Etangs circular trail

Basse-Terre Sud - Capesterre-Belle-Eau

vue sur le Grand Etang (N.Liagre - PNG)

A splendid, challenging trail from one pond to the next. There are numerous birds to see here, so it really is worth stopping off to enjoy some bird spotting and to listen to them in all their glory.

Useful information

Practice : Walking

Duration : 6 h

Length : 7.3 km

Trek ascent : 497 m

Difficulty : Difficult

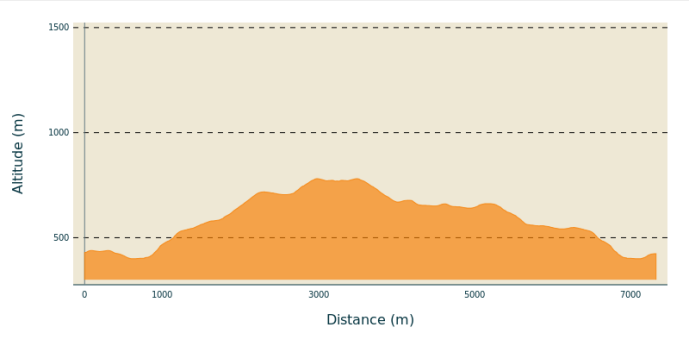
Type : Loop

Themes : Geology, Pond and wetland

Trek

Departure : Etangs parking area, Capesterre-Belle-Eau
Arrival : Etangs parking area, Capesterre-Belle-Eau
Markings : PR (short hike network)
Cities : 1. Capesterre-Belle-Eau
2. Trois-Rivieres

Altimetric profile

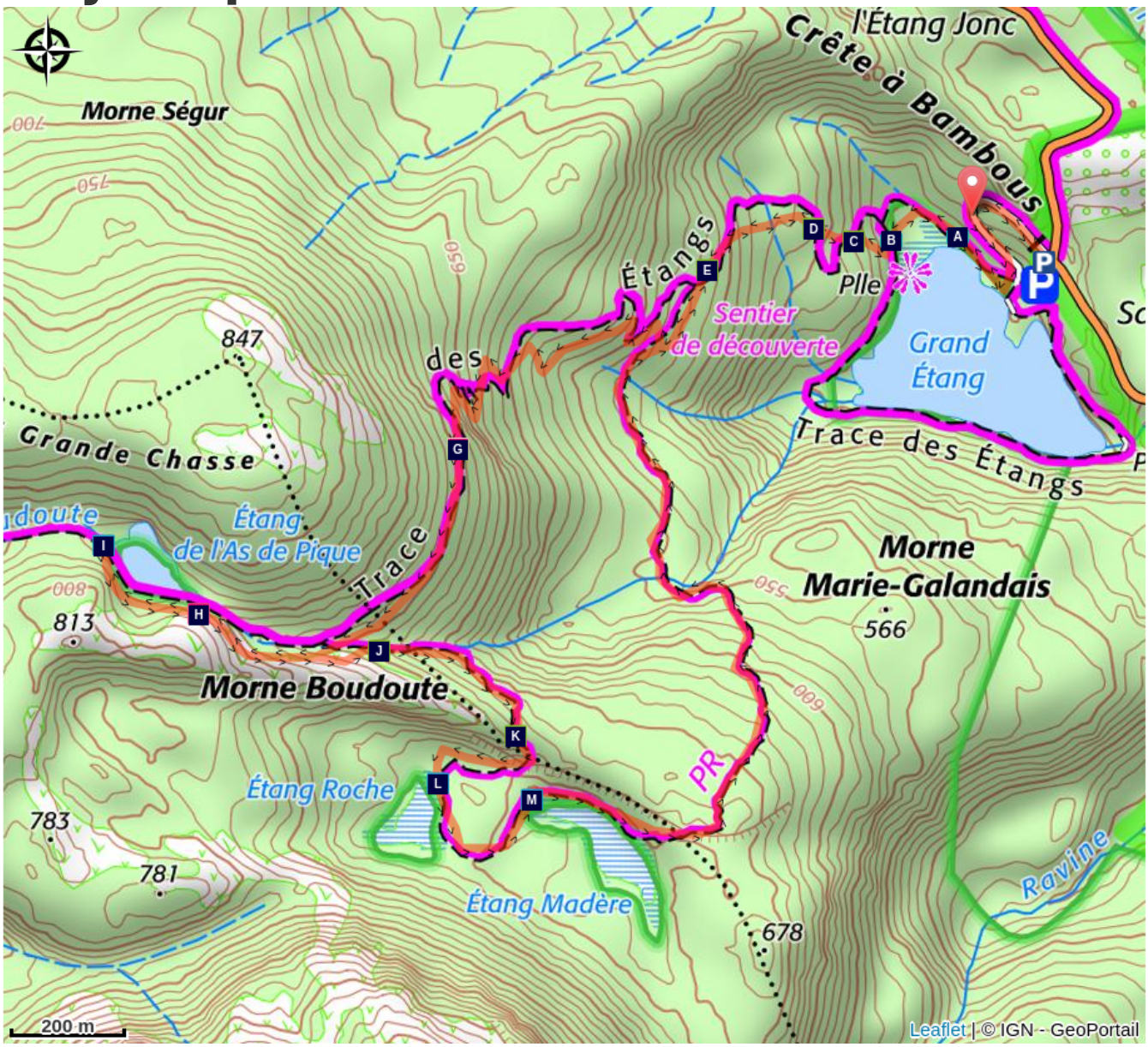


Min elevation 400 m Max elevation 781 m

Hiking trail colour: yellow

Follow the concrete path leading from the car park. Go up to the Grand Etang to enjoy the great views. Turn back and walk for a few metres and then turn left towards l'Etang As-de-Pique.
At the three intersections that follow, head in the same direction (right twice and straight on once). Once you get to l'Etang As-de-Pique, walk along it from the left. Enjoy the views marked out by the sign "Etang As-de-Pique". Turn around and head back down to the previous intersection. Turn right to reach l'Etang Roche. Walk alongside the pond, making sure to follow the trail that continues until l'Etang Madère. Turn left at the next intersection and then right and finally left to return to the concrete road. Keep going up until you reach the parking area. Both at the start and at the end points you can join the Grand Etang tour.
N.B. The numbered info markers correspond to detailed and illustrated information which can be found in the "Grand Etang Discovery Guide".

On your path...



Info point 17: "The tree of a thousand buttresses" (A)
Bats (C)
Bwa rouj carapate (E)
How the Grand Etang was formed (G)
L'Etang As-de-Pique (I)
Mapou baril (K)
Etang Madère (M)

Info point 16: "A fragile soil" (B)
The Gommier (D)
Osprey (F)
As-de-Pique and Citerne (H)
Geonoma (J)
Etang Roche (L)

All useful information

Is in the midst of the park

The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors.

Advices

As Guadeloupe is prone to natural risks, extra care should be taken in this natural environment. For the benefit of all hikers, responsible behaviour is very important. Warning : the parking area is unsupervised.

How to come ?

Access

GPS coordinates of the start point : Lat : 16,02922 N - Long : 61,62748 W.

After Saint-Sauveur on Route RN1 (between "Bananier" and the town of Capesterre-Belle-Eau), head towards "Chutes du Carbet".
Keep going on the RD4. The road is steep. Parking for the Etangs is shown at an intersection on the left.

Advised parking

Etangs parking areas, Capesterre-Belle-Eau

Information desks

Headquarters of the National Park of Guadeloupe
Montéran, 97120 Saint-Claude

info@randoguadeloupe.gp
Tel : 0590 41 55 55
http://www.guadeloupe-parcnational.fr/fr/des-decouvertes/ou-sinformer/siege-de-saint-claude

Reception area of Les Chutes du Carbet
terminus de la RD4 , route de l'Habituée, 97130 Capesterre-Belle-Eau

info@randoguadeloupe.gp
http://www.guadeloupe-parcnational.fr/fr/des-decouvertes/ou-sinformer/chutes-du-carbet

Source

Rando Guadeloupe

https://www.randoguadeloupe.gp/

On your path...

Info point 17: "The tree of a thousand buttresses" (A)

The Acomat boucan *(Sloanea caribaea)* belongs to the Elaeocarpaceae family. It is an extremely large tree that can grow up to 40 metres tall. It is the most spectacular tree in the Sloanea genus, with an exposed trunk and magnificent buttresses. Its bark is reddish-brown and tends to flake off in thin strips when the tree ages. Formerly, visitors to the forest would use its enormous buttresses to shelter their fires and to smoke meat. It has since been established that lighting fires among the roots is not conducive to the well-being of trees.

Attribution : F. Salles / PNG

Info point 16: "A fragile soil" (B)

Plant roots in the soil are easy to spot throughout the trail. They are evidence of a young and shallow soil, which was only set down very recently.

Attribution : F. Salles / PNG

Bats (C)

When you turn right, you may be able to hear the unmistakeable sound of bats, which inhabit this area.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG

The Gommier (D)

The Gommier (Daryodes excelsa) can grow up to 35m high. When they are damaged, its white trunk and roots exude a white resin with a pungent turpentine smell, which is traditionally used as incense or to start fires, because it burns slowly regardless of the surrounding humidity. It is reported that the tree has the ability to cast out spirits. It is strictly forbidden to take away any plant parts from the National Park. Its trunk was used by American Indians to make their canoes (kanawa), and is still used today by coastal people from many tropical countries, such as Dominique, to make fishing vessels. Its green seeds are popular with pigeons.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

Bwa rouj carapate (E)

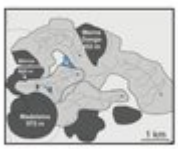
A member of the Euphorbiacieae family, *Amanoa caribeae* is endemic to the Lesser Antilles. It is a large tree with a trunk that rests straight on its buttresses, depending on the terrain. The most distinctive feature of this species is its reddish bark and roots at the foot of the trunk. Its leaves vary in shape: sometimes they are whole, sometimes pointed. Its flowers form small clusters, while its very hard wood was used as timber or in carpentry.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

Osprey (F)

An opening in the vegetation provides the perfect vantage point to see some ospreys. The Osprey *(Pandion haliaetus)* is a raptor with its own scientific family, the Pandionidae. In Guadeloupe it is known as the Gligli montagne. It has a blue/black beak, with dark brown plumage on its back and a speckled brown/white belly. It measures between 55-60 cm and boasts a wingspan of 1.8 metres. It feeds on the fish that it catches in ponds or at the seafront.

Attribution : F. Hemery



How the Grand Etang was formed (G)

The largest pond in the Basse-Terre mountains, the Carib Indians called it "the great water of the mountain".
More than 10,000 years ago, a natural depression was formed between the lava flows of the Madeleine and Morne Boudoute, pushing against Morne Dongo. With its waterproof clay bedrock, the natural basin quickly filled up with water, forming into the Grand Etang pond.
As it was eroded over time, the Grand Etang gradually filled up with materials from the hillsides around it. Plant formations started to develop from the banks and shallows, eventually covering the entire lake. Unless appropriate action is taken, by pulling up and cutting down the plants, and dredging the sediment, the Grand Etang looks set to disappear completely.

Attribution : BRGM

As-de-Pique and Citerne (H)

View of l'Etang As-de-Pique and the top of the Citerne (known for its French TV antenna).

Attribution : C.Lesponne - PNG

L'Etang As-de-Pique (I)

Etang As-de-Pique, set at 748 metres above sea level.

Attribution : C.Lesponne

Geonoma (J)

There are two species of palm in the Geonoma genus that are endemic to the Lesser Antilles and that co-exist in Guadeloupe. *G. dussiana* (10-15 cm in diameter) has a bigger stipe (trunk) than *G. martinicensis* (3-5 cm in diameter).

Mapou baril (K)

Sterculia caribea is endemic to the Lesser Antilles. Depending on the age of the plant, its leaves come in different shapes. Its fruits - large woody follicles that cluster together in groups of four or five - are highly distinctive. They are lined with urticating bristles on the inside. Its flowers appear in the form of a bunch of small yellow and pink bells.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

Etang Roche (L)

L'Etang Roche is set at 650 metres above sea level. It is almost always dry, especially during Lent (the driest season in Guadeloupe, running from December to June).

Attribution : C.Lesponne

Etang Madère (M)

Beautiful views of l'Etang Madère and the Madeleine massif. The pond is almost always dry.

Attribution : C.Lesponne