

# Rhin supérieur / Oberrhein //



RAMSAR SITE  
NUMBER  
**1810**

Linked to the  
german site  
n° 1809



FRANCE

Area :  
**22 410 ha\***

Date of designation :  
**September 5<sup>th</sup> 2008**

Coordinates :  
**48° 25' N 07° 45' E**

## Summary

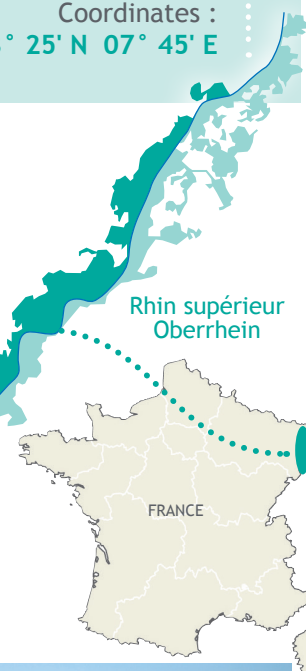
The transboundary site "Rhin supérieur / Oberrhein" extends on both sides of the Rhine over a distance of 190 km and a maximum width of 11 km in its downstream part. It includes the river course and the lateral alluvial environments. It is an ancient alluvial zone shaped by the Rhine, which is the origin of one of the largest groundwater bodies in Europe. The developments, carried out at the end of the 19th and during the 20th centuries, for the benefit of navigation and the production of hydroelectricity, have resulted in the loss of surface area of these alluvial environments and a degradation of their functionality due to their disconnection from the Rhine.

## Internationale importance

This alluvial zone is made up of a mosaic of remarkable natural habitats (willow-peatland, alluvial forests with oaks, elms and ashes, side arms, phreatic springs, thin lawns, etc.). It is a breeding ground for the great fish migratory species of the Rhine (Atlantic salmon, sea trout, large shad, sea lamprey, etc.) and a wintering ground of international importance for water birds (50,000 individuals in January).

## General location

The Ramsar site marks the French-German border on the Rhine, between Basel in the south and, in the north, Lauterbourg for the French bank and Karlsruhe for the German bank.



## Services provided by wetlands

The alluvial zones provide food and habitat for a large number of animal species. Hunting and fishing, agriculture and forestry are practiced in some parts of the site. The site hosts many tourist and recreational activities that contribute to the local economy. The alluvial plain also plays an important role in the regulation of floods since retention areas allow the flood waves to be shifted to protect the populations located downstream. Moreover, these alluvial environments also contribute to the improvement of water quality. Finally, they contribute to the improvement of the living environment by offering to the inhabitants and to the tourists numerous possibilities of discovery of these environments.



## Adverse factors

Channelized and dammed during the 20th century, these environments no longer have the necessary freedom to implement dynamic processes that regularly regenerate the diversity of the associated environments. The developments have caused a significant drop in the water table, modifying the functioning of the alluvial systems and the balance of the environments. The pressure of urbanization and activities threatens the sustainability of certain environments. At the crossroads of exchanges linked to the Rhine, the environments are also subject to the development of invasive species.

\* Total area of 47 530 ha including 22 410 ha in France (site n° 1810) and 25 120 ha in Germany (site n° 1809)

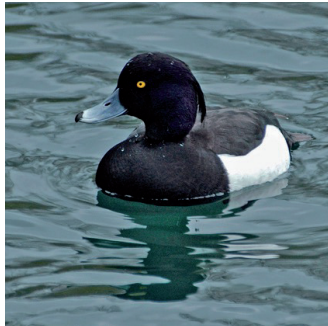


## Four species representative of the site



**GREEN RAINETTE**  
(*Hyla arborea*)

Measuring between 3 and 6 cm, the green tree frog has a large head with a rounded snout. Generally of an intense green color, it can also be pale yellow, grey-brown, yellow-green, dark green, blue-green depending on the season and the environment. It feeds on insects and their larvae. The song of the males resembles the sound of a small bell which can be heard in a radius of more than 100 m.



**TUFTED DUCK**  
(*Aythya fuligula*)

The tufted duck is a medium-sized diving duck. Propelled by its large webbed feet, it can descend to a depth of seven meters. The male has black and white plumage, while the female is brown overall. It is a gregarious bird, which forms large flocks in winter. It lives with other diving ducks such as scaups and coots.



**ATLANTIC SALMON**  
(*Salmo salar*)

This well known fish measures from 45 cm to 1 m and can weigh 10 kg as an adult. It swims up rivers to spawn and reproduce. The course of the Rhine is of international importance as a migration route for this species, with salmon breeding mainly in its tributaries. It has benefited from restocking measures on the site.



**EUROPEAN STAG BEETLE**  
(*Lucanus Cervus*)

The European stag beetle is the largest beetle in Europe and measures 2 to 5 cm in the female, and 3 to 8 cm in the male. Its body is black. Faced with threats, the male beetle displays its mandibles, which are powerful and can pinch strongly. The adults are active in the evening and at night. They fly in a quasi-vertical position and produce a strong buzzing sound.

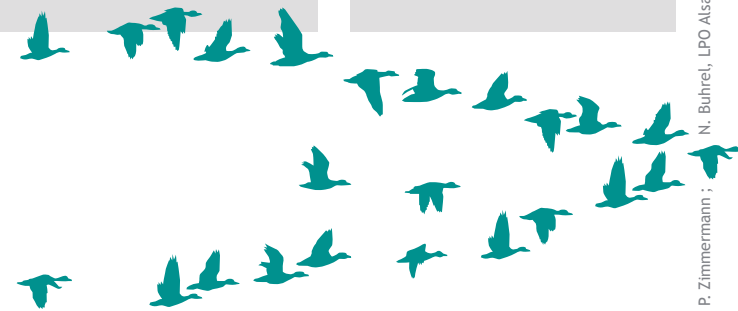


## Biodiversity

The site is home to a wide variety of species: nearly 900 plants, 260 birds, 55 dragonflies, 17 amphibians, 4 reptiles, 47 mammals.

The aquatic environments of the Rhine strip play an essential role for a number of migratory species, particularly during the winter period (resting, feeding). With an average of 50,000 wintering birds of nearly 40 species, this area is the second most important wintering site for waterbirds in France after the Camargue.

The Rhine is of international importance as a migration route for rare or protected migratory species such as the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), the Great shad (*Alosa alosa*), the Sea trout (*Salmo trutta*), the River lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), the Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) and the Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*).



## Management and conservation

The Ramsar site is entirely included in the Natura 2000 Rhine-Ried-Bruch site. It also includes seven national nature reserves on the French side (from south to north: Petite Camargue Alsacienne à Saint-Louis, Rhinau, Erstein, Illkirch-Graffenstaden, Strasbourg-Rohrschollen, Offendorf, Seltz-Munchhausen). In its southern part, it has a cross-border management plan. Finally, the entire length is a hunting and wildlife reserve.



### The Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, is a global inter-governmental treaty that provides the frame-work for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global treaty to focus on one single ecosystem.