

D Starting point

P Car park
at the Belvedere (Viewpoint)
of Vaux

- 1** Take the trail situated to the left of the belvedere
- 2** View point from the chapel
- 3** View point from the chalk-banks. Cross the stile to access the "Maquettes" trail
- 4** Take the right turning and go down the steps
- 5** Join the road alongside the marshes
- 6** Take the Voyette trail to the right and return to the belvedere

View Point

i Information point

Be careful:

This trail is for pedestrians only.
No dogs allowed on the chalk-banks during grazing periods. **Closed from October to the end of February** because of hunting and unstable ground.

Protect the natural environment

To help with the conservation of the rich natural habitats of this fragile site, please:

- . Always use the marked trails
- . Keep gates and stiles closed
- . Respect the fauna and flora
- . Take your litter away with you
- . Always keep dogs on leads

This trail is maintained by the Communauté de Communes du Pays du Coquelicot

For more information:

- Poppy Country Tourist Office : 03 22 75 11 72
www.tourisme-paysducoquelicot.com
- Audio-guide for the walk:
www.zavisit.com/tourisme/pays-du-coquelicot
- Somme Tourist Board:
www.somme-tourisme.com
www.somme-nature.com

Managers of the site:



La Somme

The Chalk-banks of the Mountain of Vaux

Eclusier-Vaux, 7km from Bray-sur-Somme, 15km from Albert and Péronne

At the heart of the Upper Valley of the Somme, the chalk-banks of the Mountain of Vaux give views of contrasting landscapes - a change of scenery is guaranteed!



D Starting at: Car park of the Belvedere (Viewpoint) of Vaux

Time: 40 mins

Distance: 2.3km

Route: difficult (very steep slope)

- ▶ Spring
- ▶ Summer
- ▶ Autumn
- ▶ Winter

Sign posts
Route continues: [Yellow arrow pointing right]
Wrong direction: [Yellow X]
Change of direction: [Yellow arrows pointing left and right]

This leaflet was created by the Somme County Council
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Exploring the natural sites

The chalk-banks of the Mountain of Vaux

The chalk-banks of the Mountain of Vaux dominate the Upper Somme Valley and give wonderful panoramic views of the ponds and marshlands. You could just stay here, but a little trail threading to the left lets you prolong the experience and explore the chalk-banks, which are managed by the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie. Here, an unusual type of fauna and flora thrive - as you will see when you take the "Maguette" trail.



Daniel Derly,
Mayor of
Eclusier-Vaux

"The municipality of Eclusier-Vaux started working with the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de

Picardie in 1995, to restore the chalk-banks which had been invaded by trees and bushes. This, initially audacious, project has now reunited more than 50 volunteers each year for the past 15 years during the maintenance program. All the inhabitants of the village are involved during this pleasant day. The maintenance work is completed by the goats (or "maguettes" in the Picardy language) of a local breeder."

About the site

- > **Proprietor:** Municipality of Eclusier-Vaux
- > **Size:** 11ha
- > **Managed by:** Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie
- > **Maintenance partners:** Municipality, a sheep and goat farmer, the fête committee
- > **Financial partners:** Europe, State, Regional Council of Picardie, Somme County Council

A little bit of history

At the bottom of the valley, at the heart of the marshlands and the ponds, man developed traditional activities that consisted of hunting, fishing, peat extracting and basket making. Farming was concentrated to the high grounds and the steeper slopes were kept for grazing: this is how the chalk-banks were formed. The characteristics of the chalk-banks consist of chalky ground, and fauna and flora more familiar to the south. This last chalk-bank of the Upper Somme Valley was used for grazing until the 1950's and then again from 1997 (*read the following text box*).

Change of perspective...

To explore the site, rendez-vous at the Belvedere of Vaux; the view over the valley is superb. At the foot of the chalk-banks



The Swallowtail: this is one of the largest butterflies in France, but it has seen a sharp decline in numbers in recent years. The presence of this butterfly on these hillsides illustrates the need for "refuge" areas such as the chalk-banks.

small islands, which are gradually being cleared and maintained, are lined with reed beds.

During the warm seasons, the scenery gains even more splendour with the addition of Water Lilies floating on the water. Just after the Notre-Dame Chapel, you will discover the best part of the slopes of the Mountain of Vaux. Once you have crossed the stile, follow the little "Maguettes" trail – used by goats in the

warm seasons – to penetrate into the heart of the chalk-banks. Be careful, the slope is very steep and the chalky surface slippery.

In springtime the mountain is covered here and there by a vegetation of beautiful colours. In June for example, you can admire the yellow flowers of the Greater Yellow-Rattle and enjoy the scent from the carpets of Thyme and Oregano.

When you come to the bottom of the hillside, cross the little copse, which, during May, is full of Lady Orchids. After the stile, follow the road which runs alongside the marshlands. Here you will see fauna distinctive of the wetlands.

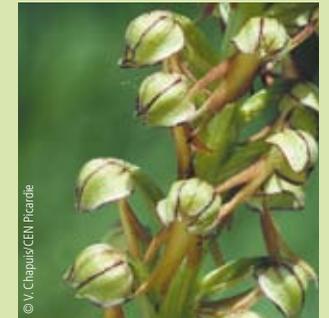


At the end of the road, take the pedestrian crossing, and follow the "Voyette" trail. Here you will be walking in the shelter of the trees and vegetation, decorated in the springtime by a carpet of Violets.

Further if you choose

The walk can be carried on further if you would like. By taking a few more steps after the pedestrian crossing, you will come to the Place de l'Arroivoir of Vaux where you will discover a barrage-dam equipped with an eel trap. This was a traditional way of fishing in the Upper Somme. The opening of the floodgates makes water run along a long plank of perforated wood, and the eels, taken by the current, fall into a gutter situated on the outside where they can be picked up by hand.

Guided tours by the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie allow you to appreciate the diversity of the fauna and flora. In the spring-time, the Horseshoe Vetch and the Wild Thyme make up yellow and violet carpets sprinkled with orchids, including the rare Man Orchid. In the summer, Dog Roses and Yellow Foxgloves flower. Butterflies, crickets and grass-hoppers thrive in this area and will accompany you along your way.



The Man Orchid: a very rare orchid to Picardy, it was so named because of the form of its delicate, yellow-green flowers; hundreds of plants spread across the chalk-banks from the month of May.

The healthy appetite of the "maguettes" (goats in the Picardy language) guarantees the survival of the chalk-banks. Perfectly at home here on the steep slopes, they clear the ground and limit the re-growth of the woodlands. Marc Dubiquet, a goat farmer, has been bringing his flock to graze here since 1997.