



D Starting Point
Turn left along the towpath to the left of the canal. After 800 metres take the trail to the left, which will take you to the ponds.

P Parking
Along the D57 between Bourdon and Hangest-sur-Somme

Be careful:
Waterfowl shooting is carried out close to this area between mid-August and mid-February (depending on official dates). Please be careful during this period.

The natural environment is precious, please respect it!
The Cavins Marshes are some of the fragile natural areas that have been acquired by the County Council to assure their protection and to open them to the public.

This trail is maintained by the County Council



La Somme

The Cavins Marshes

Bourdon, 8km from Picquigny, 21km from Amiens

Halfway along the Somme Valley, in the midst of the river banks, the Cavins Marshes are situated in an area of great ecological interest and beautiful scenery. A walk combining nature and culture!

D Starting at: Bourdon, car park opposite the cooperative

Time: 1 hour

Distance: 3km

Route: easy



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



This leaflet was created by the Somme County Council
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For more information:
• Tourist Offices:
Picquigny : 03 22 51 46 85 - www.otcco.fr
Longpré-les-Corps-Saints : 03 22 31 72 02
• Somme Tourist Board:
www.somme-tourisme.com
www.somme-nature.com
• This walk has received the: "Tourism and Handicap National Label":



Exploring the natural sites

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Summer 2012



The Cavins Marshes

Overlooked by the Hangest-sur-Somme chalk-banks, the Cavins Marshes, like the neighbouring marshes of the Château, belong to a group of vast peaty wetlands and ponds of the Somme Valley. They are considered to be unique in Europe. Following this 3km trail, come and discover a walk that combines nature and culture through a "literature circuit" based on the novel "En Famille" by Hector Malot.



Jean-Paul Grumetz,
Tour guide and lecturer for "Discovery of the Val de Nièvre and Surrounding Area"

"This is a wonderful area to explore and to enjoy the tranquillity. The walk allows you to discover the riches of the Somme: a land of water. Completed with a literature circuit, it also highlights the legacy of the novel "En Famille", by Hector Malot. The marshlands are mentioned in his work when the heroine comes to live in the area. Combining nature and culture, this is a walk not to be missed!"

A legacy of the past

The large ponds were created by the removal of peat, extracted using a special spade: a "louchet" in French. The property is made up of large stretches of water and many narrow belts of land patchworked with reed beds and willow thickets.

Wetlands, covered by high-growing vegetation, such as reeds and plants growing to a height of two metres, are very numerous.

Guided tour

To explore this site, rendez-vous at the car park between Bourdon and Hangest, on the D57. A little trail on the right will bring you to the towpath. Continue for 800 metres until you reach the entrance of the site via a little footbridge and



path on the left. You will now be able to admire the whole site from the heart of the river banks.

Once on the walkways, keep your eyes open and you may be lucky enough to see a Little Bittern, the smallest heron in Europe. This species, whose population is endangered in Europe, uses the ponds and wetlands for feeding. They are fond of the reed beds bordered by willow bushes, probably using them as breeding sites.

During the good weather, the scenery is even more beautiful

with the added beauty of the Water Lillies on the ponds. Continuing along the trail, you could have a rest on one of the benches before arriving at the site's meeting point where you will find a picnic area, a landing site for canoes and kayaks, and "catch and release" fishing areas. Information panels and an orientation table will unveil the secrets of the fauna and flora of the site, and highlight the novel "En Famille" by Hector Malot. Continue the walk, passing in front of a chalet, along the trail which will take you to the lodge, tucked behind the vegetation of the wetlands and the willow thickets.

Following the path, which will take you to the end of the walk, you will notice the



Dwarf Hairgrass

white or violet flowers of the Common Comfrey, followed by a large reed bed on the left.

After the final footbridge, you will discover the low-marshes which formed after bank restoration work was carried out by the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie. Plants characteristic of the environment grow here, such as the Dwarf Hairgrass, Brown Galingale and the Nodding Bur-marigold.

You will now return to the towpath that will take you back to the car park.



Brown Galingale

Management of the site

If maintenance work is insufficient, the accumulation of organic waste will create a richer soil and the marshes will eventually dry out. Wet grasslands, progressively being taken over by willow thickets, would then develop. In the absence of maintenance work, the terrestrial environments naturally evolve towards wooded areas of thickets of willow, birch, alder and ash, which offer a poorer ecological interest. Maintenance strimming is regularly carried out and the strimming waste is taken away; the willow thickets are also cleared and certain pollarded trees are cared for.



The Little Bittern is a type of nesting and migratory heron that belongs to the Ardeidae family. It is recognisable by its small size: equivalent to that of a pigeon, and its straw-yellow colouring that brightens up the back of its head and black back. This species is considered endangered in France and Europe.

About the site

- > **Proprietor:** Somme County Council
- > **Size:** 17ha
- > **Managed by:** Somme County Council
- > **Maintenance partners:** Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie
- > **Financial partners:** Europe, State, Agence de l'Eau