

Parc naturel régional de Camargue

Discover the Parc

ENGLISH

de Camargue

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Beaches and reed beds, rice and wheat, the salt ponds and the Mediterranean – the Camargue Regional Nature Park is multifarious.

Born out of a struggle between river and sea, the Camargue, in biological terms, is one of Western Europe's richest regions, and an important stopping-off point for migratory birds as they go back and forth between Europe and Africa.

It is also France's only nesting site for the flamingo, its world-famous emblem. And then there are the bulls, horses, beavers, owls, gulls, terns, herons and wading birds.

The Camargue is a subtle blend of contrasts, both entrancing and ever-changing. It reveals itself in a multitude of ways, depending on the time of day and the season. There are always surprises in store for the visitor. Enjoy your visit...

A new life is being invented...



The natural heritage



2 Scamandre Regional Nature Reserve

(Réserve naturelle régionale du Scamandre)
This typically Mediterranean wetland is exceptional in its biodiversity. A number of remarkable bird species nest close to the reception area itself. There are 9 species of heron, and the majority of France's glossy ibises. Protected species include the European pond turtle.
Syndicat Mixte de la Camargue Gardoise, Centre du Scamandre, Route des Iscles, Gallician, Vauvert - Tel. +33 (0)4 66 73 52 05 contact@camarguegardoise.com www.camarguegardoise.com
Opening times: Tuesday to Saturday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. Closed on bank holidays. Free admission (reservation required for groups).

4 Mas de Pin Fourcat

This private domain is open to families and groups. It represents the authentic Camargue, with its herds of bulls and horses, and a myriad of birds in the marshes and ponds. Visits on horseback or by horse and cart.
Route du Bac, CIAM, Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer Tel. +33 (0)4 66 73 51 94 info@maspinfourcat.com www.maspinfourcat.com - www.camargue-mer.com
Opening times: 8:00 to 12:00 am, and 1:30 to 5:00 pm, all year round. Reservations required. There is an admission charge.

5 The Pont de Gau bird park

(Parc ornithologique de Pont de Gau)
Here you can observe birds in a natural environment of 60 hectares. And there are 7 km of paths that link up the marshes, ponds, reed beds, meadowlands, salt plains and irrigation channels. The diversity of habitats is matched by that of the birds themselves, both sedentary and migratory, and much has been done to facilitate the observation of flamingos, herons, storks, egrets, teals, sparrows, wading birds and raptors.
Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer Tel. +33 (0)4 90 97 82 62 contact@parcornithologique.com www.parcornithologique.com
Opening times: 1 April to 30 September, 9:00 am till sunset, and 1 October to 31 March, 10:00 am till sunset. There is an admission charge.

The Camargue National Nature Reserve

(Réserve naturelle nationale de Camargue)
With its 13 000 hectares of ponds, lagoons and salt plains at the heart of the Camargue, the Camargue National Nature Reserve is among Europe's largest wetlands.
It extends out to the shore, and takes in Vaccarès lake. It is totally protected, and its visitors will discover some real treasures, notably 237 species of birds in pristine environments.

6 La Gacholle lighthouse

(Phare de la Gacholle)
One of the starting points for a tour of the sea dyke: 20 km of pathways for pedestrians or cyclists (but not cars). Although the dunes themselves are out of bounds, the sea is accessible via marked paths. The birds include gulls, terns and flamingos. Exhibition on the subject of the Camargue coast, and an observatory.
Opening times: School holidays, public holidays and weekends, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Admission free

11 La Capelière

Here, in natural landscapes, you will discover the fauna and flora of the Camargue in different exhibitions, and on walks with panoramic views. Authorisations for the Salin de Badon observatories are issued at La Capelière.
Opening times:
• 1 April to 30 September, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, and 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm
• 1 October to 31 March, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, and 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm (except Tuesdays)
• Closed on 25 December and 1 January
There is an admission charge.
Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature – Camargue National Reserve
C 134 de Fielouse, Arles - Tel. +33 (0)4 90 97 00 97
camargue-rn@espaces-naturels.fr - www.reserve-camargue.org

7 Flamingo reproduction site

(Étang du Fangassier)
For more than 20 years, the Camargue Regional Nature Park has been managing the only site in France where flamingos reproduce, at Fangassier, owned by the Conservatoire du Littoral. The Bureau des Guides Naturalistes, in partnership with the park, the Office de Tourisme in Arles, the Tour du Valat and the Conservatoire du Littoral, organises visits, during the nesting season, to one of the western Mediterranean's largest flamingo colonies.
Étang du Fangassier – Salin-de-Giraud
Opening times: 1 April to 30 September.
Reservations (there is an admission charge) at the Office de Tourisme, Arles :
Tel. + 33 (0)4 42 86 89 77 or + 33 (0)6 95 90 70 48 - ot-arles@visitsprovence.com www.guide-nature.fr

8 Domaine de la Palissade

Here you will find ponds and lagoons that communicate with the river and the sea, and unique landscapes with a rich variety of flora and fauna. The aquatic environment provides a remarkable habitat for fish: bass, eels, grey mullet, blenny, shad, lampreys. And birds are everywhere, attracted by the swarming biological life. Depending on the season there are waders, avocets, sandpipers, greenshanks, and all sorts of duck, whose are particularly numerous when wintering. There is also a colony of herons and egrets. The Domaine de la Palissade is the only part of the Camargue that can be visited on horseback. Nature exhibitions, discovery paths, guided visits.

Salin-de-Giraud - Tel. +33 (0)4 42 86 81 28 - palissade@parc-camargue.fr www.palissade.fr - Opening times: 15 November to 28 February, Wednesday to Sunday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (closed on 25 December and 1 January) - Open daily the rest of the year, apart from 1 May and 11 November: 1 March to 14 June, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (closed on 1 January) - 15 June to 15 September, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm - 16 September to 14 November, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (closed on 11 November). Equestrian initiation sessions take place from the start of April to mid-November.

9 The Salt works observatory

The Giraud salt works, near the mouth of the Grand Rhône, covers 6,000 hectares and produces various compounds that are used by the chemical industry, including 340,000 tonnes of sodium chloride a year.
The Salt works observatory is on the road between Piemanson and Salin-de-Giraud

12 The Vigueirat marshes, a National Nature Reserve

(Les Marais du Vigueirat)
There is a range of different landscapes: flood plains, salt plains, ponds and woods, and the Camargue's largest reed beds. These natural spaces are microcosms in themselves, with thousands of birds, 4 herds of Camargue bulls and horses, 15 km of paths (sections of which are built on piles), observatories, etc. There are novel experiences for both children and adults, on foot or in horse-drawn carriages and an eco-path that is unique in France.
Mas Thibert - Tel. +33 (0)4 90 98 70 91 - visites.mdv@espaces-naturels.fr www.marais-vigueirat.reserve-camargue.org
Opening times: 1 February to 7 December, 9:30 am to 5:30 pm. Besides free access there are guided visits (reservations necessary).

The cultural heritage



1 Musée de la Camargue

This museum provides an indispensable introduction to the territory, from a societal viewpoint. The permanent exhibition "Le fil de temps... le fil de l'eau" (The flow of water, the flow of time, in the Camargue) shows how, on this island formed by the Rhône and the sea, change can be deep and rapid, and people constantly have to adapt to their environment in order to live and work there. At the start of the 3.5 km discovery walk there is an observation point in wood, created by the artist Tadashi Kawamata for Marseille Provence 2013, from which the visitor can look out over the surrounding landscape.

Mas du Pont de Rousty, RD 570, Arles - Tel. +33 (0)4 90 97 10 82
musee@parc-camargue.fr - www.parc-camargue.fr
The museum is open daily except on Tuesdays: from 1 April to 30 September, 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and 1:00 to 6:00 pm / 1 October to 31 March, 10:00 am to 12:30 pm and 1:00 to 5:00 pm.

Some of the Camargue's animals



Some of the Camargue's plants



3 The Château d'Avignon

(Domaine départemental du Château d'Avignon)
The design of the château was inspired by the historicist predilections of the belle-époque bourgeoisie. It is now a classified historic monument, with a landscaped park and a late 19th-century pumping station whose machinery is still used to irrigate the former property of Louis Noilly-Prat. Visits, exhibitions, cultural events and educational activities take place throughout the year.
RD 570, Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer
Tel. +33 (0)4 13 31 94 54 - www.chateaudavignon.fr
Opening times: 1 April to 4 October, 9:45 am to 5:30 pm (closed Monday to Tuesday and on 1 May) - 5 October to 31 March, open on Thursdays and Fridays, only for groups, reservation required. Free admission to the park and the outbuildings. For the château, there is an admission charge.

10 Musée du Riz

Robert Bon, the former head of the Bongran rice factory and now the director of the Musée du Riz, unveils the mysteries of rice: its history and cultivation, how it is processed, prepared and cooked. There are documents, scale models and some unusual machines. And at the end of the visit there is an opportunity to sample some organic products.
Le Petit Manuscrit, Le Sambuc, Arles
Tel. +33 (0)6 38 16 56 90
contact@museeduriz.fr. Opening times: All year round, by reservation. By reservation. There is an admission charge.

13 Tour Saint Louis

This tower provides an exceptional view of the Camargue, including the Saint Louis canal, the mouth of the Rhône and the salt ponds. It was built in 1737, for use as a lookout post and a lighthouse. It is now a classified historic monument, and houses the Office de Tourisme, along with a permanent exhibition of the largest ornithological collection in the Camargue, and temporary exhibitions.
Quai Bonnardel - Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône
Tel. +33 (0)4 42 86 01 21
contact@portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr
www.portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr
Opening times: summer: Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 12:00 am, and 1:30 pm to 5:00 pm. The opening hours are extended during the tourist season. There is an admission charge.

The main features of the Park's natural and cultural heritage are to be found on the map overleaf



This document is printed on unbleached paper, using wood from sustainably-managed forests

Some figures
Three towns
> Arles
including invertebrates: 5 700,
nationally or worldwide
> Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône
Population: 10 000
Area: 100 000 hectares
Coastline: 75 km
Highest point: 4 metres above sea level!
are to be found in the Camargue!

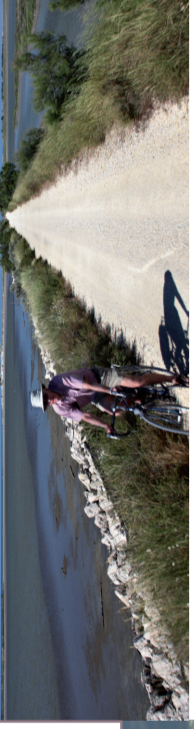
Some advice for visitors

- Help us keep the Camargue clean
- take your waste home!
- Remember that the dunes are sensitive areas.
- When walking round the park, remain on the paths. Do not stray onto private property.
- No fires or barbecues!
- Respect the wildlife, and avoid making unnecessary noise.
- Park only in designated areas.
- Between May and October, don't forget to bring mosquito repellent, sunscreen, and water.

The Camargue Regional Nature Park

The park is run on the basis of consultations between the authorities, the local people and the economic decision-makers. Its remit is to reconcile human development and nature conservation.

SCOP bid communication | Dominique Biret - 04 66 64 48 80 - Crédits photos: A.R. Johnson / Tour du Valat - J. Boudoux - A. Chtwaier, P. Danilou, J. Roché, Opus Species, E. Valet / PMIC



The Camargue is a large wetland in the Rhône delta. It is exceptionally diverse in its flora and fauna, its scenery and the culture of Provence in all its historical grandeur.

Whether you are interested in nature or in the traditions of the Camargue, we can give you the information you need to appreciate the park, bearing in mind its vulnerability.

Visiting museums or natural features, between the sea and the pools, on foot or on horseback, following the tourist routes or relaxing on the beach – you can organise your visit according to your preferences, while also respecting the quality of your surroundings.

Cultivated land

20% of the Camargue is used to grow rice. The water, taken from the Rhône for this purpose decalcifies the soil to a certain depth, and the rice fields are also home to nesting birds such as the heron. They are flooded in April and allowed to dry out in September for the harvest.



Freshwater marshes and reed beds

These are common in the upper Camargue and on the banks of the Rhône. Water plants such as bullrushes, cane and reeds are abundant in the marshes, which are used for hunting and, in summer, pasturing. They provide shelter for nesting and wintering birds. Reeds (« sagno », in Provençal) are cut in winter by the « sagneurs ». They are used as a roofing material.

The salt plains (« sansouires ») and meadowlands

Salt plains are a feature of the lower Camargue. Their salt content is so high that only a few plant species such as glasswort, saltwort, obione and statice can survive there. They are prone to periodic flooding, and in summer are marked by white traces due to the presence of salt. Meadowland occupies only small, fragmented areas in which the effects of salt are less obvious.



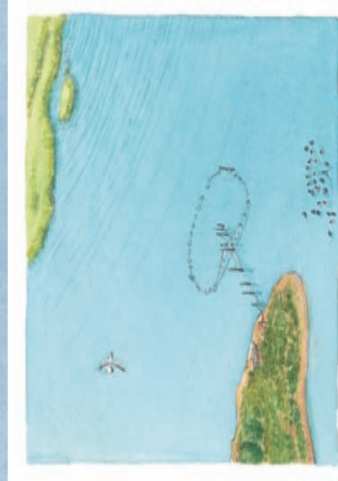
The salt ponds

These are to be found along the sea. In reality they are lagoons that have been adapted to maximise their salt concentration. The salt ponds are extensive and rich in invertebrates, which makes them an important source of food for birds, and in particular the flamingos, which spend most of their time there.



The ponds and lagoons

The shallow ponds of the lower Camargue are separated from the sea by a sandbar. They are more or less salty, and communicate with the sea via sluice gates. They provide a refuge for birds, and fish, and play a major role in water management.



- 1 Musée de la Camargue (Reception area)
- 2 Scamandre Regional Nature Reserve (Réserve naturelle régionale du Scamandre)
- 3 The Château d'Avignon (Domaine départemental du Château d'Avignon)
- 4 Mas de Pin Fourcat
- 5 The Pont de Gau bird park (Parc ornithologique de Pont de Gau)
- 6 La Gacholle Lighthouse (Phare de la Gacholle)
- 7 Flamingo reproduction site (Étang du Fangassier)
- 8 Domaine de la Palissade
- 9 Salt works observatory
- 10 Musée du riz
- 11 La Capelière
- 12 The Vigueirat marshes (Les Marais du Vigueirat)
- 13 Tour Saint Louis

- Boundary of the Camargue Regional Nature Park
- Boundary of the Camargue National Reserve

The beaches and dunes

The Camargue has some 50 km of beaches. Outside the perimeter of the protective dykes – and thus subject to the caprices of the sea – the coastline is in a permanent state of change. The dunes are inhabited by spectacular flowering plants and a number of rare insects.



- Panoramic viewing area
- Tourist path
- Discovery route for pedestrians and cyclists (closed to cars)
- Cycle path
- Free discovery path for pedestrians



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Arment Brunot

Local professionals work with the «Parc naturel régional» label

The « Parc naturel régional » label. This label is awarded by the Ministry of the Environment to agricultural and artisanal products, skills and services that exemplify the specificities of regional nature parks, the preservation of their environment and their human dimension.

EQUESTRIAN CENTRES

- 1 **Domaine Paul Ricard**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 10 62
manadepaulricard@wanadoo.fr
- 2 **Bergerie d'Alivon**
Tél. + 33 (0)6 03 54 10 94 / (0)4 90 97 10 37
mrozeemmanuel@free.fr
- 3 **Les Cabanes de Cacharel**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 84 10 / 06 11 57 74 75
info@camargueacheval.com
www.cabanesdecacharel.com
- 4 **Centre de Tourisme Équestre La Grenouillère**
Tél. + 33 (0)6 80 25 68 58 / (0)4 90 97 90 22
equitation@hotel-la-grenouillere.fr
- 5 **L'Écurie de l'Auberge Cavalière du Pont des Bannes**
Tél. + 33 (0)6 63 65 26 08
jerome@ecurie-camargue.fr

BULL HERDS that offer individual visits

- 1 **Manade Mailhan**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 00 12 / (0)6 15 09 09 11
jacques.mailhan@yahoo.fr
- 2 **Manade Paul Ricard**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 10 62
manadepaulricard@wanadoo.fr
- 3 **Manade Saint-Antoine**
Tél. + 33 (0)6 10 66 02 12
contact@manadesaintantoine.com
- 4 **Manade Cavallini**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 50 06
contact@manadecavallini.com
- 5 **Manade Jacques Bon**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 28 50
contact@manade-jacques-bon.com
- 6 **Manade Blanc**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 27 73
contact@manade-blanc.fr

WINE GROWERS

- 1 **Domaine de Beaujeu**
Tél. + 33 (0)9 64 18 90 33 / 4 90 97 22 30
domainedebeaujeu@yahoo.fr
- 2 **Mas de Valérieole**
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 10 41
www.masdevalerieole.com

Distances between the main towns:

Aigues-Mortes - Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer	30 km
Aigues-Mortes - Arles	42 km
Arles - Salin-de-Giraud	37 km
Arles - Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer	37 km
Albaron - Port-Saint-Louis	36 km
Albaron - Salin-de-Giraud (par bord du Vaccarès)	40 km
Salin-de-Giraud - Port-Saint-Louis (par le bac de Barcarin)	5 km