



# Celebrations of the designation of the 44th Ramsar Site in France

28 June 2016

France



Celebrating the listing of the "Marais Vernier et Vallée de la Risle" as the 44th Ramsar Site in France. (Photo credit S.Roussel)

On the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the “**Marais Vernier et Vallée de la Risle maritime**” hosted a special on-site ceremony to celebrate the listing of this area as a Ramsar Site, designated on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Following the **national ceremony** organised during World Wetlands Day 2016 in Brest, the Community of Communes of Quillebeuf-sur-Seine, the Regional Natural Park “Boucles de la Seine Normande” and their partners invited us for a day of immersion in this Wetland of International Importance.

The program of the day set out with a visit of the Site, starting with a panorama of the Marais Vernier, an old meander of the Seine River. From this scenic view, we noticed a territory marked by the interaction between humans and nature, which has shaped the landscape throughout the centuries. Since the Middle-Ages, agriculture has taken an important place in the area. The long land parcels called Courtils are characteristic of the traditional practices in the marshes and hold a rich natural heritage. Our next stop took us to the Hunting and Wildlife Reserve of the Grand 'Mare. This Reserve is of great importance for supporting the different life stages of several species including the eel. The various activities associated to the marsh such as agriculture, grazing and hunting, depend upon but are also actively involved in the water management of the Site. This interaction is crucial in order to maintain the various wetland habitats and their associated biodiversity. We continued our visit in the Valley of the Risle Maritime River, where we were received at the town hall of Saint-Sulpice-de-Grimbouville. The area around the Risle River is of great interest for migrating populations or for the reproduction of various species.

The last stage of our visit directed us to Berville-sur-Mer. After a tasting of regional products with **Saveurs & Savoir** as well as some apple juice “**pom' de reinette**”, a series of presentations revealed the current challenges as well as the numerous management and restoration activities occurring around this wetland. Through these various interventions, we notice the presence of a large network of local actors working to increase the knowledge



Marais Vernier program

around these wetlands as well as enhance this rich natural and cultural heritage. To name a few, the Community of Communes of Quillebeuf-sur-Seine, the Regional Natural Park “Boucles de la Seine Normande”, the Community of Communes of Beuzeville and Pond-Audemer, the Water Agency Seine Normandie, DREAL Normandy and the Ramsar France Association, are conducting restoration activities as well as education and awareness raising programs across the Site.

This event demonstrated a dynamic network of stakeholders working together in order to develop this Wetland of International Importance. This new Ramsar label is the result of exceptional local support and is inscribed within the national policy of the **3rd National Action Plan for wetlands 2014-2018** and within the **Charter of the Regional Park “Boucles de la Seine Normande” 2013-2025**. With this recently acquired Ramsar label, local stakeholders aim to improve the visibility of this Site particularly through developing sustainable tourism. The Site will be hosting the next seminar of the francophone Ramsar Site managers in October this year.

The Ramsar Secretariat thanks the Community of Communes of Quillebeuf-sur-Seine and their partners for this opportunity to discover the “Marais Vernier et Vallée de la Risle maritime” and expresses its congratulations for the designation of this Wetland of International Importance.

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