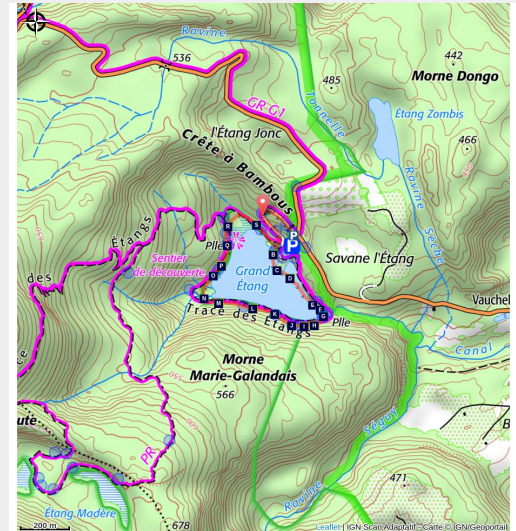


# Grand Etang

Basse-Terre Sud



Vue sur l'observatoire (PNG)



*A round trail around the Grand Etang in a lush setting, under the imposing trees of the rainforest. Bird lovers will delight in the array of species on offer here.*

There are 17 information points on the trail. Discover more information about them in the "Grand Etang Discovery Guide" (*available for download on this page*).

Renovation of the educational trail in 2026 !

## Useful information

Practice : Walking

Duration : 1 h 30

Length : 2.3 km

Trek ascent : 94 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Loop

Themes : Discovery trail, Geology, Pond and wetland

# Trek

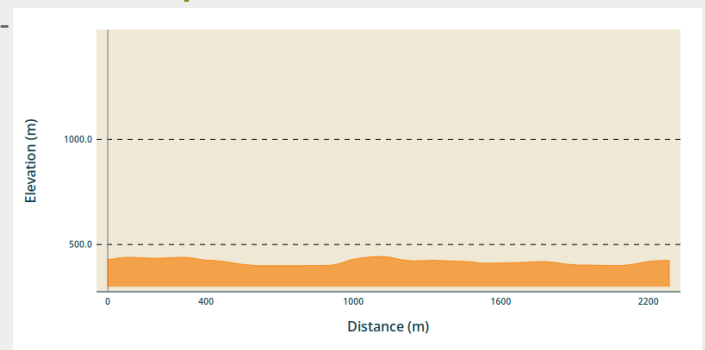
**Departure** : Etangs parking area, Capesterre-Belle-Eau

**Arrival** : Etangs parking area, Capesterre-Belle-Eau

**Markings** : — PR (short hike network)

**Cities** : 1. Capesterre-Belle-Eau

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 399 m Max elevation 443 m

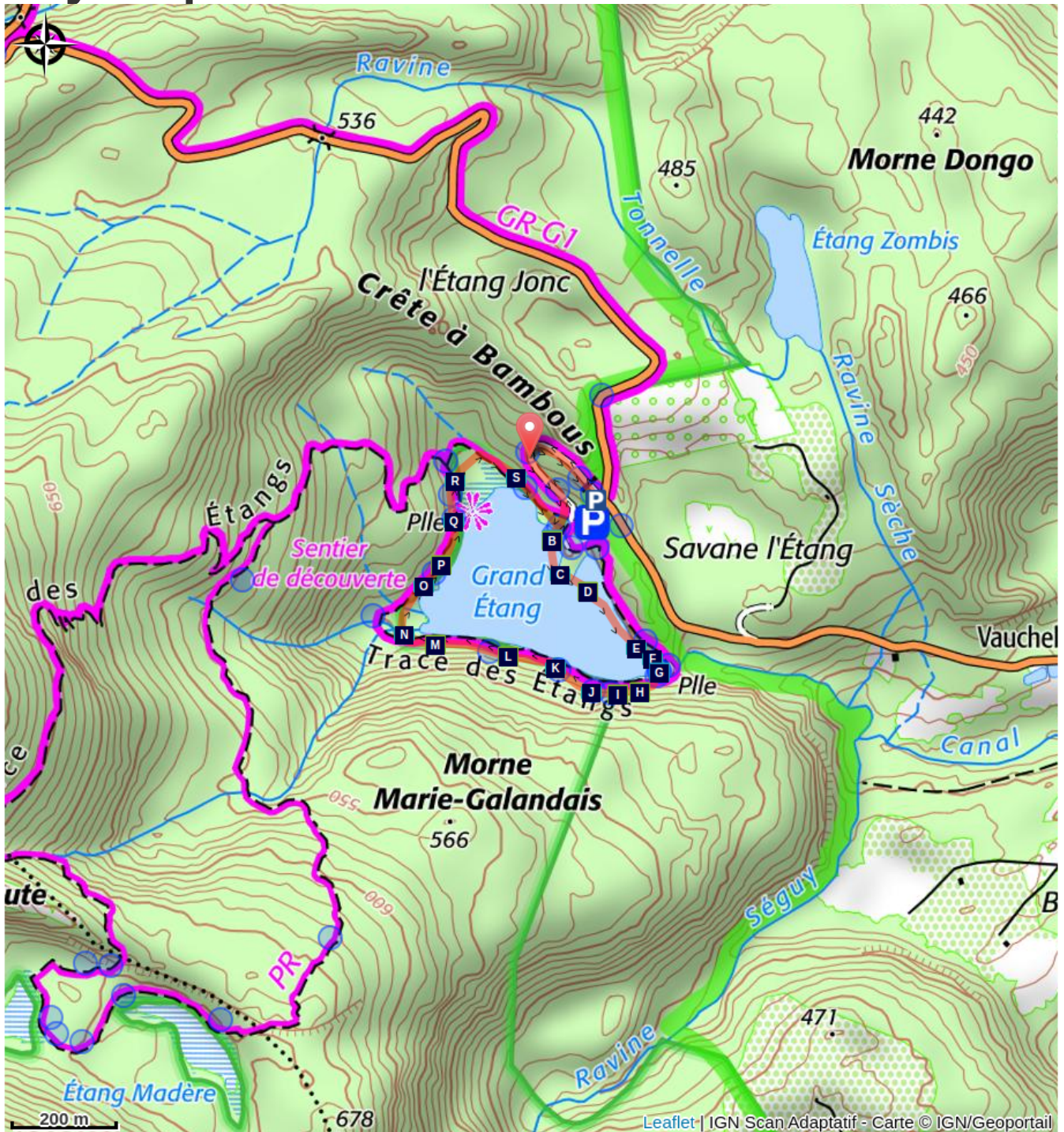
## Hiking trail colour: yellow

















Read the information boards at the Etangs parking area.



Take the concrete road to Grand Etang. Enjoy the views and then take a left onto the small wooden lock bridge to start the circular trail. The trail cuts through a few small gullies. Keep going on the trail along the Grand Etang. Stop off at the observatory, where you will find some information boards about the lagoon's birdlife. Leave the observatory and take the path on the right, which crosses through an area of chewstick trees. When you come to the intersection, keep going straight, walking over the wooden decking. At the next intersection, turn left to return to the car park on the concrete road.

*N.B. The numbered information points correspond to detailed and illustrated information, which can be found in the "Grand Etang Discovery Guide".*

# On your path...



- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Le Grand Etang (A)                                  |  Info point 2 : "Kan'dlo" (B)         |
|  Info point 3: "The Gommier" (C)                     |  Tapura latifolia (D)                 |
|  Info point 4: "Epiphytes" (E)                       |  Info point 5: "Bamboo" (F)           |
|  The outlet (G)                                      |  Tree ferns (H)                       |
|  Sierran palm (I)                                    |  Info point 9 : "Ailes à mouches" (J) |
|  Info point 10 : "The chewstick" (K)                 |  "Bwa rouj carapate" (L)              |
|  Psychotria uliginosa (M)                            |  Info Point 12: "The gullies" (N)     |
|  Info Point 13 : "The brown trembler's hideaway" (O) |  Guatteria caribaea (P)               |

 Info point 15 : "The observatory" (Q)  
 Info point 17: "The tree of a thousand  
buttresses" (S)

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

# 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 ?**

### Transports

En Guadeloupe, 2 applications pour le covoiturage :

Déposé : <https://depoze.fr>

KAROS : <https://www.karos.fr>

### 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 village of Capesterre-Belle-Eau), head towards Les Chutes du Carbet. Continue on Route RD4. The road is steep. The Etangs parking area is shown at an intersection on the left.

### Advised parking

Etangs parking area, Capesterre-Belle-Eau

## Information desks

### Headquarters of the National Park of Guadeloupe

Montéran, 97120 Saint-Claude

[info@randoguadeloupe.gp](mailto: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](mailto: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...

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## Le Grand Etang (A)

The largest lagoon 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 lagoon. With erosion 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 suitable action is taken, such as pulling up and cutting down the plants and dredging the sediment, the Grand Etang looks set to disappear completely.

Attribution : BRGM

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## Info point 2 : "Kan'dlo" (B)

A member of the Costaceae family, *Costus speciosus*, known locally as Kand'lo, is native to Southeast Asia. The plant is highly adapted to tropical regions. The plant's brick red ear is supported by a stem that measures between 1.5 and 2 metres. The flower buds turn into a vivid and colourful red ear, dotted with white flowers.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

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## Info point 3: "The Gommier" (C)

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.

*N.B. The numbered info points correspond to detailed and illustrated information, which can be found in the "Grand Etang Discovery Guide".*

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

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## ✿ Tapura latifolia (D)

A member of the Melastomaceae family, *Tapura latifolia* is a small tree with a fluted trunk that seldom grows beyond 20 metres. Its leaves feature five main veins that run perpendicular to its many secondary veins.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG



## 📖 Info point 4: "Epiphytes" (E)

Epiphytes are plants that grown on top of other plants and are strikingly abundant in the thick rainforests of Guadeloupe. Attaching themselves to host trunks, branches and leaves, they form some truly startling hanging gardens. While some may grow close to the ground, they tend to grown high up in their search for light and because of the high humidity levels found there, which often exceed 80%.

*N.B. The numbered info points correspond to detailed and illustrated information, which can be found in the "Grand Etang Discovery Guide".*

Attribution : PNG



## 📖 Info point 5: "Bamboo" (F)

Bamboo (*Bambousa vulgaris*) was introduced by Europeans in the 17th, or most probably the 18th century. In Guadeloupe it has become an invasive species.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG



## 🌊 The outlet (G)

The Grand Etang lagoon forms the Bananier river through this outlet. At the high water level, the Grand Etang is level with the small dam, which can be seen from the footbridge. Lower down, the water seeps into cracks in the soil and carries on, feeding into the river. Depending on rainfall patterns, the water levels of the Grand Etang can fluctuate by 4 metres.

Attribution : PNG



## ✿ Tree ferns (H)

Tree ferns (*Cyathea sp.*), members of the Cyatheaceae family, include six species, the biggest of which (*C. Arborea*) can grow taller than 18 metres. Contrary to what the name suggests, tree ferns are not actually trees. The young leaves have the distinctive shape of a cross, while the black stipe is covered with petiole remnants. The fibrous material at the base of the stipe can be used to make sculptures and containers.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG



## ✿ Sierran palm (I)

*Prestaea montana* is a member of the Arecaceae family. Despite its size, it is in fact a palm tree. Like ferns, it does not have a trunk but a stipe. It can flourish just as well in hygrophilous forests, where it can reach around ten metres, as at altitude, where it grows no taller than two metres.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG



## 📖 Info point 9 : "Ailes à mouches" (J)

The name of these herbaceous plants, which translates literally from the French as "fly wings", derives from the cleft nature of its leaves. The plant is particularly striking in the undergrowth of the rainforest.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG



## 📖 Info point 10 : "The chewstick" (K)

*Symphonia globulifera*, more commonly known as the chewstick, belongs to the Clusiaceae family. It is a tree that grows in thick, humid and swampy forests. Reaching up to 25-30 metres in height, it has stilt roots and a yellow latex trunk. Its flowers are formed of bright red petals and its fruits resemble nutmeg, are oval in shape and yellow when ripe. Its wood was used as timber for houses and its latex resin was used to make boats.

Attribution : PNG



### ✿ "Bwa rouj carapate" (L)

A member of the Euphorbiaceae family, *Amanoa caribaeae* 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



### ✿ Psychotria uliginosa (M)

A member of the Rubiaceae family, *Psychotria uliginosa* is rather rare in Guadeloupe, but is found at the Grand Etang and on the Monts Caraïbes.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG



### 📖 Info Point 12: "The gullies" (N)

In contrast to the dark undergrowth of the thick forest, this enchanting place, lit up by effects of the light and the gentle lapping sound of the water, is an oasis of peace.

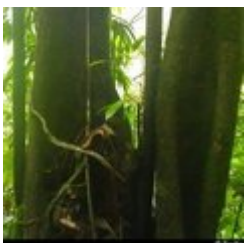
Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG



### 📖 Info Point 13 : "The brown trembler's hideaway" (O)

Every now and then, near the path by the edge of the Grand Etang, you can see small clusters of snail shells amid the surface of the rocks. These are nothing other than the leftovers of the dinner of the brown trembler (*Cinclocerthia ruficauda*), which likes to feed on the snails that reside in the muddy and exposed areas of the Grand Etang.

Attribution : PNG



### ✿ Guatteria caribaeae (P)

*Guatteria caribaeae* is a very straight tree, often with multiple trunks, in the Annonaceae family. It has dark bark and hanging branches and produces dark and plump berries. Its bark was used to make ropes and its wood was used to make masts for boats. It is still used today in Guadeloupe to make traditional sailing dinghies.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG



### 📖 Info point 15 : "The observatory" (Q)

This floating wooden structure makes for a great close-up on the life of the Grand Etang. Its unique location allows for ideal insights into the plant life and fauna of the lake. Information panels about the lake's birdlife are displayed above the viewing points. The ideal time for bird watching is after sunrise or before sunset. Don't forget to bring your binoculars.

Attribution : PNG



### 📖 Info point 16: "A fragile soil" (R)

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



### 📖 Info point 17: "The tree of a thousand buttresses" (S)

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