

## **THE NATURE RESERVE OF THE PLATIER D'OYE** **IN OYE PLAGE**

### **SITUATION**

The Platier d'Oye is situated on the admin of Oye Plage between Calais and Dunkirke, in the department of Pas De Calais.

### **HISTORIC**

In the Gallo-Roman times, the Platier d'Oye didn't exist. There was a big delta between Calais, Dunkirke and St Omer. This delta of l'Aa was covered with Boggy forest. In the fourth century, an infringement from the sea was destroyed. During the middle ages, the sea kept receding. The delta is filled in Naturally but this has been intensified with the intervention of the man. He has built a system of ditches (watergangs) and dykes. In Oye Plage the Valençay dyke on the Toaf dyke dated since the eight century . At time, off this Toaf dyke appeared to sandbank

- **In 1925**, We created a dyke which prevented the sea from penetrating behind this sandbanks. The Platier d'Oye was then isolated from the sea. This site is still in development. In a general manner, the ground encroached the sea.

- **In 1940**, During the second world war, the Germans built the Atlantic wall with some blockhouses and some anti-tank walks along the beach. We can see these today in the reserve. Lots of these blockhouses are now in the middle of the "dunes à fourrées" so far off the sea, that this proves there is a fattening of the dunes.

- **In 1953**, the broke sea flooded the Platier d'Oye some one metre of salt watter has covered the humid meadow.

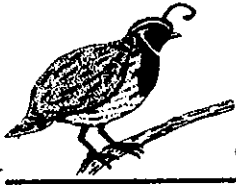
- **In 1970**, the construction of one housing estate of 1000 houses are built. It's the housing estate of Escardines. It's situated between the part west and the part east the Platier d'Oye.

- **In 1979**, the littoral conservatory get 128 hectares (This public organisation created in 1974 was aimed at buying littoral thretened spaces and mantain them in Natural State in order to protected the biological harmony).

Some fitting are realized in connection with the admin of Oye Plage. We created some stairs to walk though the dunes. We intalled sign posts, some hilling trail. Hunting is forbidden on the conservatory's land to protect the fauna.

However, it's allowed on the public maritime land which includes the Vasières and the beach (around 200 hectares).

- **In 1984**, a nature guide association was created to let the public discover the faun and the flora of the Platier d'Oye all around the year (a guided tour takes place the first sunday of the month at 9.30 am in the park of the observatory).



## **THE PLATIER D'OYE CLASSIFIED NATURE RESERVE**

On july 1987, a departmental order (87-533) classified 391 hectares of the Platier d'Oye as Nature Reserve (158 hectares of the littoral conservatory and 223 hectares of the public maritime land).

In France, more than 200 sites hold this "label". In the Nord Pas De Calais area, two other Natural sphere are classified : the dune machand near Dunkirk and the Bay of the Canche near Etaples.

The Platier d'Oye form part of the European Network of the big Natural sites. It has been twinned with the Site of Titchweel in Norfolk in great Britain Reserve is headed by the R S P B ,and this of zwanenwater in Nether lands headed by natuurmonumenten. The Officials of the three reserves meet regularly in order to exchange their experiences regarding the natural sphere management.

The Nature Reserve of the Platier d'Oye is managed by l'E.N.R (Natural Space Area) and l'E.D.E.N 62 activities of the site . Lots of partners take part in the financing of the spending : the department of the environment, the littoral conservatory European Union, the local committee of Nord Pas de Calais, the general committee of Nord Pas de Calais, the admin of Oye Plage.

Since 1987, the managements have done carried out some work to divers the activities in the area. We have create both some new pools and islets. We have introduced a herd of rustic races. A scientific follow up of the faun and the flora of the site is carried out regularly.

### **Regulation relating to the Nature Reserve**

Since 1987, on the nature reserve of the Platier d'Oye like in only nature reserve in France it 's forbidden to move out of the signposted foot path to go cycle to ride horses to let dogs off their lead, to pick flowers, fruits or mushrooms, to dig out plants, to hunt or disturb wild animals, to picnic, to leave litter, to make fires or to camp.

### **Formation of the dunes**

The sands formed by the thin particles of silica and of remnants of shellfish which deposited on the beach thank to sail current. Pushed by the wind, the sand is piling up behind obstacles. It forms some little embryonic dunes. Beyond this first cord of dune with an plant essential for its and its root holds the dune. Late we discovered a lawn of moss, of lichens and with some little annual plants. The grey dune is fixed it doesn't move with the wind anylonger. Then come the "fourrés" on them accumulated wich enrich the ground. It's essentially the property of the Argousier. The fruits of these "fourrés" are the meat safe of every bird during autumn.



## **FLORA IN THE DUNES**

The Platier d'Oye is bordered by the sea over 4km the Vasières, salt-meadow, embryonic dunes, white dunes, grey dunes, dunes "à fourrés" and humid meadows with the ponds of fresh water are the main landscape of the Platier d'Oye. The flora is typical of the dune environment of north of France. It plays an essential role because this what holdsback the sand.

### **In the Vasières**

The maritime aster, the glasswort of Europe or (passepierre) in Europe protected race in the Nord Pas De Calais area.

The maritime glasswort, the statice or the lavender of sea, the obione

### **On the high of beach**

The bot purslan of sea, the sea cabbage, the maritime matricaire.

### **In the embryonic dune**

The maritime couch grass

### **In the white dune**

The marram, euphorbia, the panicaut or blue thistle of dune (conservatory of the littoral emblem) the bot groundsel jaccobré the dog tongre or cynoglosse...

### **In the grey dune**

The tortula moss, the lichen, the geranium, the forget-me-mot, the lotier, the pepper of wall or sedum, the saxifrage.

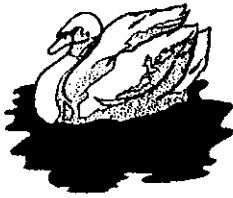
### **In the dune "à fourrés"**

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The argousier, the elder, the wild rose, the bramble, the bot privet, the hawthorn, the blackthorn.

### **In the humid environment (meadows and ponds)**

The willow, bot reed, anserian linquefoil, the aquatic buttercup...



## FAUNA OF PLATIER D'OYE

A/ The nature reserve of Platier d'Oye has been created essentially for its situation on an axis of migration of the birds in spring and autumn. In fact, for the birds which go to nest in the north of Europe, the Platier d'Oye is a halt half-way between the reserves of Marquene in Baie de Somme and the Zwin in Belgium.

We can find a lot of ducks during the period of migration (widgeon, teal of winter) and a lot of species of limicoles, little orn wader (avocet, sand piper, curlew, young woodcock, barge, gravelot).

These birds can be seen since from some observatories situated on the west and east part of the reserve. It's preferable to have binoculars for a best view.

B/ On the Platier d'Oye various species of birds nest in spring and summer. We count more than sixty of them. For example :

- the lapwing, avocet, oyster catcher, the sandpiper, gambette, the gravelot, the coot, the shelduck of belon, mallard, the souchet duck, the teal of summer, the gull, the sterne caugek, the swan tuberculared, the pheasant. Don't forget the passereaux which nest in the fourrés :
- The cuckoo, the tit, the linnet, the wheatear, the lark, the thrush, the blackbird, the nightingale, the warbler, the robin etc...

C/ Other birds, like the grey heron, the cormorant, the white spoonbill, come to the site but nest elsewhere.

D/ More than 110 species are already known. The Platier d'Oye is appreciated by the birds because they find a humid environment with fresh water or brackish (humid meadows) or with salt water (vasières). These humid zones produce a lot of food.

All these birds find peace and quiet here.

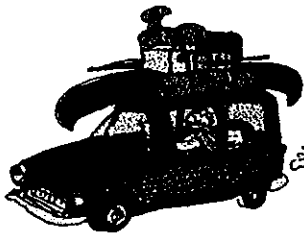
They are not the only ones to come to the Platier d'Oye we can see bunnies, some little rodents like the voles, some insects like dragonfly, some butterflies like the Zygène, some batrachians like the red frog.

Since 1999, some cows and highland ponies have been implanted on the meadow of the reserve to maintain the grass (more or less shaved). This allowed the diversification, of the flora and favours the nidification of species of birds like the lapwings hupé, the highland cows have long hair and big horns. These wide clods avoid to sink.

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The pony is also capable to ensure the pasture.

On the beach, we can discover about thirty kinds of shellfish in the foreshore (the cockle, the mactre, the donace, the tellime) some gasteropods (the buccin, the natic, the angel fish, the hoopnet, ...) some spaiums (of skate, of spotted dog fish, of buccin ...) some sea urchins, some cuttlefish bony and some seaweed (lettuce of the sea, ascophylle).



## **VISITORS ARE WELCOME**

There 4 car parks for visitors in the part west and east of the site.

### **1- A CAR PARK IS SITUATED AT THE ABRICOTIER**

From this bay west of the Platier d'Oye there is a wild path which joins the observatory.

### **2- AN OTHER CAR PARK IS SITUATED AT THE FRONT OF THE OBSERVATORY**

Road of the dune 200 metres away from leaning tower simulated a steeple built by the Germans in 1940. In this car park, a nature path 3km long to a buckle around of the path west. It's the path which is used when there are guided visits of the guided tour association on the first sunday of the month. The school group council work, seniors citizens clubs can have a guided visit during the week. A nature organiser who worked for the l'Aa ensure these.

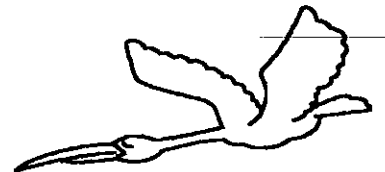
### **3- A THIRD CAR PARK IS SITUATED NEXT TO THE HOUSING ESTATE OF ESCARDINES 5front of the house of the guard)**

2 guards are in charge of the reserve of the Platier d'Oye. From this car park, it's possible to go to the beach. Taken the stairs which over hanged the dune or discover the puddle of goose, little nature path with some pools on they live some birds of watter (ducks, geoses, barnack geoses).

### **4- THE LAST CAR PARK IS AT EAST OF THE RESERVE**

It permite leads to an observatory where in summer we can follow the nidification of several hundreds of couples of caugek sternes we can also go on the vasières which are around the channel of l'Aa.

They are regularly flooded by the sea and corvered in thin particles of clay come from the river. These muds allow the introduction of a vegetation like salt, they contain lots of "grubs" and molluscs apreciated by the limicoles. Don't forget there is on the vasières in period of hunting from the end of jully to the end of february.



*The End*