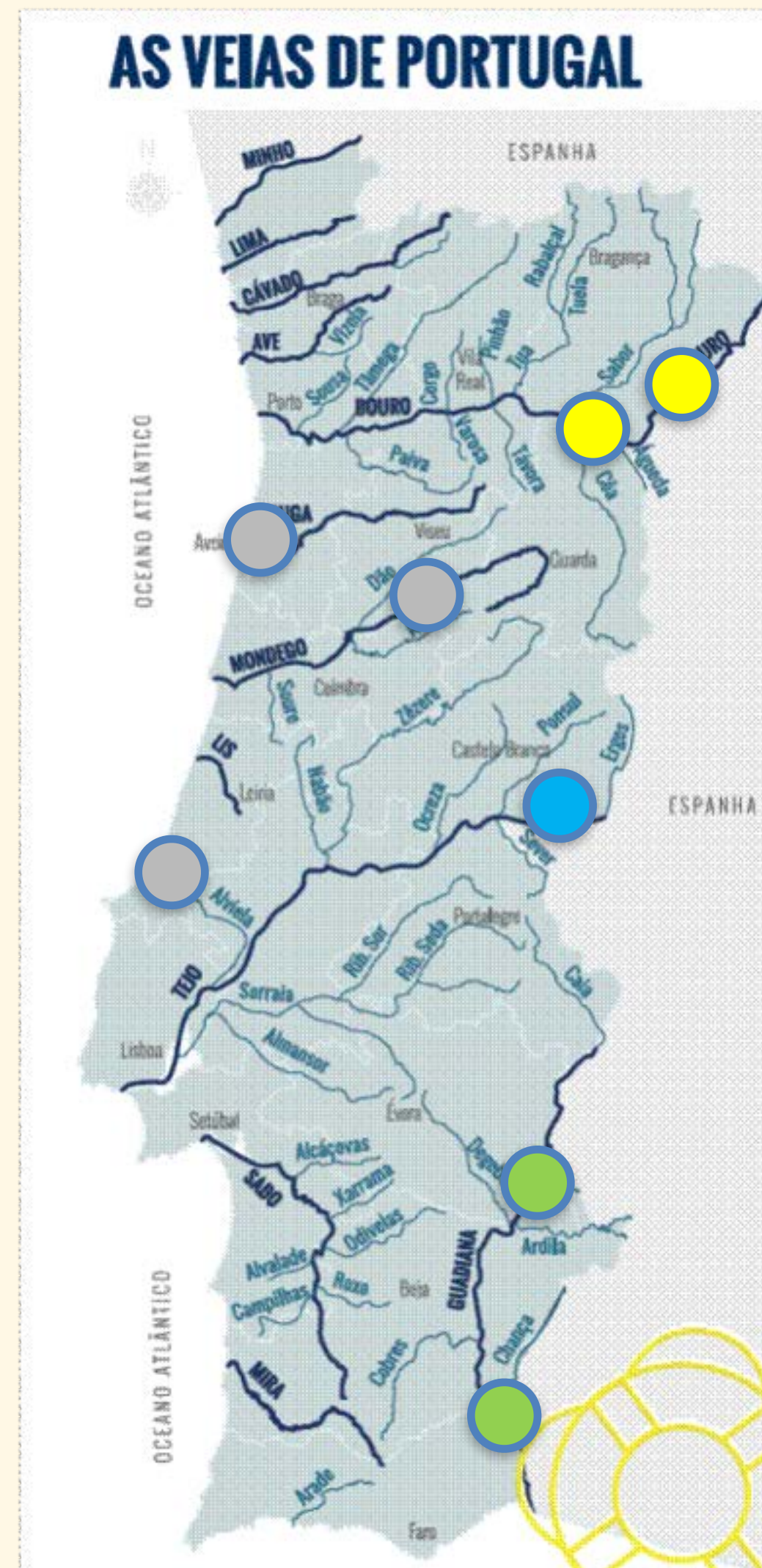


# EUROPEAN RIVERS SUMMIT 2021

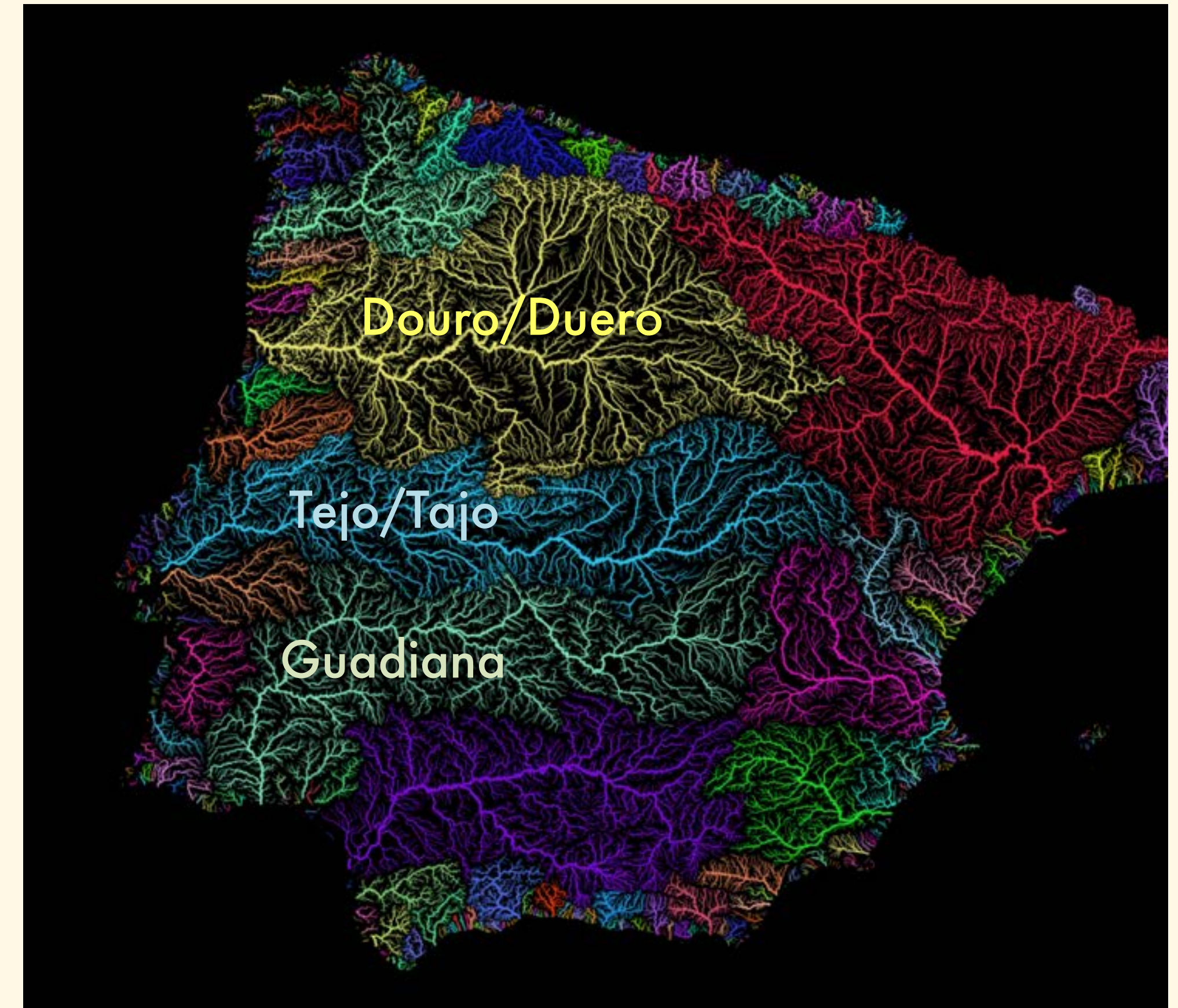
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## PORTUGAL'S MAIN RIVER BASINS



'Guide to save rivers'  
(Leaflet, GEOTA/Rios Livres)



Iberian Peninsula: Robert Szucs (Grasshopper Geography)

GUARDA RIOS RESIDENCIES  
(2019-2021)



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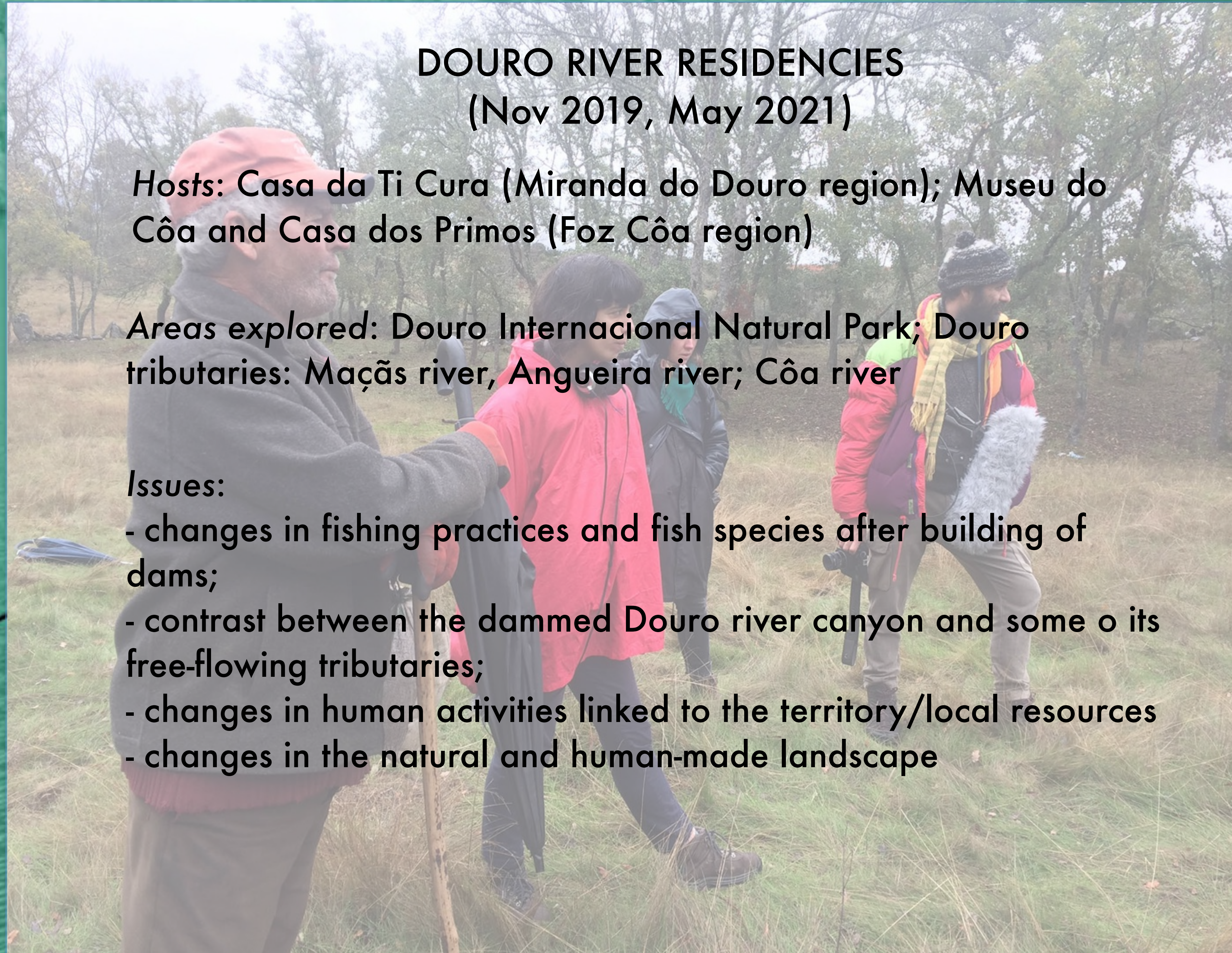
## DOURO RIVER RESIDENCIES (Nov 2019, May 2021)

*Hosts:* Casa da Ti Cura (Miranda do Douro region); Museu do Côa and Casa dos Primos (Foz Côa region)

*Areas explored:* Douro Internacional Natural Park; Douro tributaries: Maças river, Angueira river; Côa river

### *Issues:*

- changes in fishing practices and fish species after building of dams;
- contrast between the dammed Douro river canyon and some of its free-flowing tributaries;
- changes in human activities linked to the territory/local resources
- changes in the natural and human-made landscape







**Douro River**  
(Bemposta dam)

November 2019  
Douro River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Maças River

November 2019  
Douro River Basin

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Angueira River

May 2021  
Douro River Basin

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Angueira River

Water flute [Video](#)

May 2021  
Douro River Basin

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## TEJO RIVER RESIDENCIES (Oct 2019, May 2020, Sep 2021)

*Host:* Tapada da Tojeira (Vila Velha de Ródão region)

*Areas explored:* Tejo Internacional Natural Park; Tejo tributaries: Sever river, Pônsul river, Fonte Santa brook; Cedillo dam reservoir; Pego das Portas (Arneiro)

### *Issues:*

- changes in river-linked activities (e.g. fishing practices) and in fish and other species after building of dams (conversations with local fishermen);
- impacts of drought and dam management on the landscape, the river flow and water quality







Pônsul River

October 2019  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Pônsul River

October 2019  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





**Sever River**  
(submerged water mills)

**October 2019**  
**Tejo River Basin**

**Coletivo Guarda Rios**





Sever River

October 2019  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





Fonte Santa Brook

October 2019  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Fonte Santa & Calatrucha Brooks

October 2019  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Cedillo Dam Reservoir

(Azolla water fern bloom)

May 2020  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Cedillo Dam Reservoir

(Azolla water fern bloom)

May 2020  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





**Cedillo Dam Reservoir**  
'green slime': cyanobacteria bloom)

September 2021  
Tejo River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Cedillo Dam Reservoir

September 2021  
Tejo River Basin

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**Enxarrique Brook**  
(downstream from Cedillo dam)

September 2021  
Tejo River Basin

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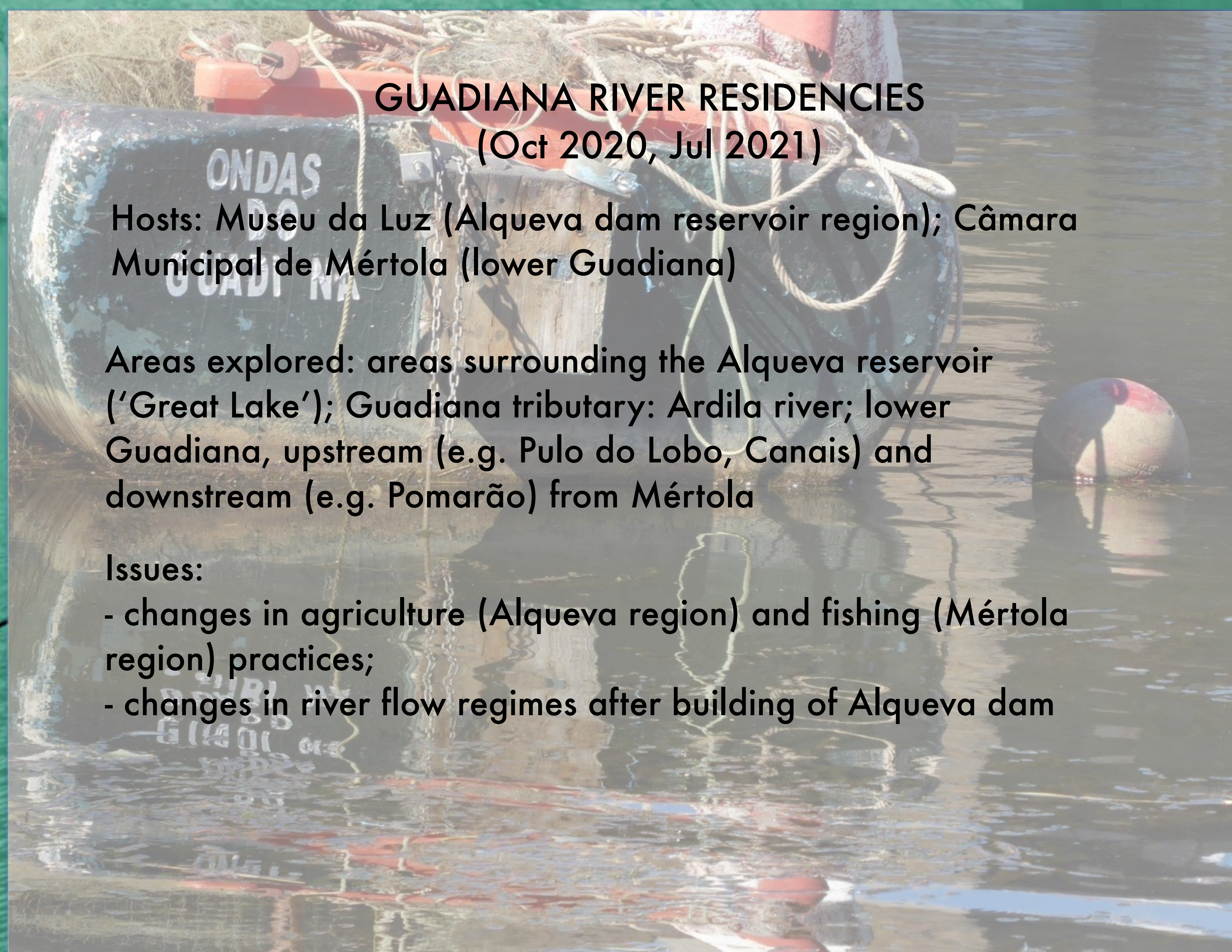
## GUADIANA RIVER RESIDENCIES (Oct 2020, Jul 2021)

Hosts: Museu da Luz (Alqueva dam reservoir region); Câmara Municipal de Mértola (lower Guadiana)

Areas explored: areas surrounding the Alqueva reservoir ('Great Lake'); Guadiana tributary: Ardila river; lower Guadiana, upstream (e.g. Pulo do Lobo, Canais) and downstream (e.g. Pomarão) from Mértola

Issues:

- changes in agriculture (Alqueva region) and fishing (Mértola region) practices;
- changes in river flow regimes after building of Alqueva dam







**Alqueva dam reservoir**  
(Mourão region)

October 2020  
Guadiana River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





**Alqueva dam reservoir**  
(Mourão region)

October 2020  
Guadiana River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





**Superintensive and intensive olive groves**  
(Mourão region)

October 2020/Guadiana River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





## Ardila River

October 2020  
Guadiana River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios





# Guadiana River

(Pulo do Lobo)

July 2021  
Guadiana River Basin

Coletivo Guarda Rios



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## VISUALIZING THE ANTHROPOCENE

GUARDA RIOS's immersive and relational approach, shifting between apparently opposing dimensions: functional and experimental, mapping and play, ethics and aesthetics, utopian and dystopian.

Witnessing and interrogating the impacts of the socioeconomic development model of the last decades, which has been exploiting the natural world, in particular rivers and all the human and more-than-human life that subsists around them.

*"Break the pattern which connects and you necessarily destroy all quality."* Gregory Bateson ('Mind and nature')

Impacts of climate and  
river-flow changes

Neglect and devaluation of  
local practices linked to the territory

Disconnect from land-based  
knowledge and craftsmanship

Replacement of vernacular knowledge  
with industrial development models



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## CHALLENGES

For artists, researchers, activists, citizens

*"How can we recreate social practices that will give us our humanity back (...) not only for our own survival but just as much for the future of life on the planet, for animal species and plants. But also non-bodily species such as music, art, film – and the relationship to both time, love and care for others, the feeling of merging into the heart of the cosmos?" Félix Guattari ('The three ecologies')*

## RECONNECT WITH TERRITORIES & PEOPLE

Ecological  
Ethics

Local socially-engaged  
& regenerative projects

Relational  
aesthetics

Interdisciplinary dialogue  
& mutual support

(INFRAPOLITICAL SPHERE)



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New Internationalist 2015

Rivers are not alive, it is said.  
They are, like factories and cars, systems that  
can be taken apart and put together.  
It is said that the world's economy needs the  
world's rivers, the world's oceans, the world's  
forests, and the world's people.  
That the world's economy is infinitely more  
important than the world's ecology, which is  
now measured at \$33 trillion (only).  
.../...



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That the currents between bank accounts flow  
sweeter than the waters of a river, enabling  
our evolution as a species, by nourishing our  
bellies, our minds and hearts and ever-  
demanding bodies.

Nearly all the rivers in the world have been  
dammed, what's your worry, are you not  
being supported by the economy?



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## GUARDA RIOS

Álvaro Fonseca

Francisco Pinheiro

Laura Marques

Nuno Barroso



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Guided visit to exhibition: Nov 19; 19h