

Lac de la Douche

Parc national des Ecrins - Le Monêtier-les-Bains



Le lac de la Douche (Cyril Coursier - Parc national des Ecrins)



This pleasant family walk features a wide range of mountain landscapes.

From the traditional village of Le Casset to the turquoise blue lake, this trail runs alongside meadows visited by deer at dawn, and then crosses the larch forest where you can sometimes glimpse a few chamois. At the bottom of the valley, the torrent brings a spot of welcome freshness in summer to the hikers and mountain dwellers, all delighted to find a water source.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 8.2 km

Trek ascent : 413 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Lake and glacier

Accessibility : Joelette

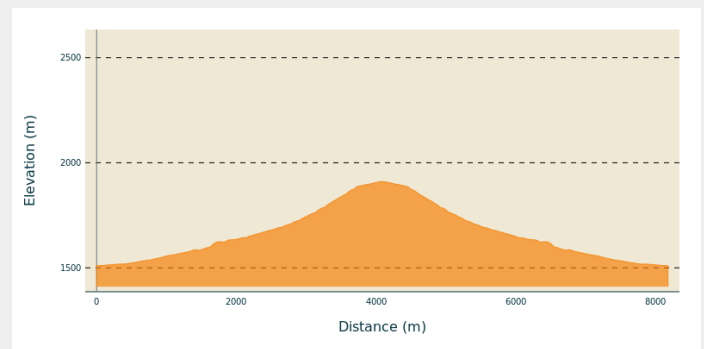
Trek

Departure : Le Casset, Le Mûnetier-les-Bains

Arrival : Le Casset, Le Mûnetier-les-Bains

Cities : 1. Le Mûnetier-les-Bains

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1511 m Max elevation 1912 m

From the car park at the edge of the village of Le Casset, near the Park Information Centre, walk up the main village street and then turn left across the second bridge over the Guisane. A straight track runs alongside the Petit Tabuc torrent, gradually leaving the hay meadows and entering the woods. Beyond the Clot du Gu  barrier and bridge, a regular climb through the larch forest leads first of all to the Grand Pr  clearing (1,683 m), then La Douche lake (1,901 m). Come back the same way.

On your path...




 Church of Saint-Claude (A)


 Sundials (C)

 Rock sparrow (E)

 Whiskered bat (G)

 European badger (I)

 Chamois (K)

 Golden eagle, the Ecrins' mascot (M)

 Larch (O)

 Saint Claude's church in Le Casset (B)

 Le Casset (D)

 Doors and courtyards (F)

 Lover of old stones (H)

 White-throated dipper (J)

 Golden eagle (L)

 A flying predator (N)

 Ring ouzel (P)

All useful information

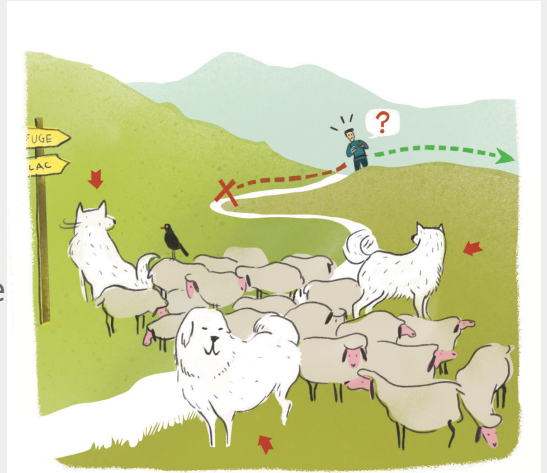
Herd protection dogs

In mountain pastures, protection dogs are there to protect the herds from predators (wolves, etc.).

When I hike I adapt my behavior by going around the herd and pausing for the dog to identify me.

Find out more about the actions to adopt with the article ["Protection dogs: a context and actions to adopt"](#).

Tell us about your meeting by answering this [survey](#).



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.



How to come ?

Access

Le Casset, 17 km from Briançon along the D1091 and D300.

Advised parking

At the entrance to the village of Le Casset

Accessibility

Obstacles :

Pentes, cailloux, sentier étroit

Parking :

A l'entrée du village du casset, grand parking en stabilisé. Pas de place PMR.

Sanitaires :

Sanitaire sur le parking accessible PMR



Joelette

Accessibility level : Experimented

Slope

Pente moyenne à 11% sur le début de la randonnée puis une pente à 19% sur 600m

Width

Étroit à l'arrivée sur le lac

Signage

Balisage avec panneaux jaunes

Covering

Début de la randonnée sur une large piste puis sentier caillouteux à partir de 3,2km.

Exposure

Toute la montée est ombragée, puis ensoleillée sur le dernier kilomètre.

Advice

Depuis le parking à l'entrée du Casset, au niveau du Centre d'information du Parc, remonter le hameau par la ruelle principale. Pente à 11%.

Traverser sur votre gauche, le deuxième pont sur la Guisane. Une piste rectiligne

longe le torrent du Petit Tabuc et permet de quitter progressivement les prairies de fauche pour s'enfoncer dans les bois. Au-delà de la barrière et du pont du Clot du Gué, une ascension régulière (pente à 11%) traverse le mélézin et mène d'abord dans la clairière du Grand Pré (1683 m).

Après avoir traversé le pont de la clairière du Grand Prè (3,2 km), suivre le sentier très technique avec présence de gros cailloux et une pente à 19% sur 500m.

A 3,8km, après une montée intense vous arrivez sur un sentier étroit avec quelques passages techniques mais plutôt plat pour arriver au lac de la Douche (1901 m).

Présence de zones plate au bord du Lac pour faire une pause

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.

Golden eagle

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August

Contact: Parc National des Écrins
Julien Charron
julien.charron@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Nidification de l'Aigle royal

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec l'Aigle royal en période de nidification sont principalement le vol libre et les pratiques verticales ou en falaise, comme l'escalade ou l'alpinisme. Merci d'éviter cette zone et de privilégier un survol de la zone à une distance de survol de 300m sol soit à une altitude minimale de 2610m.

Information desks

Information center "le Casset" (summer only)

Le Casset, 05220 Le Monétier-les-bains
brianconnais@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 92 24 53 27
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



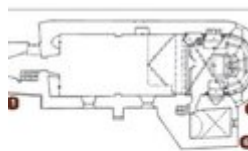
Source



Parc national des Ecrins

<https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr>

On your path...



les former porche
à gémme à double
mes en nef
à l'impériale

1 Nef et chœur voûtés d'ogives
2 Tribune utilisée jadis par
les pénitents
3 Sacristie voûtée d'arêtes

Church of Saint-Claude (A)

Formerly a chapel, its existence recorded in 1500, this Romanesque building became a parish church in 1826. It is dedicated to Saint Claudius of Besançon. "In former times, the people of Le Casset used to go on a pilgrimage to Saint-Claude in the Jura." On the saint's feast day (6 June), a mass is celebrated. "Two days beforehand, the women of the village clean and decorate the church." Then, the people take an aperitif in the café opposite the church. Visits to the church are organised by the Tourist Office all summer.

Attribution : PNE



Saint Claude's church in Le Casset (B)

With its disproportionately high spire, the Casset church never goes unnoticed. Its four-sided Comtois steeple was modelled on the collegiate church in Briançon. The church is listed as a Historic Monument and is placed under the protection of Saint Claude. In its present condition, it dates from the 18th century. The previous building was constructed prior to the 16th century. Inside, the eye is immediately attracted by the choir ogives, creating an intimate atmosphere, particularly since the unusually large spire does not suggest an interior of such a small size. The choir was rebuilt in 1716-1717, probably after the previous chapel burnt down. Traces from this period can be seen on the keystone. The wrought-iron choir gate has the inscription "HM 1717", a date that can also be seen in the apse, on the wrought iron railing of the impost of the axial window, and on the baptismal font.



Sundials (C)

As you walk through the village of Lauzet, you will see recently made sundials made in traditional style. Easy to see from the main village streets, they adorn the beautifully restored facades of the old houses.

Attribution : Claire Broquet - PNE



🕒 Le Casset (D)

At the entrance to the valley, Le Casset is a stone shell village surrounded by farming landscapes. Its name comes from the verb 'cassare' ('to break, to shatter' in late Latin), describing a place covered with stones. In fact there are many such villages in this mountain valley carved out by a vast glacier. Le Casset, on the left bank of the Guisane, is sheltered from avalanches beneath the watchful eye of the prestigious summits and glaciers that “move” in a different time scale from our own.

Attribution : PNE - Masclaux Pierre



🐦 Rock sparrow (E)

The rock sparrow is here at the north-western limit and highest altitude of its home territory and regularly nests in the area. The species is in decline nationally and is on the endangered 'red' list in Rhône-Alpes and is being studied in the PACA region. People sometimes pay little attention to house sparrows since they are so familiar, which is a pity. The rock sparrow is bigger and although its plumage is similar to a female house sparrow's, its call sets it apart at once: pi-yip or pi-yui or even a chay sound that is similar to a brambling's!

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



🏠 Doors and courtyards (F)

As you stroll through the streets of Le Casset, some house doors will attract your notice, as they bring together most of the decorative elements of the facades. Made of larch wood, they have been moulded or sculpted with geometric or floral patterns and have a tympanum above them, often with a grating. Behind the door is the courtyard, the shared entrance for people and animals. The way people lived and organised their homes resulted in this single entrance, an area giving access both to the stable and to the living quarters. Between the world inside and outside, the courtyard provided a passageway, insulation, but also storage space.

Attribution : Claire Broquet - PNE



Whiskered bat (G)

The whiskered bat is a dark-faced bat. It is quite common in certain mountain regions and is one of the most frequent species after its cousin the common pipistrelle. It likes trees, be they on the banks of a river or in the high altitude forests, but it is also possible to catch sight of them in gardens and villages such as the hamlet of Casset. This small mammal lives on flying insects and thus helps in controlling their numbers. Like all mammals, the female feeds her sole offspring with her milk.

Attribution : PNE - Corail Marc



Lover of old stones (H)

The rock sparrow is a sedentary bird. It generally settles in well-exposed, agricultural areas where there are lots of stones, stone terraces, ruins, piles of stones, old buildings. This southern sparrow can be found up to an altitude of 2000 m provided there is an open landscape and many mineral elements. It nests in the hole of a rock, in a wall and sometimes under the roof of a house. It will then mingle with the house sparrow. A sociable bird, it lives in small, dispersed colonies.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



European badger (I)

You will often see a badger at nighttime on the edge of a path, a road or an embankment. The gentle pace and portly gait of this member of the mustelid family are reminiscent of a small bear you may get a glimpse of his black and the white stripes on his head before he hurries away. Worms, reptiles, frogs, fruit and plants are his staple diet. Families of badgers live in sometimes very extensive and very old burrows, with numerous chambers and galleries. They are tolerant animals, since they will sometimes share their home with rabbits and foxes. Badgers are among the unobtrusive neighbours whose presence goes undetected, except for their footprints made up of five nearly parallel toes and the tracks of their long claws.

Attribution : PNE - Fiat Denis



White-throated dipper (J)

The mountain streams relinquish their secrets to an attentive hiker. The master of this little world is a small brown, red and grey bird with a short tail and a pure white breast, separated from the darker abdomen by a light brown stripe. We can often see it in the air, flying close to the water to snap up insects. The dipper owes its name to its eating habits to find water larva, it dips its head into the water and grips the riverbed to walk against the current.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE



Chamois (K)

Rupicapra rupicapra, the mountain goat was not at first solely a creature of the mountains. The species is more attached to rocky escarpments and steep slopes than high altitude. But strong human pressure on chamois made them withdraw ever higher. Coveted as a hunting target, they have found refuge here in the Ecrins National Park.

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - PNE



Golden eagle (L)

Near the mountain slopes, in the warmest hours of the day, a large bird circles in the sky, making use of the wind to climb. Soon the brown silhouette disappears into the blue sky, hidden by the altitude. The eagle patrols its vast territory, and no detail escapes its legendary eyesight. It also spends long hours perched and still, cleaning its plumage or looking out for its next victim. Although it steers clear of man, it is still quite easy to spot a royal eagle alone or with its “other half”, since adults generally live in couples. Its large size, dark colour, rectangular wings and frequent flights across the sky make it almost a familiar sight for anyone who knows how to “watch” the mountains.

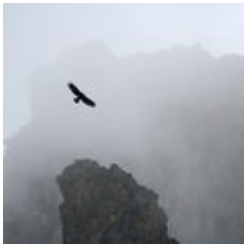
Attribution : PNE - Couloumy Christian



Golden eagle, the Ecrins' mascot (M)

The Petit Tabuc site is ideal for the golden eagle to nest. The golden eagle is amongst the protected species that are considered rare in Europe. The size of the populations that have been registered in the Ecrins massif, bestow a strong responsibility on the Park for conservation of the species. Counting takes place regularly since 1985 along with monitoring of reproduction, causes of disturbance and mortality.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



A flying predator (N)

The eagle is the archetypal predator. Everything about it suggests strength and daring. Its appearance, of course, with its impressive expression highlighted by the prominent brow ridge, but above all its fearsome weapons: rapid flight, which can be adapted to even the most acrobatic situations, and sharp, powerful talons. Its keen eyesight helps it detect its prey, from the marmot to the young chamois, ptarmigans and hares. In winter, it often takes its food from the dead bodies of animals, helping towards the natural cleansing of nature.

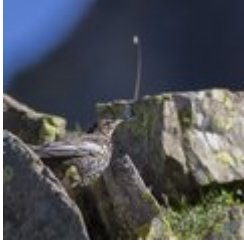
Attribution : PNE - Telmon Jean-Philippe



Larch (O)

The larch is the only European resinous tree to lose its needles in winter. Its wood is red-brown. It stands out in the landscape with its leaves ranging from a soft green colour in spring to gold in autumn. Its pink flowers attract naturalists and photographers in the spring. The larch tree is a coloniser of mountain slopes. Although it is at home in the harsh conditions of the mountainside, it cannot bear competition from other trees. The Petit Tabuc site is a fine example of its colonising capacity, even though it is regularly hit by avalanches.

Attribution : PNE - Chevalier Robert



Ring ouzel (P)

In the pastures covered with larch or 'bush", a cry of alarm followed the start of a song resounds. A blackbird? Yes, but more specifically a ring ouzel. This shy, swift mountain blackbird lives on the fringe of the larch, scots pine, spruce or Swiss pine forests between 1000 and 2500 m in altitude. The ring ouzel is a migratory bird that spends winter in Spain or North Africa before coming back to the mountains around March.

Attribution : PNE - Saulay Pascal