

THE Camargue REGIONAL NATURE PARK



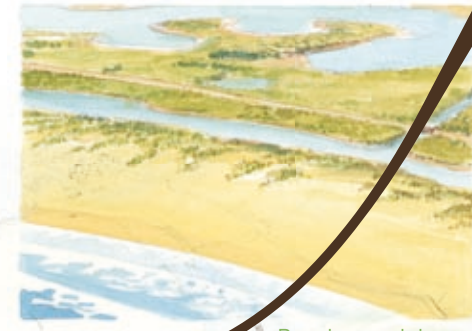
The salt ponds (« étangs ») and lagoons



The fresh water marshes and reed beds



Agriculture



Beaches and dunes



The salt plains (« sansouires ») and meadows



Tourist products and services bearing the « Parc naturel régional de Camargue » label

EQUESTRIAN TOURISM CENTRES

- 1 Ferme équestre du Mas Saint-Germain
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 00 60 - massaintgermain@camargue.fr
- 2 Domaine Paul RICARD
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 10 62 - manadepaulricard@wanadoo.fr
- 3 Bergerie d'Alivon
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 10 37 - mrozemanuelgil@free.fr
- 4 Centre de Tourisme Équestre « Chez Brenda »
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 52 08 - gattibrenda@aol.com
- 5 Cabanes de Cacharel
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 84 10 - info@camargueacheval.com
- 6 Les Écuries de l'Auberge Cavalière
Tél. + 33 (0)6 09 54 24 40 - ecuries-cavaliere@camargue.fr
- 7 Les Chevaux du Pont des Bannes
Tél. + 33 (0)6 63 65 26 08 - chevaux-pontdesbannes@camargue.fr
- 8 Centre de Tourisme Équestre « La Grenouillère »
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 90 22 - grenouillere.cheval@wanadoo.fr

INTRODUCTION TO BULL-BREEDING FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- 9 Manade SALIERENE
Tél. + 33 (0)4 66 87 45 57 - manade.salierene@wanadoo.fr
- 10 Manade THIBAUD
Tél. + 33 (0)4 66 87 09 42 - manade.thibaud@orange.fr
- 11 Manade Paul RICARD
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 10 10 - mejanes@ricard.fr
- 12 Manade BLANC
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 27 73 - vero-blanc@wanadoo.fr
- 13 Manade Jacques BON
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 20 62 - contact@manade-jacques-bon.com
- 14 Manade CAVALLINI
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 50 06 - contact@manadecavallini.com
- 15 Manade SAINT-ANTOINE
Tél. + 33 (0)6 10 66 02 12 - authenticcamargue@orange.fr

VINEYARDS

- 16 Mas de Valérolle
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 00 38 - patrick.michel113@orange.fr
- 17 Domaine de Beaujeu
Tél. + 33 (0)4 90 97 22 30 - beaujeuwinerod@yahoo.fr

- 1 The « Heureuse Camargue » factory
 - 2 The Museum of the Camargue
 - 3 La Capelière
 - 4 The Vigueirat marshes
 - 5 The Rice Museum
 - 6 The Salt Ecomuseum
 - 7 Domaine de la Palissade
 - 8 La Gacholle lighthouse
 - 9 The bird park at Pont de Gau
 - 10 Mas de Pin Fourcat
 - 11 Domaine départemental du Château d'Avignon
 - 12 The Regional nature reserve of Le Scamandre
- The boundary of the Camargue regional nature Park
--- The boundary of the Camargue national Reserve
--- Scenic route
--- Closed to traffic or restricted access



Camargue

ENGLISH



- CONTACT US**
- PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DE CAMARGUE**
Mas du Pont de Rousty - 13200 ARLES
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 10 82 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 19 20
www.parc-camargue.fr - info@parc-camargue.fr
 - OFFICE DE TOURISME D'ARLES**
Esplanade Charles de Gaulle - 13200 ARLES
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 18 41 20 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 18 41 29
www.arlestourisme.com - ot-arles@visitprovence.com
 - OFFICE DE TOURISME DES SAINTES-MARIES-DE-LA-MER**
5 av. Van Gogh - 13460 LES SAINTES-MARIES-DE-LA-MER
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 82 55 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 11 15
www.saintesmaries.com - info@saintesmaries.com
 - COMITÉ RÉGIONAL DU TOURISME DE PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR**
Les Docks - 10 place Joliette - Atrium 10.5 - BP 46 214
13567 MARSEILLE CEDEX 02 - Tél. +33 (0)4 91 56 47 00
Fax: +33 (0)4 91 56 47 01 - www.decouverte-paca.fr

INFORMATIONS TOURISTIQUES SUR LES BOUCHES-DU-RHÔNE

CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL
Comité Départemental du Tourisme
13 rue Roux de Brignoles - 13006 Marseille - France
Tél: +33 (0)4 91 13 84 13 - Fax: +33 (0)4 91 33 01 82
www.visitprovence.com



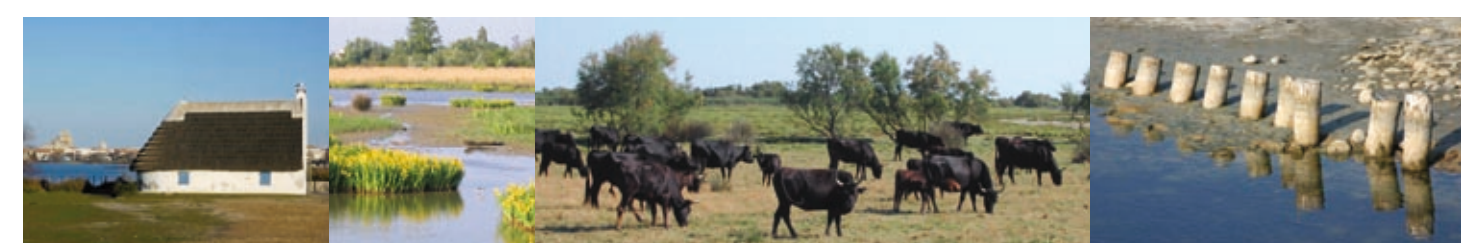
It is awarded to agricultural and craft products, skills and services that satisfy three criteria:

- geographical specificity** (contribution to the development of the location, and participation in the construction of its identity)
- environmental protection** (involvement in management issues, preservation of the natural heritage, landscape integration)
- the human dimension** (controlled development, social issues)

More and more producers are signing up to charters that ensure these criteria, which enables them to use the « Parc naturel régional de Camargue » label. The activities concerned include bull breeding, with visits to the manades, equestrian tourist activities and wine growing.

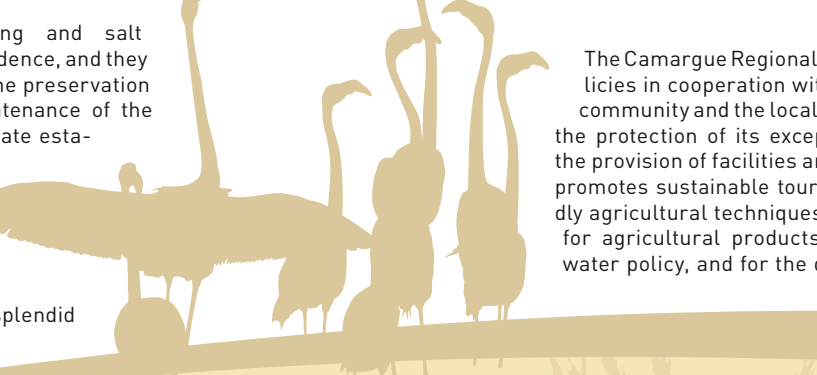
WHO HAVE ADOPTED THE « PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL » LABEL

Producers



The Camargue is a large area of wetland in the Rhône delta whose importance is recognised worldwide. Created by the incessant combat between river and sea, it is a precarious geographical entity, with alternating lagoons, stretches of salt water (« étangs »), dunes, fresh water marshes and reed beds, salt plains (« sansouires ») and meadow land. It attracts large numbers of nesting and migrating birds (pink flamingos, herons, small nesting waders, ducks), and in general it is rich in animal and plant species. All the forms of life in the Camargue must be able to withstand dry conditions and salinity, and the region would appear relatively inhospitable to human life. But appearances are misleading, in this case. Activities such as the extensive breeding of bulls and horses, fishing, rice growing and salt production are very much in evidence, and they make a major contribution to the preservation of the wetlands and the maintenance of the landscapes. With its large private estates and protected zones, the Camargue is not always readily accessible to the visitor. Having said that, the facilities described below will allow you to discover for yourself this splendid region, whether you come on your own

THE Camargue



or with your family, whether you are a spontaneous enthusiast or of a more reflective temperament.

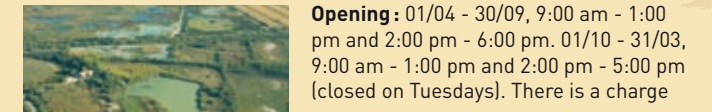
The Camargue Regional Nature Park has a population of around 8,000, and covers an area of 100,000 hectares between the two main arms of the Rhône. It occupies the entire district of Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, and part of the district of Arles.

Like France's 44 other Regional Nature Parks, that of the Camargue is a rural territory with its own population. Its cultural, natural and topological assets are exceptional, though the regulations on construction, fishing and hunting to which it is subject are the same as those that apply to the rest of the country. Its essential remit is to reconcile environmental imperatives and local development.

The Camargue Regional Nature Park implements its policies in cooperation with the authorities, the business community and the local population. It is concerned with the protection of its exceptional natural resources, and the provision of facilities and information for its visitors. It promotes sustainable tourism and environmentally friendly agricultural techniques. It also sets quality standards for agricultural products. It is responsible for overall water policy, and for the quality of life of its inhabitants.

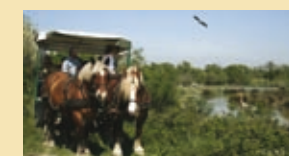
THE natural HERITAGE

3 La Capelière
SNPN - Réserve nationale de Camargue - C 134 de Fiérouse
13200 ARLES - Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 00 97 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 01 44
camargue-rn@espaces-naturels.fr - www.reserve-camargue.org



Opening: 01/04 - 30/09, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm. 01/10 - 31/03, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm (closed on Tuesdays). There is a charge.
Nature information centre: an exhibition of natural environments, a discovery trail of 1,5 km, 4 observation points, 2 observation platforms, information panels. Authorisation for the observation points at Salin de Badon can be obtained at La Capelière.

4 The Vigueirat marshes
13104 MAS THIBERT - Tél. +33 (0)4 90 98 70 91
Fax: +33 (0)4 90 98 72 54 - marais-vigueirat@espaces-naturels.fr
www.marais-vigueirat.reserves-naturelles.org



Opening: 01/02 - 30/11, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. A freely accessible path and guided visits, with advance booking. There is a charge.
This protected natural environment of 1,000 hectares is owned by the Conservatoire du Littoral. It is an eco-tourism site. Different aspects of the marshes are on display, with paths that are available to all, and guided visits in horse-drawn carriages or on foot, as well as nature rambles and thematic visits, and of course the local flora and fauna: bulls, horses, and thousands of birds can be seen from different observation points.

7 Domaine de la Palissade
BP 5 - 13129 SALIN-DE-GIRAUD
Tél. +33 (0)4 42 86 81 28 - Fax: +33 (0)4 42 48 82 11
palissade@palissade.fr - www.conservatoire-du-littoral.fr



Opening: all year round, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Closed on 01/01, 01/05, 11/11, 25/12; also Mon. and Tues. between 15/11 and 28/02. 15/06 - 15/09, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm. Equestrian activities: 01/04 - 31/10. There is a charge.
Three pedestrian trails (between 1.5 and 8 km) cross some of the lower Camargue's most typical landscapes. There are 3 observation points. The equestrian trail takes the visitor into the wetlands. This is an excellent way of discovering the territory at first hand.

8 La Gacholle lighthouse
SNPN - Réserve nationale de Camargue
13460 LES SAINTES-MARIES-DE-LA-MER
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 00 97 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 01 44
camargue-rn@espaces-naturels.fr - www.reserve-camargue.org



Opening: school holidays, weekends and public holidays: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm. Admission free.
An exhibition featuring the Camargue coast. An observation point, a walking and cycling trail.

9 The bird park at Pont de Gau
RD 570 - 13460 LES SAINTES-MARIES-DE-LA-MER
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 82 62 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 74 77
contact@parcornithologie.com - www.parcornithologie.com



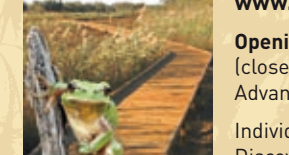
Opening: 01/04 - 30/09, 9:00 am to sunset. 01/10 - 31/03, 10:00 am to sunset. There is a charge.
This is a natural environment that is devoted to the observation of bird life. In the heart of the marshes there are paths and observation points that bring the visitor into close proximity with the local fauna.

10 Mas de Pin Fourcat
Route du bac - CIAM - 13460 Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer
Tél. +33 (0)4 66 73 51 94 - Fax: +33 (0)4 66 73 50 09 - info@maspinfourcat.com
www.maspinfourcat.com - www.camargue-mer.com



Opening: All year round, 8:00 am - 12:00 am and 1:30 - 5:00 pm, with advance booking. There is a charge.
In groups, or with one's family, this private estate shows a side of the Camargue that is authentic and well preserved. There are introductions to the activities of the bull and horse breeders, and many species of bird can be seen in the marshes and on the ponds. Visits in carts or charabancs, or on horseback.

12 The Regional nature reserve of Le Scamandre
Route des Iscles - Gallician - 30600 VAUVERT
Tél. +33 (0)4 66 73 52 05 - Fax: +33 (0)4 66 73 52 16
contact@camarguegardoise.com
www.camarguegardoise.com



Opening: Wednesday-Saturday, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm (closed on public holidays). Advance booking is required for groups.
Individuals and family groups. Discovery trails and exhibitions. Educational activities for school groups.

THE cultural HERITAGE

2 The Museum of the Camargue
RD 570 - Mas du Pont de Rousty - 13200 ARLES
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 10 82 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 19 20
musee@parc-camargue.fr - www.parc-camargue.fr



Opening: October-March, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm (closed on Tuesdays, 25/12 and 01/01). April-September, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm (closed on 01/05). There is a charge.
The museum is installed in a former sheepfold. It presents the Rhône delta through the 19th century and the present day, through the activities of its inhabitants. A visit to the museum can be followed by a walk around the Mas du Pont de Rousty (approximately 1½ hours). Temporary exhibition.

5 The Rice Museum
Le Petit Manusclet - Le Sambuc - 13200 ARLES
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 20 29 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 21 84
musee@heureuse-camargue.com



Opening: 01/03 - 30/11: visits on Tuesdays at 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm. 01/07 - 31/08: visits on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm. For other days, advance booking is required. There is a charge for guided visits.
Robert Bon, formerly the manager of the Bongran rice factory and now the curator of the Rice Museum, will initiate you into the secrets of rice: its history, cultivation and processing, but also methods of cooking and preparing it. You will see some unusual and surprising machines, models and documents. And finally, you will have your senses awakened by a sampling of organic, natural products.

6 The Salt Ecomuseum
Place Péchiney - 13129 SALIN-DE-GIRAUD
Tél. +33 (0)4 42 86 70 20 - Fax: +33 (0)4 42 86 70 21
salinstourisme@salins.com - www.salins.com



Opening: March-June and September-October: 10:15 am - 12:15 pm and 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Visits begin at 2:30 pm and 3:30 pm. July-August: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm. Visits begin at 11:00 am, 2:30 pm, 7:00 pm and 5:30 pm. Admission to the Salt Ecomuseum is free. There is a charge for visits to the saltworks.
Visits to the saltworks at Salin-de-Giraud, with explanations of the different stages in the production process: water movements, concentration, crystallisation. Bird watching. Botanical information on halophilic plants (i.e. those that are adapted to saline environments). Films on ancient and modern methods of salt production, and its uses.

11 Domaine départemental du Château d'Avignon
RD 570 - 13460 LES SAINTES-MARIES-DE-LA-MER
Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 58 60 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 58 78
chateau.davignon@laposte.net - www.cg13.fr



Opening: 01/04 - 31/10, 9:45 am - 5:30 pm (closed on Tuesdays and 01/05). 02/11 - 31/03, every Friday, and one Sunday per month, 9:45 am - 4:30 pm. There is a charge, and advance booking is necessary.
The Domaine d'Avignon gives an illustration of the Camargue's industrial history. It was the vineyard of Louis Prat, who made the famous Noilly Prat aperitif in Marseille. It also had a pumping station which in the 19th century provided water for irrigation, domestic use and the generation of electricity for the luxurious chateau. There are two annual programmes of shows, theme days, school workshops, etc. From July to October there is a temporary exhibition on heritage and contemporary creative activity. An audio guide is available in English, French and Italian, with a separate version for 8-12 year olds.

THE economic HERITAGE

1 The « Heureuse Camargue » factory
Chemin de la Grande Sacristane - Route de Gimeaux
13200 Arles - Tél. +33 (0)4 90 97 20 29 - Fax: +33 (0)4 90 97 21 84
bienvenue@heureuse-camargue.com
www.heureuse-camargue.com



Opening: 01/03 - 30/11: Wednesdays, 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Visits are free, but advance booking is required.
The Bongran factory is part of the Heureuse Camargue group, which has been a pioneer in the development of biological products in the Camargue. Guided visits to the factory take in the silo, the processing department and the packaging area. They also include the production of rice cakes. There are descriptions of the different varieties of rice, and the distinction between organic and conventional rice.

Photo credits: 1 - Usine Bongran, 2 - Julien FAURE/PNRC, 3 - Opus Species, 4 - Les Amis des Marais du Vigueirat, 5 - H. HOTE/Agence Caméleon, 6 - G. REY/G. SANTANTONIO/Salins, 7 - Syndicat mixte de gestion du Domaine de la Palissade, 8 - SNPN/Réserve nationale de Camargue, 9 - Serge MERCIER, 10 - CIAM, 11 - hoapo/Enviés Rhônements, 12 - Simon BAUDOUIN/SMCG.

The natural ENVIRONMENTS OF THE CAMARGUE

AGRICULTURE



Numerous forms of agriculture have been practised in the Camargue over the centuries, but at present it is rice growing that dominates. It accounts for almost 20 % of the territory.

Rice growing uses a lot of water, which is pumped in from the Rhône. This allows the land to be desalinated to the necessary depth, and means that crop rotation (wheat and alfalfa) can take place before the salt comes back up to the surface.

The rice fields, flooded in April and drained in September for the harvest, also provide feeding grounds for nesting birds such as herons.

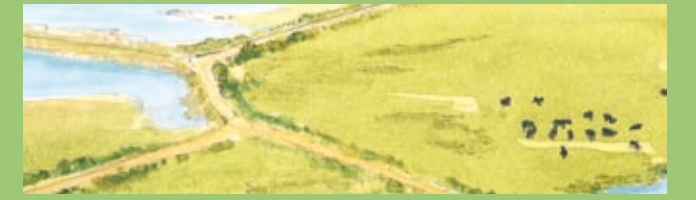
BEACHES AND DUNES



The Camargue has around 50 km of sandy beaches. Outside the protective dykes, the coastline is subject to the caprices of the sea, and in some places it is undergoing erosion, though in others (for example Beauduc and L'Espiguette) the sea is being pushed back.

The first coastal dunes were stabilised by so-called « pioneer » plants (dune grass, couch grass, glasswort). They subsequently became home to a specific flora with masses of flowers (camomile, bindweed, searocket), and valuable species of insects. Further inland, the dunes are of marine or fluvial origin. They bear the traces of the long-standing contest between the Rhône and the sea, and are also of considerable topological and botanical interest.

THE SALT PLAINS (« SANSOUIRES ») AND MEADOWS



The sansouire is emblematic of the lower Camargue, where high salt concentrations mean that only a few plant species - « salicorne » (glasswort), saltwort, obione, statice - can thrive.

The salt plains may be flooded at times, leaving some « salicorne rafts » visible. During the summer the salt comes back up to the surface, producing a white film.

The meadows of the Camargue are fragmented environments whose soil and topology are favourable to a large number of leguminous plants (clovers, lotus, vetches) and grasses (couch grass, fescue grass, creeping bentgrass) which complete their life cycle before the intense summer drought, and the rising salt levels that accompany it.

THE FRESH WATER MARSHES AND REED BEDS



These are most common in the upper Camargue and on the banks of the Rhône.

The marshes are home to water plants such as bullrushes, cane and reeds. They are used for hunting and, in summer, pasturage. They provide shelter for nesting and wintering birds.

Reeds (« sagno », in Provençal) are harvested in winter by the « sagneurs ». They are used for roofing in France and elsewhere.

THE SALT PONDS (« ÉTANGS ») OR LAGOONS



The salt ponds of the lower Camargue are former arms of the Rhône that have become silted up and separated by sand bars from the sea, with which they can communicate via « pertuis » (sluice gates). They have a high salt content, though the concentration varies considerably from one year to another.

These ponds are rarely more than a metre deep. They are connected by natural channels that are locally known as « gazes ».

The lower ponds provide a refuge for bird life, but are also important for fish, and for water management in the « fluvio-lacustrine » Camargue.

THE SALT MARSHES



These are located in the lower Camargue. They have been designed to maximise the concentration of sodium chloride in the water.

Movements of water between the sea and the salt beds are supervised by the « sauniers ». This involves a complex system of circulation through concentration basins.

The extensive salt marshes are rich in invertebrates. This makes them important for bird life, and in particular the pink flamingo, which nests there (and in fact spends most of its time there).