

Caption

- Borders of the natural reserve
- Township
- Access point with car park
- Point of view
- Information panel
- Picnic area
- Bike rack
- Fishing spot
- Boarding site / canoe landing slipway
- Start of walk
- walking path
- Bridge
- Church
- Camp Site
- Motorhome area
- Espace Nature du Val d'Allier
- Tourist Office
- Start of walking path «beavers»
- GR 300 path
- Track



Discover the interactive map of the Reserve:
<https://auvergne-rhone-alpes.lpo.fr/espaces-naturels/rnn-val-d-allier/>

The Reserve shows its nature!

With its 1,450 hectares of protected land on both sides of the river Allier, the Allier Valley National Natural Reserve welcomes you just a few kilometers upstream from Moulins.

Walking, canoeing, cycling, fishing, or simply observing nature are outdoor activities easily at reach thanks to 10 free entry points into the Natural Reserve territory.

The Reserve shelters a large variety of fauna and flora, which you can observe at any time of the year, as long as you comply with the regulations in place and respect the species* tranquility. Adopting such a respectful behaviour is necessary to ensure we can all enjoy the marvels the river has to offer for many more years.

Wanna know more?



Visit the LPO (Birdlife French representative) Espace Nature du Val d'Allier in Moulins.

There, you can familiarise yourself with the rich natural heritage the river offers, thanks to movies, exhibitions and play areas

8, bd de Nomazy
03000 Moulins

More information:

<https://auvergne-rhone-alpes.lpo.fr/espaces-naturels/rnn-val-d-allier/>

Have a safe wander:

- During high water periods, some areas of the reserve will be impassable.
- Beware of branch or tree falls and avoid wandering about on days of strong wind.
- Do not approach eroded banks.
- If you come across livestock, remain calm, do not run and walk around them. Please make sure you properly close gates after crossing them, and respect the facilities in place.
- Information is regularly updated on the reserve interactive map.

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A river and its dynamics

With over 20 kilometres of preserved land on both sides of the river, the Allier Valley Natural Reserve protects one of the only remaining examples, in occidental Europe, of an almost totally free-flowing river.

Water is an untameable element that, with time, erodes and remodel riverbanks, opens new arms and leaves old ones unused, deposits sediments...

Thanks to this phenomenon, called fluvial dynamics, river Allier models a complex and rich mosaic of varied habitats, intricated like the pieces of a puzzle: sand and gravel banks, eroded slopes, dead arms, meadows, grasslands, barrens, riparian forests...

It is thanks to such a variety of connected and dynamic habitats that river Allier is shelter to an impressively rich fauna and flora.

Protecting this remarkable biological capital, and drinkable water resources (quantity and quality), requires maintaining the free-flowing abilities of the river.



Banks in Boudemange



Dead arm at Saint-Loup island

From Eurasian thick knees to Black-crowned night herons, from Ospreys to Black woodpeckers.

Here, on the immense aridity of a pebbles beach, three mimetic eggs laid on the ground betray the presence of a Little ringed plover. A little further, atop a hawthorn, a Red-backed shrike contemplates its territory while the song of a Black woodpecker echoes through the curtain of poplars branches. Perched on large oaks, Grey herons and White storks are at work, feeding their relentless nestlings.

Nowadays, very few places offer such a variety of species within such a short reach. The Allier Valley is a birding privileged location, with no less than 280 species seen.

In winter, many ducks and other waterbirds leave northern countries to spend the cold season on river Allier, adding a warming touch to the apparent coldness of the river wilderness.

From Salmon to Pikes, from Perches to Shads.



Pike

Many fish species breed and live on the reserve, in its dead arms (bitterlings, pikes) as well as in its live-bed (chubs, bleaks). The reserve is also a major migration route for some emblematic species like the Atlantic salmon, Shads or Eels, all threatened of extinction in France.

In addition to revealing its great species richness (41 species censused), studying fish fauna provides precious information about the river's functionality and its potential disturbances.

From Beavers to Roe deer, from Otters to House martens.

At dusk, find a hide to wait and observe beavers and otters. Be on the lookout for spoors left by roe deer or coypus when you walk around on wet beaches. Look closely at those droppings left by rabbits and foxes. You might come across pine martens or bank voles when strolling in the forest. As the

moon rises, observe the aerial ballet of bats.

With 51 mammal species found on the reserve, the opportunities are nearly unlimited, from a 5g-tiny Eurasian harvest mouse to a 35 kg-massive beaver.



Beaver

From Green tiger beetles to European stag beetles, from Crickets to Large coppers.

No need to be an expert to appreciate the wonders of the insects world. With its prodigious diversity, you can find pretty little bugs everywhere, in the tiniest puddle, in the smallest grove, on the highest tree top, underground or under the smallest grain of sand, at the back of the thinnest blade of grass...

The reserve shelters an incredible entomofauna, with over 50 species of odonates, 125 species of butterflies, 35 of crickets and grasshoppers, and over 1000 different beetles.

From 4 mm water lentils to 30 m black poplars.

A quick stroll is enough for the visitor to enter a wonderland of colours. From the silver grey of willows to the bright red of stonecrops, through the deep green of wet meadows or the shiny white of blooming hawthorns, the eye is caught by an infinity of shades throughout the seasons, and within sometimes a few metres.

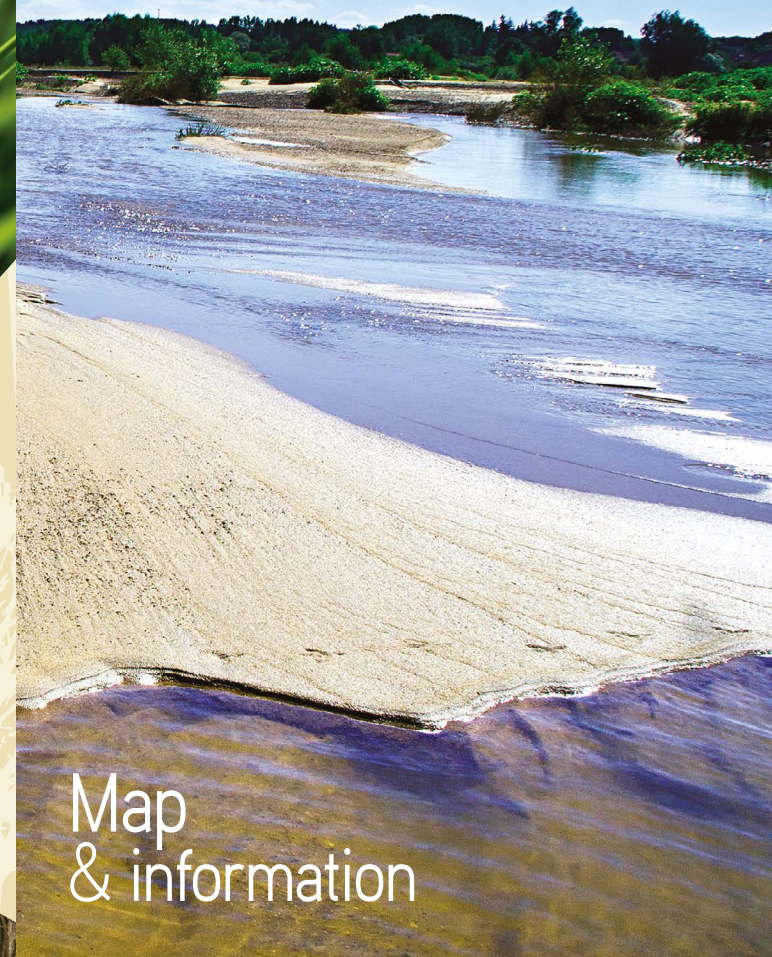
With a large variety of soil types, particle sizes, nutrients, moisture, one can find an incredible floristic diversity,

with over 600 species censused, some of them considered endemic to the reserve.

Many new discoveries are yet to be made within the fungus, lichen and moss families.



Black poplar



Map & information



www.lpo-auvergne.org



*Regulations according to ministerial decree of March 25 1994