

Impluvium d'Évian //



RAMSAR SITE
NUMBER
1833



FRANCE

Area :
3275 ha

Date of designation :
September 15th 2008

Coordinates :
46° 22' N 06° 36' E

Summary

Halfway between Lake Geneva and the Pre-Alps of Chablais, the Gavot region is a green setting between water and mountains. Mainly located between 630 and 950 meters of altitude, it is the impluvium, i.e. the preferential infiltration area, of Evian natural mineral water. It hosts more than a hundred wetlands with a wide variety of surfaces and ecological types. The historical policy of conservation of wetlands carried out very early and in partnership by the local actors make this site a unique place remarkably preserved.

International importance

The biological diversity of the Pays de Gavot is remarkable, rich in patrimonial species whose conservation is an issue and a territorial responsibility. In fact, the contour of the Ramsar site gathers 27% of all the plant species of Haute-Savoie and 9% of the species of interest, and this despite its small surface which represents only 0.72% of the department. On the other hand, this site represents the glacial relics of the Pre-Alps formation, a unique geological entity in France that has received international recognition by UNESCO: the "Chablais Geopark" label.

General location

The Pays de Gavot, located in the north-east of Haute-Savoie, is a plateau delimited from the surrounding regions by the bed of the Dranse to the west, the municipalities bordering Lake Geneva to the north and the Chablais Alps to the southeast.



Impluvium d'Évian

Services provided by wetlands

In addition to the biological richness that they host, the wetlands of the territory, although representing only 10% of the surfaces of the plateau, concentrate more than 30% of the rain, snow and runoff water. They therefore undeniably contribute to the collection, purification and infiltration of groundwater resources. Marshes also play a major role in flood regulation and, on a larger scale, in climate regulation.

The site developed for the reception of the public, and more particularly the Maravant marsh, serve as natural "showcase" spaces to make the general public aware of the current issues related to wetlands and climate change.

In addition, the Pré Curieux water garden, a real peri-urban communication tool for the Ramsar site, covers 3.5 hectares on the shore of Lake Geneva. It is a unique place that presents, through an exhibition and a tour of the park, the different ecosystems linked to water.

Adverse factors

The demographic growth has favored an extension of urban areas on the downstream slope of Lake Geneva and the Gavot plateau and the development of road equipment linked to urbanization (drainage, surface sealing, salting, etc.). The concentration of agricultural activities within a constrained land area and drainage have caused a modification of the hydrological functioning. In the marshes of the plateau, the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices has led to the development of shrubby vegetation that threatens local biodiversity, as do invasive exotic species.



Four species representative of the site



SOUTHERN DAMSELFLY
(*Coenagrion mercuriale*)

This delicate southern damselfly is protected at the national level. It takes advantage of sunny areas near seeps and small streams where plants typical of wetlands grow. According to a national synthesis, this species is essentially present in the Rhône valley and in the river corridors. The Gavot plateau station is therefore ecologically original, due to its location and also due to its altitude.



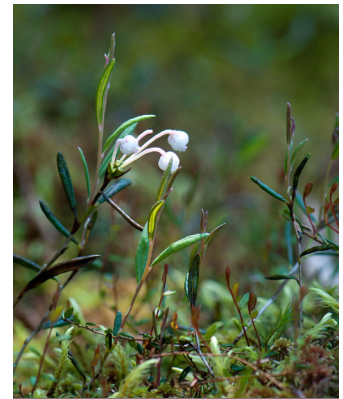
ROUND-LEAVED SUNDEW
(*Drosera rotundifolia*)

The round-leaved sundew is very discreet, you have to bend down to observe it. This small plant secretes, via glands on the surface of its leaves, a sticky liquid attractive to insects. Insects thinking they are enjoying a sweet nectar are fooled by the subterfuge, engulfed and digested by the plant. Nice evolution that of the drosera, which to compensate for the lack of assimilable nitrogen in the soil, became carnivorous.



FEN ORCHID
(*Liparis loeselii*)

This rare orchid is well represented in Haute-Savoie and particularly on the Gavot where it is present in several wetlands. Haute-Savoie has 1/4 of the French stations of liparis and the populations of the plateau are among the most beautiful of the department.



BOG-ROSEMARY
(*Andromeda polifolia*)

Small pink bell-shaped flowers top this shrub with narrow leaves. Protected on the national territory, the andromeda with leaves of polium, cousin of the heather, thrives in the peat bogs with acid substrate.



Management and conservation



Biodiversity

Almost all types of marshes of the northern Alps inherited from the last ice age are represented on the plateau: from lakes to high grass meadows with variable humidity, including tufa seepage, alkaline marshes and peat bogs. Their state of conservation is remarkable due to their early consideration in land use planning and management measures.

The rarity and fragility of the wild species and natural habitats present have led to the classification of 38 of the plateau's wetlands in the European Natura 2000 network.

For example, on the Praubert marsh alone (42 hectares), more than 250 plant species have been identified, 14 of which are threatened on a regional or national level.

For almost 20 years, the wetlands of the Pays de Gavot have been regularly maintained with two main objectives.

1 - Limit the closing of the environments: a light clearing as well as a mowing of maintenance make it possible to preserve them from the colonization by the young trees and the brambles.

2 - Control invasive species: invasive alien species (introduced outside their natural range) are the second most important cause of biodiversity loss in the world. If no adequate management is undertaken, invasive plants (solidago and balsamina) will become a problem for the maintenance of local biodiversity. This is why they are pulled out before they mature.

At the same time, a reinforcement of good agricultural practices has been put in place thanks to a methanization-composting network coupled with a spreading system designed to better manage and balance fertilization practices.



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.