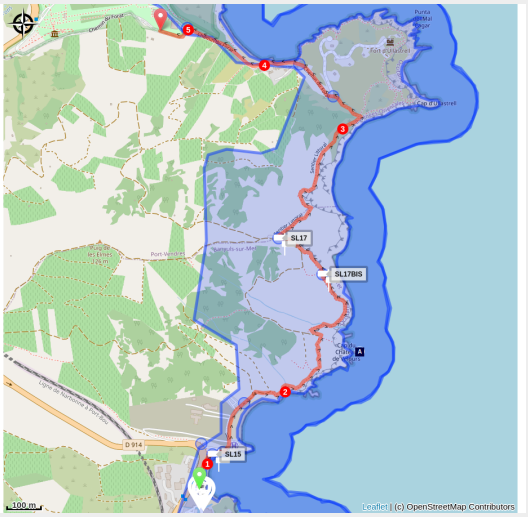
In the Footsteps of the Smugglers

Côte Vermeille



Paulilles (Frédéric Hédelin)



By walking along one of the most beautiful sections of the coastal trail, follow in the footsteps of the smugglers of Banyuls and their municipal smuggler's republic between 1780 and 1850.

This walk, themed around the history of smugglers, will lead you through stunning landscapes along the coastal trail, whether by the water’s edge or through vineyards. The coves along the way offer perfect spots to take a break. It's a great opportunity for a quick swim to explore the local underwater flora and fauna.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 2 h

Length : 2.6 km

Trek ascent : 109 m

Difficulty : Medium

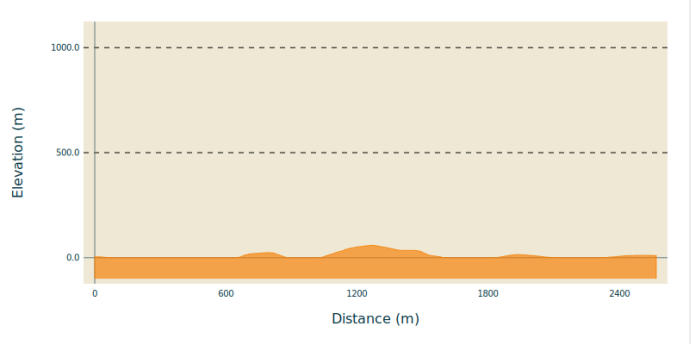
Type : Traversée

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Point de vue, Géologie, Histoire

Trek

Departure : Plage des Elmes / Banyuls-sur-mer
Arrival : Anse de Paulilles
Cities : 1. BANYULS SUR MER
2. PORT-VENDRES

Altimetric profile

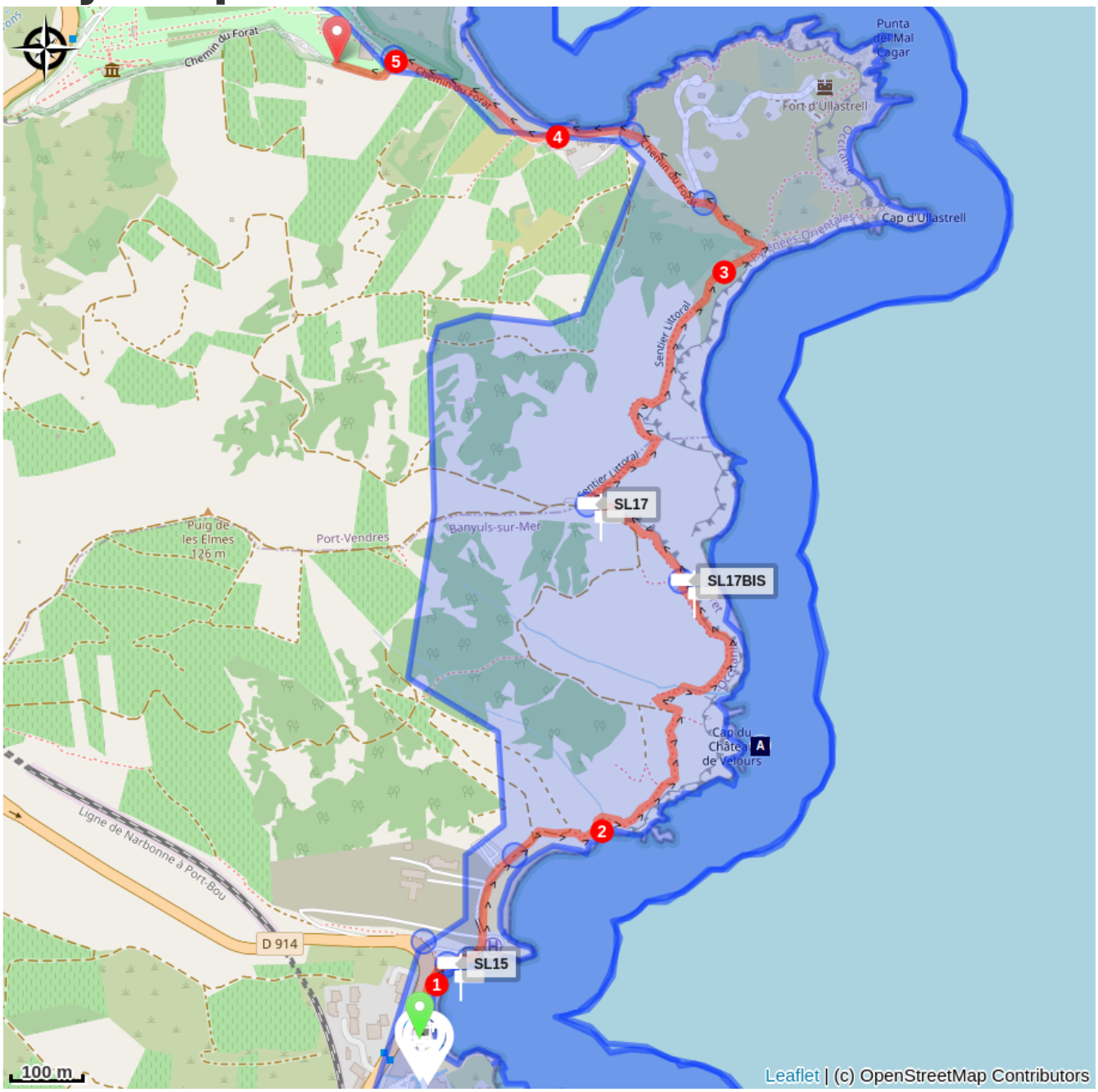


Min elevation 0 m Max elevation 59 m

1. Take the coastal trail that runs along the beach of the former heliotherapy center (known locally in Banyuls as "Sana Beach").
2. Further along, note the proud and towering rock formation called Castell de Velut ("Velvet Castle"). It owes its name to an incident where customs officers discovered a piece of Genoese velvet hidden by smugglers in a crevice of the rock.The trail winds along the cliffside, overlooking Crique dels Tamarius ("Tamarisk Cove") and Crique de la Pistoline, known for its swirling whirlpools (remolinats).
3. A bit farther, just before reaching Cap Ullastrell, you'll find Anse de la Felouga. Here, in 1833, Banyuls locals set fire to the customs felucca Lynx using thorny brushwood.
4. The trail continues to Le Fourat ("The Hole"), passing by some old fishermen's houses and a beach.
5. Eventually, it leads to the Paulilles site, where the Nobel dynamite factory and workers' village were once located. Today, visitors can explore a museum, a workshop for Catalan boats, an exhibition hall, and the Director's Garden, filled with exotic trees and flowers.

The coastal trail extends northward to Argelès-sur-Mer and southward to Cerbère. Beyond the border, it connects to the GR92, which continues all the way to Roses and beyond.

On your path...



Sphinx (A)

All useful information

⚠ Advices

Plan for proper hydration, hiking shoes, a hat or cap, and a windbreaker depending on the weather or season. Respect nature and carry your waste with you. For those curious about the local marine flora and fauna, bring a mask and snorkel.

How to come ?

Transports

Bus 2€

Access

D 914

Advised parking

Sana Parking lot

Environmental sensitive areas

Along your trek, you will go through sensitive areas related to the presence of a specific species or environment. In these areas, an appropriate behaviour allows to contribute to their preservation. For detailed information, specific forms are accessible for each area.

Zone Natura 2000 Directive Habitat

Sensitivity period:

Zone Natura 2000 Directive Oiseaux



Zone Natura 2000 Directive Oiseaux

Sensitivity period:

Zone Natura 2000 Directive oiseaux

On your path...



Sphinx (A)

When Egypt invites itself on the Côte Vermeille. Observe the coastline and you will discover an authentic sphinx ... with a little imagination. This cape located near the Plage des Elmes is a beautiful place. You have to take the Chemin des Douaniers, by the Plage des Elmes to get there.

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