

## de Camargue



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.

- ### Park rules
- You are in a Regional nature park
- Remove your trash !**
- Respect the dunes.
  - Stay on the trail, do not enter private property.
  - No fires or barbecues.
  - No loud noises.
  - Park only in designated areas.
  - Dogs must remain leashed.
  - In summer time, don't forget sunscreen, water and mosquito repellent.

**Professionals commit to sustainable tourism in the Camargue with the « Valeurs Parc naturel régional » brand**

Owned by the Ministry of the Environment, « Valeurs Parc naturel régional » is a brand to help foster sustainable development in local areas. It promotes local products and human-scale tourist businesses, local economy players who respect the specific features of the area and its environment.



### Cultivated land

20% of the Camargue is used to grow rice. The water taken from the Rhône for this purpose desalinates 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, pasturage. 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.

Find the details of the sites on the back

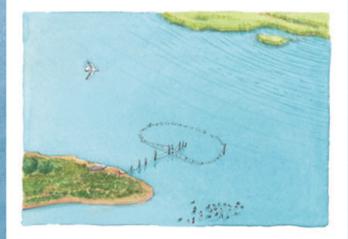
### The salt plains (« sansouires ») and meadowlands

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 static 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.

- ### NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES (presented overleaf)
- Museum of the Camargue (Musée de la Camargue - Park reception area)
  - Domaine de la Palissade
  - The Camargue National Nature Reserve (La Capelière)
  - La Gacholle lighthouse (Phare de la Gacholle)
  - The Pont de Gau bird park (Parc ornithologique de Pont de Gau)
  - Flamingo reproduction site (Étang du Fangassier)
  - The Vigueirat marshes National Nature Reserve
  - Home of rice (Maison du riz)
  - The Scamandre Regional Nature Reserve
  - Home of the Camargue Horse (Maison du cheval Camargue)
  - The Salt works observatory
  - The Saint-Louis Tower (Tour Saint-Louis)



### 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.

- Viewpoint
- Tourist path (by bike / by car)
- Discovery route for pedestrians and cyclists (closed to cars)
- Cycle path ViaRhôna
- Boundary of the Camargue Regional Nature Park
- River stop

- ### SITE TO VISIT
- Museum of Camargue
  - The Pont de Gau bird park
  - Flamingo reproduction site
  - The Vigueirat marshes
  - Home of rice
  - Home of the Camargue horse
- ### WINE MAKERS
- Domaine de Beaujeu
  - Mas de Valériole
- ### ACCOMMODATION
- Bergerie d'Alivon
  - Chambres d'hôtes Mas de Bouvet
  - Hôtel-restaurant\*\*\*\* Mas de Calabrun
  - Gîte Mas Farola
  - Hôtel-restaurant\*\*\*\* Le Flamant rose
  - Chambres d'hôtes Mas de la Forge
  - Gîtes Mas Saint-Germain
  - Hôtel\*\*\* Mas de la Grenouillère
  - Gîte de l'Isle Saint-Pierre
  - Gîte Maebriilu
  - Mas de Montredon
  - Chambres d'hôtes Un nid en Camargue
  - Hôtel-restaurant\*\*\*\* Mas de Peint
  - Gîtes Mas de la Vigne
- ### HORSE TREKKING (by réservation)
- Bergerie d'Alivon
  - Écurie de l'Auberge cavalière du Pont des Bannes
  - Marais du Vigueirat - Manade Coule
  - Mas Saint-Germain
  - Mas de la Grenouillère
  - Domaine Paul Ricard
- ### BULL HERDING (by réservation)
- Manade Blanc
  - Manade Jacques Bon
  - Manade Cavallini
  - Manade Mailhan
  - Manade Paul Ricard

### DISTANCES BETWEEN THE MAIN TOWNS :

From	To	Distance (km)	By car	By bike	By foot
Aigues-Mortes	- Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer	30 km	30'	1h34	
Aigues-Mortes	- Arles	47 km	45'	4h10 (par la ViaRhôna)	
Arles	- Salin-de-Giraud	38 km	37'	1h51	
Arles	- Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer	37 km	35'	1h50	
Arles	- Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône	40 km	40'	3h26 (par la ViaRhôna)	
Albaron	- Salin-de-Giraud (par bord du Vaccarès)	40 km	34'	1h55	
Salin-de-Giraud	- Port-Saint-Louis (via bac de Barcarin)	9 km	20'	33'	



Discover the Park

de Camargue Parc naturel régional

# Parc naturel régional

# de Camargue



The Park of Camargue offers a large diversity of landscapes : beaches, reedbeds, rice and wheat fields, ponds and the Mediterranean Sea. The delta of the Camargue is one of the richest ecosystems of Western Europe, created by the confluence between the Rhône river and the Mediterranean sea.

The Park is one of the principal migratory stopovers for birds migrating from Northern Europe to Africa. The biodiversity here is incredible, especially the fauna : flamingos, bulls, horses, european bee-eaters, slender-billed gulls, sea swallows, heron, beaver, and the black-winged stilt.

The Camargue is full off contrasts and its changing nuances occur hourly and throughout the seasons. There will always be a surprise for the visitor. We wish you a very good trip in the Camargue. Enjoy it !

## Some of the Camargue's animals



Pond turtle (Emys orbicularis)

dragonfly (Lestes macrostigma)

Black-winged stilt (Himantopus himantopus)

Guépier d'Europe (Merops apiaster)

## Some of the Camargue's plants to admire, but not touch



Sea daffodil (Pancratium maritimum)

Chardon des sables (Eryngium maritimum)

Sea lavender (Limonium narbonense)

Annual Saltwort (Salicornia annua)

## A new life is being invented...



Telline, a seashell to taste delicate, caught on sandy beaches



La Camargue, main place of French rice production



The bull at the heart of the Camargue identity

## Discovering the natural and cultural heritage of the Camargue

### 1 Museum of Camargue

To discover the Park, start by visiting the Museum of Camargue. You will learn of the special relationship between the inhabitants and nature through objects, images and videos. The Tadashi Kawamata observatory is the beginning of a 3.5 km trail where you will encounter a variety of landscapes.

Mas du Pont de Rousty - RD 570 - Arles  
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 17 10 82  
musee@parc-camargue.fr  
www.museedelacamargue.com

October to March : every day from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm\* except Tuesday, 25/12, 01/01 and weekends from November to January inclusive, excluding school holidays. April to September : every day from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm except 01/05 : 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. \*Box office close from 12:30 am to 1:00 pm". Entrance fee, 7€/4€. Labelled « Tourisme et Handicap ».

### 2 The Domaine de la Palissade

The Domaine de la Palissade is a Conservatoire du Littoral property open to the public. Here, on pedestrian and horseback trails it is possible to observe the principal wetlands of Camargue, the natural habitats of birds and fish. Exhibitions and guided tours are available.

Salin-de-Giraud - Tél. +33(0)4 42 86 81 28  
palissade@parc-camargue.fr - www.palissade.fr  
Opening times : February and November, wednesday to sunday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ; March to mid-June and mid-September to end

October, every day from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ; Mid-June to mid-September, every day from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. Closed in December and January, 1<sup>st</sup> May and 11<sup>th</sup> November. Equestrian initiation sessions take place from the start of April to October. There is an admission charge.

### Natural Reserve of Camargue

One of the largest wetlands conservation reserves in Europe, the Reserve of Camargue covers 13 200 hectares from the Vaccarès lake to the Mediterranean beaches. The landscapes are wild and authentic.

### 3 The Natural Reserve House, La Capelière

This is the information center of the Reserve, including a museum and a shop, as well as the departure point of a 1,5 km trail winding through the Camargue's various habitats. You will especially appreciate the 4 observatories placed among the marshes. By appointment : a visit on the Salin de Badon trail, heart of the Reserve.

C134 route de Fielouse - Arles - Tél. +33(0)4 90 97 00 97  
reserve@camargue.com - www.snpn.com/reservedecamargue  
Opening times : April to 30 September : every day from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm, October to 31<sup>st</sup> March : every day (except Tuesday outside school holiday) from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Closed on December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>. There is an admission charge. Labelled « Tourisme et Handicap ».

### 4 The light house La Gacholle and the sea dike

One of the starting points for a tour of the sea dike : 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.

### 5 The Pont de Gau bird Park

An ideal birdwatching site for the many species of Camargue, especially the rose flamingos. Trails and observatories bring you alongside wild fauna and amongst the various settings of marshes, ponds, reedbeds and saltmarsh scrubs.

Parc Ornithologique de Pont de Gau  
RD 570 - Saintes-Maries-de-la-mer  
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 82 62  
contact@parcornithologique.com  
www.parcornithologique.com

Opening times : April to 30 September, 9:00 am to 7:00 pm, and 1 October to 31 March, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. The Park exit is independent of the reception desk and remains open until sunset all year. There is an admission charge. Labelled « Tourisme et Handicap » and « Park brand ». Buvette/terrace open from April to October.

On the back of this brochure, you will be able to spot on the map :  
- all the natural and cultural heritage sites presented above ;  
- all professionals that carry the « Valeurs Parc naturel régional » brand.

### 6 Etang du Fangassier / Guided tour with The Bureau des Guides naturalistes

A guide tour of « étang du Fangassier » owned by the Conservatoire du Littoral, allows you to know everything about the Rhone Delta and discover the only site in France where Flamingos reproduce.

Etang du Fangassier - Salin-de-Giraud.  
Guided tour 1 April to 30 September, fee charged, by reservation only in the Arles and Salin-de-Giraud tourist Offices, tél. +33(0)6 95 90 70 48.  
www.guide-nature.fr

### 7 The Vigueirat marshes National Nature Reserve

Meadow and flooded wood, The Camargue largest reed bed constitute an environment teeming with life with thousands of birds, 6 herds of bulls and Camargue horses. Thematic boardwalk trails and guided tour by horse and cart and on horseback/pony.

Mas Thibert - Tél. +33(0)4 90 98 70 91  
visites.mdv@espacesnaturels.fr  
www.marais-vigueirat.reserves-naturelles.org  
Opening times : 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, February to 15 November. Free trails and guided tours on reservation. Boutique, refreshment and organic food.

### 8 Home of Rice

Rice grower in the Camargue for five generations, the Rozière Family welcome you to their farm where they have created a visitor centre about rice-growing. The visit includes a trail with small rice fields, an exhibition room, a demonstration of the rice whitening process and a tasting session on request.

Mas de la Vigne, Albaron - Arles  
Tél. +33(0)6 31 03 40 11 - maisonduriz@orange.fr  
www.maisonduriz.com - Open every day from April to end of November, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Local produce shop.

### 9 Scamandre Regional Nature Reserve

Meadow, « sansouire » (saline scrub), reed bed and pond presents a variety of environment conducive to the faunistic and floristic diversity typical of a Mediterranean wetland.

Route des Iscles - Gallician - Vauvert  
Tél. +33(0)4 66 73 52 05  
contact@camarguegardoise.com  
www.camarguegardoise.com - Opening times : Tuesday to Saturday, 9 am to 6 pm, shop 9 am to 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm to 6 pm. Sales of guide. Reservation required for groups.

### 10 Home of the Camargue Horse

Find out about the Camargue horse breed, its history, the way it is raised, its involvement in the management of natural areas, etc. by means of a guided walking tour in the heart of the Mas de la Cure estate.

Mas de la Cure, Chemin de Bardouine  
Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (in front of the Castle of Avignon) - Tél. +33(0)4 90 97 76 37  
contact@masdelacure.org  
www.maisonduchevalcamargue.com

Guided visit by reservation only, fee charged, all year for groups (12 people min.) and from April to September, wednesday and friday from 10:00 to 11:45 am for individuals.

### 11 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 Piémanson and Salin-de-giraud.

Route de la plage de Piémanson  
Salin-de-Giraud.

### 12 The Saint Louis Tower

Built in 1737, 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.

Office de tourisme - Quai Bonnardel  
Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône - Tél. +33(0)4 42 86 01 21  
contact@portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr  
www.portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr  
Opening times summer : monday to friday, 8:30 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.

## More informations

### Walking and cycling tours

The Camargue Regional Nature Park offers 14 walking or cycling discovery tours within its borders, in order to observe the full diversity of Camargue lands-capes : from the vineyards in the north to the beaches in the south via the salt meadows and marshes. Starting in Arles, Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer or Port - Saint-Louis-du-Rhône, the tours are arranged thematically so as to give you all the keys to understanding this exceptional area.

Pack available in French, English and German. On sale at Arles and Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône tourist offices, the Museum of the Camargue and the Vigueirat Marshes. Can be downloaded from : [www.parc-camargue.fr/itineraires.html](http://www.parc-camargue.fr/itineraires.html)



### Chemins des Parcs

On this website [www.cheminsdesparcs.fr](http://www.cheminsdesparcs.fr) all the information is available to prepare for your trip in the Camargue and in the 8 other regional parks of the region. Website and smartphone application are available for park information.

### Where to watch birds ?

Nearly 2/3 of the birds observed in Europe can be seen in the Camargue, which makes it a popular place with ornithologists, both professional and amateur. Discover the booklet « Where to watch birds in the Camargue Regional Nature Park », which tells you 11 good sites for bird watching, and more generally for observing Camargue plants and wildlife. In addition to the descriptions of each site and the species to be seen there, the booklet highlights outdoor activities, restaurants and accommodation situated close to the sites ; most of which are committed to sustainable tourism.

Booklet available in French and English from tourist offices and heritage and English sites, or can be downloaded from : [www.parc-camargue.fr/ou-observer-les-oiseaux-en-camargue.html](http://www.parc-camargue.fr/ou-observer-les-oiseaux-en-camargue.html)

### Biosphere Reserve

Since 1977, the Camargue has been designated by UNESCO as a « Biosphere Reserve » covering the whole biogeographical delta of the Rhône. This designation involves the setting up of a sustainable development project whose results are assessed every 10 years. The project concerns the conservation of natural areas, support for human activities in harmony with the environment, including sustainable tourism, and also backs research and awareness-raising about the Camargue's exceptional biodiversity.

[www.mab-france.org/en/](http://www.mab-france.org/en/)

### Ramsar Label

The French state is a member of the Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, since 1986. One of the most varied and rich ecosystems, wetlands are threatened all around the world. The park of the Camargue is a Ramsar site, and exemplifies the protection of wetlands through the sustainable use of resources.



## DestiMED : an eco-tourism package being tested



Initiated and funded by the MedPAN association, the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, The European DestiMED project aims to develop and promote ecotourism in 13 marine and coastal protected areas, including the Camargue Regional Nature Park.

Thanks to DestiMED, the Park was able to set up an ecotourism package in collaboration with the tourist offices of Arles, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer and Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône and tourist service providers\* committed to preserving the environment: a one-week stay to discover the authentic and sustainable Camargue with the lowest possible ecological footprint.

Successfully tested in June and October 2018, this package allows to approach the traditional Camargue through encounters with the locals and the discovery of the culture that makes the link between its great natural spaces, its festive traditions, its know-how, its biodiversity...

More information : [www.medpan.org](http://www.medpan.org)

\* Bureau des guides naturalistes, Parc ornithologique du Pont de Gau, Maison du riz, Musée de la Camargue, Domaine de la Palissade ; Vélo Saintois ; Mas de Valérie ; Restaurants Les Saladelles, Les Salicornes, Le Flamant rose ; Camargue traiteur, Camargue coquillage ; Accommodation Mas Saint-Germain, Mas de Peint.

**Tourist information**  
**Tourist office of Arles**  
City center  
Esplanade Charles de Gaulle - 13200 Arles  
Tél. +33(0)4 90 18 41 20  
**Salin-de-Giraud**  
Rue Tournaire - 13200 Arles  
Tél. +33(0)4 42 86 89 77  
[www.arlestourisme.com](http://www.arlestourisme.com) - [ot-arles@arlestourisme.com](http://ot-arles@arlestourisme.com)

**Tourist office of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer**  
5 avenue Van Gogh - 13460 Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer  
Tél. +33(0)4 90 97 82 55  
[www.saintesmaries.com](http://www.saintesmaries.com) - [info@saintesmaries.com](mailto:info@saintesmaries.com)

**Tourist office of Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône**  
Tour Saint-Louis - Quai Bonnardel  
13230 Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône  
Tél. +33(0)4 42 86 01 21  
[www.portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr](http://www.portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr)  
[contact@portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr](mailto:contact@portsaintlouis-tourisme.fr)

**Camargue régional nature park**  
[www.parc-camargue.fr](http://www.parc-camargue.fr) - [info@parc-camargue.fr](mailto:info@parc-camargue.fr)

**Museum of Camargue**  
Mas du Pont de Rousty  
13200 Arles  
Tél. 0+33(0)4 90 97 10 82  
[www.museedelacamargue.com](http://www.museedelacamargue.com) - [musee@parc-camargue.fr](mailto:musee@parc-camargue.fr)  
**Domaine de la Palissade**  
13129 Salin-de-Giraud  
Tél. +33(0)4 42 86 81 28  
[palissade@parc-camargue.fr](mailto:palissade@parc-camargue.fr)



## What is a Regional Nature Park ?

A regional natural park is both :

- ▶ An inhabited rural territory recognized for its strong heritage and landscape value, open to all but whose fragile balance requires the greatest respect ;
- ▶ a public institution of consultation between the authorities, the local people and the economic decision-makers. Its remit is to reconcile human development and nature conservation.

Like the other 52 regional natural parks in France, the Camargue Regional Natural Park mobilizes a multidisciplinary team that works as well :

- ▶ Protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage ;
- ▶ Land use planning ;
- ▶ Economic, social and cultural development ;
- ▶ Reception and public awareness of wealth and heritage fragility ;
- ▶ Experimentation and research for the development of new environmentally sound practices.

## The Park in numbers

- ▶ Three towns  
> Arles  
> Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer  
> Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône
- ▶ Animal and plant species (not including invertebrates) : 5 700 of which 489 are protected, either nationally or worldwide
- ▶ Population : 10 848 inhabitants
- ▶ Area : 101 200 hectares
- ▶ Coastline : 75 k, Highest point 4 metres above sea level !
- ▶ Migrating quarters : 150 000 each year. Three quarters of France's bird species, half of its freshwater fish species and a quarter of its plant species are to be found in the Camargue !

