



Considered a "natural monument of picturesque character" as defined by the 1930 law, the Hortillonnages benefit from legal protection under the designation of "registered sites" (decree dated April 4, 1972). The Saint-Pierre pond, the Place du Don, the water market, and its surroundings had already been listed in the inventory of sites on September 18, 1947.

The site has also held the "Paysages de Reconquête" label since 1991. This label rewards outstanding sites not only for their landscape specificity but also for the economic activities that support them.

Since 2017, the Marshes and Peat Bogs of the Somme and Avre Valleys, and consequently our Hortillonnages, are designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

### Access:

**Maison des Hortillonnages**  
54, Boulevard Beauvillé  
80000 AMIENS,

a fifteen-minute walk from the SNCF train station and bus station; accessible by bus lines No. 2, 8, 9, 12 (stop: Hortillonnages). Paid parking nearby.



### Boat Tours with a Guide:

The Association welcomes visitors from April 1 to October 31 aboard long boats (capacity: about a dozen people) equipped with an electric motor... (rates available on the association's website).

### Contacts:

☎ 03 22 92 12 18

Boat Tours:

Online reservations: [leshortillonnages-amiens.com](http://leshortillonnages-amiens.com)

Association membership: [contact@leshortillonnages.fr](mailto:contact@leshortillonnages.fr)



# The Hortillonnages

ENGLISH



# Les Hortillonnages

*"In these serene and secluded places, far from the city noise, one can only enter by boat. They are there, closer to you than you would believe, hidden in the heart of the city, within a bird's flight of the Cathedral of Amiens."*

## One of the Most Beautiful Gardening Sites in France

Less than 500 metres from the cathedral, the Hortillonnages undeniably rank among **the most visited tourist sites in Amiens** (capital of Picardy) second only to the cathedral. You can easily discover this, once the fine weather returns, by going to the **Maison des Hortillonnages** (The Hortillonnages House).



Many visitors eagerly await to embark on these beautiful and unique boats, reminiscent of the **"cornet boat"** of our hortillons (former market gardeners), for an exploration of this unique place.

## A Unique Site Accessible Only by Boat

The proposed circuit, intentionally limited to three kilometres (lasting about 45 minutes), starts from the embarkation point on Boulevard Beauvillé and crosses the western part of the Hortillonnages, offering visitors a **great diversity of landscape units** and an overview of land use.

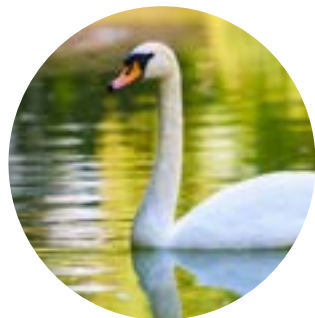
## 265 Hectares of Land and Water

In this labyrinth of nearly 67 km of small, narrow, and shallow canals (called "rieux"), you discover a floral setting with a thousand colours, framed by flowered banks, highlighting plots of land in a rich black earth.

Gliding along the water, propelled by the electric motors of the boats, whose silence can only be broken by the sound of the wind, visitors immerse themselves in the song of birds and the croaking of amphibians.

Often accompanied by a majestic swan couple protecting their offspring, or by a more talkative and less shy family of wild ducks, observed by a moorhen, a coot, or even a grebe, the visitor embarks on a journey to discover this seemingly natural environment on the outskirts of the regional capital.

An image offered to over **100,000 visitors** who are attracted each year to the Maison des Hortillonnages.



The population of Amiens and the surrounding municipalities (Camon, Rivery, Longueau, which share the site's area) has a vast green space where they can gather, away from the noise and urban congestion, enjoying the summer coolness of the marshes.

Following the rhythm of the water, visitors can explore a diverse flora, an incredible **green lung**, with weeping willows, twisted white willows, as well as ash trees.

The gaze will also focus on water plants (water lilies, water milfoil), as well as semi-aquatic plants like reeds (reeds that can reach up to 2 metres), bulrushes, and arrowheads. Throughout the journey, herbaceous plants (sedges, rushes, iris flowers) can also be discovered. The white willow and other willow species, especially the purple willow or red osier (*Salix purpurea*), can also be admired.

**The history of the Hortillonnages is truly embedded in this landscape shaped by generations of marshes and market gardeners (Hortillons).**

## The Hortillonnages, a Late Exclusive Name for this Region

The term **"Hortillonnages"** was assigned late to this part of the Somme and Aves valleys, where the hortillons (market gardeners) and peat bog workers, very early on, knew how to take advantage of particularly favourable conditions by transforming marshes into cultivable and highly fertile lands (on condition that the soil was enriched). This made market gardening suitable, and they extracted peat, which, among other things, allowed generations of farmers to heat their homes.

## Origins

The **hortillons**, whose presence is confirmed by records since the Middle Ages, were established in this marshy, peat bog environment, gradually developing a clever landscape layout adapted to the means and mode of operation of the time: long and very narrow areas (the «aires») drained by a network of small canals (the «rieux») grafted onto the course of the Aves and then the Somme, only accessible by boat.

# The Association for the Protection and Conservation of the Site and Environment of the Hortillonnages (APSSEH)

The association was declared on August 6, 1975, approved (law of 1901), and then re-recognised as of **public utility** on February 28, 1991.

By creating the association, the photographer **Nisso Pelossof**, an adopted Amiénois and a charismatic figure, contributed to saving our Hortillonnages from urbanization and oblivion, threatened at the time by an absurd project: the construction of a bypass road that would have cut it off along its entire length!



## Ensure the Promotion of the Site...

Our association **promotes the site** by offering, respecting the environment, boat trips in these characteristic cone-shaped boats equipped with electric motors, silent, avoiding pollution, and limiting the turbulence that weakens the banks.

## ...But Also Its Conservation

The association **contributes to a fund dedicated to financing the essential work needed for the maintenance of the canals** (dredging and cutting) carried out

by the Association Syndicale des Canaux d'Hortillonnages (Syndicate Association of the Hortillonnages Canals).

The association also has a team of specialized agents equipped with suitable equipment to restore and consolidate private banks using a perfectly mastered technique that has proven its effectiveness.

Every year, a competition allows them to reward the most beautiful flowered banks.

**Visit to Preserve**  
By visiting this site, you become true players in the protection and preservation of the site, where nature expresses itself in the heart of the city.

## Guardian of Traditions

Every year, on a Sunday around mid-June, market gardeners are invited by the association to come down the Somme River in their long boats heavily laden with fresh vegetables, fruits, and flowers, bringing their freshly picked produce to the quay of the upstream port, just as their ancestors did at the end of the 19th century, at Place Parmentier, where a small market still takes place every Saturday morning, retaining the name *"Marché sur l'eau"* (Market on the Water).