

Ponds and rivers



Ponds and Men

In the Champagne wetlands, the clayey subsoil allowed the creation of a multitude of ponds from the Middle Ages onwards. There is no need to dig, simply dam a small river and its stream quickly fills up the shallow bowl, the pond created is good for both flora and fauna, and human activities.

In the territory of the Park, the monks from the local abbeys created many ponds (probably more than 200), for fish farming (traditionally the carp), the drainage and the improvement of neighbouring lands, after the forest had been cleared. These ponds were mostly established in chains along the course of a stream, thus allowing a collective hydraulic management.

Today, more than 70 ponds survive in the Park, the others have disappeared, with the passing of the centuries, either naturally (the dams of former Templar ponds are still visible in the Forêt d'Orient), or by human intervention (creation of reservoirs, cultivation...). Mankind is closely linked to the pond ecosystem and this rich anthropic milieu in terms of natural heritage, can only survive with a thoughtful long-term management.

All the ponds in the Park are private and most of them are still extensively managed, either for fishing

(traditional yearly fishing by drainage) or for hunting (tracking)... Some owners welcome fishermen.

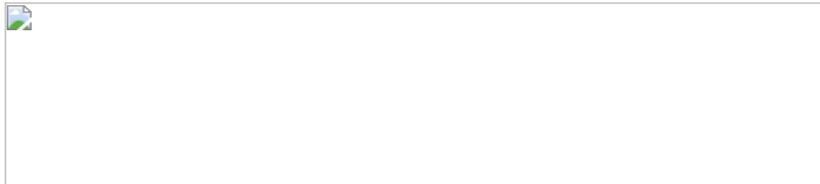
The "management" of the heritage has enabled the blooming of a rich and remarkable wild fauna, notably insects, amphibians and birds. The ponds also conceal a multitude of aquatic plant species and paludals.

This ecological and economic heritage is threatened today: decline in the market for freshwater fish, intensification of practices, abandonment, or the emergence of new leisure activities... Facing this phenomenon, the Park in collaboration with the owners and administrators of the ponds and with the financial support of the regional Council and water board, has launched a pilot scheme for the lasting management of the ponds of the Champagne wetlands, it aims to better understand and improve this remarkable heritage.

> Find out more regarding the management program of the ponds in Champagne wetlands <

Rivers

The territory of the Park benefits from a dense and varied hydrographic network, an integral part of the basin of the Seine and its main tributary the Aube.



The creation of the reservoirs for the Seine and then the Aube have deeply changed the course and the working of

these rivers in some places, but they have nevertheless preserved a landscape and biology worthy of interest .

Both rivers have piscicultural resources making them interesting for fishing and the Aube is good for canoeing.

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