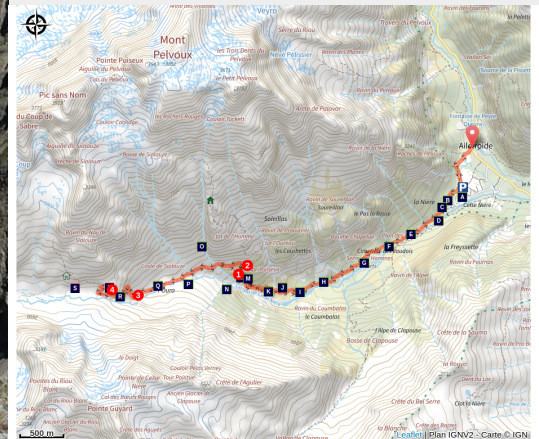


# Sélé Refuge

Vallouise - Vallouise-Pelvoux



Refuge du Sélé (Jean-Philippe Telmon - PNE)



*In a very high mountain setting, this hike follows the valley of mythical mountains which lead to two refuges by crossing a perilous cliff.*

Since 1913, the French state, through the administration of Water and Forests, bought ground from certain communities. In this way Celse Nière valley benefitted from protection well before the creation of the Ecrins National Park in 1973.

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 6 h 15

Length : 14.7 km

Trek ascent : 998 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Hut

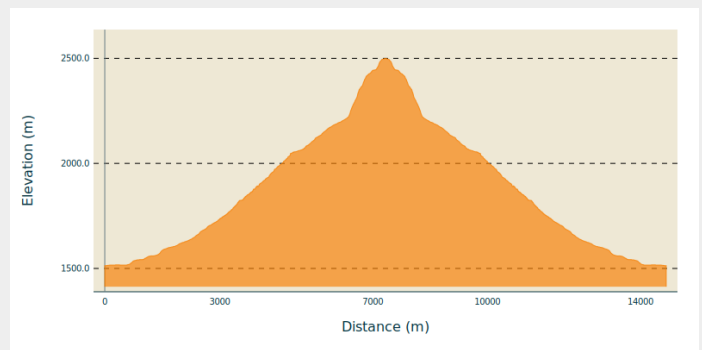
# Trek

**Departure** : Ailefroide

**Arrival** : Ailefroide

**Cities** : 1. Vallouise-Pelvoux

## Altimetric profile

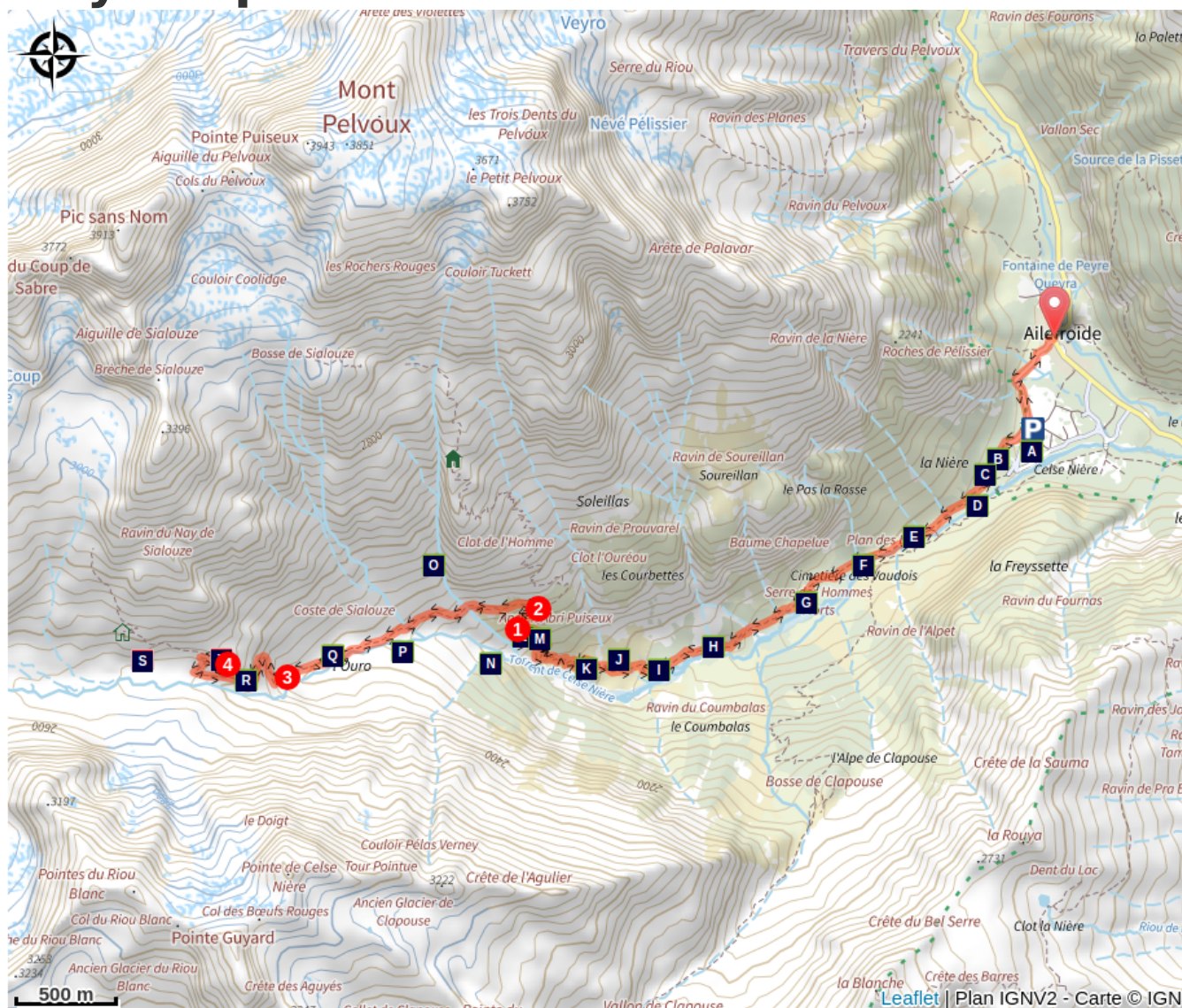


Min elevation 1513 m Max elevation 2499 m

From the carpark, go up the Sélé valley on the path which follows the right bank of the Celse Nière torrent. After a long climb with a hidden gradient, the path goes up in steep bends to a junction with the track to Pelvoux (1993m).

1. Follow straight along on large crossings that lead on foot to the very steep cliff.
2. A wide track enables you to hold on to the cables going up this face firstly to the right, then crossing towards the left.
3. After the cliff, go up a good path which turns abruptly to the right to reach the summit of the rocky promontory where the refuge is located.

# On your path...



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Roe Deer (A)                       |  Eurasian Tree Creeper (B)       |
|  Western Bonelli's Warbler (C)      |  White Throated Dipper (D)       |
|  Rhododendron (E)                   |  May Fly (F)                     |
|  Small Tortoise Shell Butterfly (G) |  White Hellebore (H)             |
|  Larch forest (I)                   |  Apollo Butterfly (J)            |
|  Northern Holly Fern (K)            |  Japanese Gentian (L)            |
|  Ring Ouzel (M)                     |  Wallcreeper (N)                 |
|  Chamois (O)                        |  Scree (P)                       |
|  Evergreen Orpine (Q)               |  Nordic Mountain Grasshopper (R) |
|  Ancient Sélé Refuge (S)            |  Sélé Refuge (T)                 |



# 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

In the barre du Sélé, there is a difficult passage equipped with cables, exposed and very slippery when it is wet and raining. Camping is forbidden after Ailefroide, bivouacking is authorized at a distance of more than an hour's walk from the limits of the National Park. Fire is forbidden.

## How to come ?

### Transports

SNCF station at Argentière-la-Bessée shuttle from Argentière to Ailefroide in the summer season (remember to reserve 36 h in advance on 05voyageurs or 04 92 502 505).

### Access

From the N94 at l'Argentière, take the direction to Vallouise, then to Pelvoux. Then go to Ailefroide Hamlet on the D994F.

Advised parking

Ailefroide carpark in the summer

# 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](mailto: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 !

Attention en zone cœur du Parc National des Écrins une réglementation spécifique aux sports de nature s'applique : <https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/thematique/sports-de-nature>

## Information desks

### Vallouise Park house

[vallouise@ecrins-parcnational.fr](mailto:vallouise@ecrins-parcnational.fr)  
Tel : 04 92 23 58 08  
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



## Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

# On your path...

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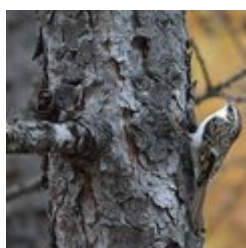


## Roe Deer (A)

Hidden in the larch forest, the Roe Deer sometimes shows its fine head at dawn or at dusk. Not always easy to see this discreet animal but a few tracks or droppings can give its presence away.: the heart shaped print of its delicate hooves, the trunks of shrubs nicked by young fallow deer rubbing new antlers there to remove the last shreds of velvet, Sometimes it is a deep sonorous and guttural bark that resonates in the woods.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE

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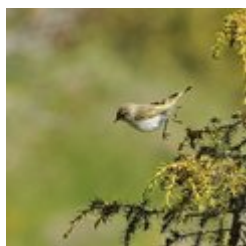


## Eurasian Tree Creeper (B)

The Eurasian Tree Creeper is a small, compact and agile bird. Its beak is long and curved and its tail is composed of stiff feathers. Its long claws have sharp nails. So many adaptations enabling it to explore the bark of the larch trees where it hunts for insects and other spiders which make up its diet all through the year.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE

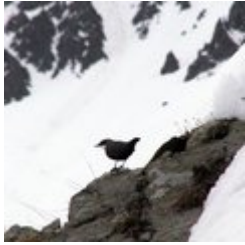
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## Western Bonelli's Warbler (C)

This common little sparrow is rarely seen but often heard. It interprets a brief song lasting just a few seconds, with around ten repetitive notes, which quickly become identifiable, rather haunting. The male sings almost throughout the year, from April to July, then only in the morning in July. After the storm when the trees are still dripping with rain, he starts singing immediately. At the end of August males et females leave for the African savannah forest regions, followed by that years young.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## White Throated Dipper (D)

Stocky, short tail, tapered beak, the White Throated Dipper is often perched in the middle of a torrent, on a boulder at water level. Recognizable by the white mark on its chin and chest and the rest of its red and slate grey plumage, this bird dives in the icy water looking for aquatic larvae which are the essential ingredient of its menu.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE



## Rhododendron (E)

The rhododendron, shrub with brightly coloured carmine flowers, is often accompanied by blue berries, green alders and other small willows. It is characteristic of the combat zone. Situated between the edge of the forest and the last trees, this transitional space is particularly favoured by the Black Grouse to nest in and to feed quietly.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## May Fly (F)

This beautiful insect flies right across the surface of the water to lay its eggs which transform into aquatic larvae. They will continue to live for up to two years in the stream before metamorphosing into a perfect insect, the 'imago' which is incapable of feeding itself, does not live for more than a few days but does breed.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE



## Small Tortoise Shell Butterfly (G)

This animal, which is not at all like a reptile « with a shell », sports a rather flamboyant covering. The top of its bright orange wings, incrustated with ebony and edged with blue lunules outlined in black, compose its decoration. Precocious, the Small Tortoiseshell is the first butterfly to visit the flowers which have only just come out from under the snow on the most well exposed slopes.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE





## ✿ White Hellebore (H)

The White Hellebore is a plant that seems almost completely white, but you can distinguish the green-white flowers as soon as you approach it. Its large wide alternating leaves along the stalk enabling you to distinguish it from the Gentian whose leaves are opposite each other on the stalk. It is important for fans of « home-made » aperitifs to tell the difference because the roots of the gentian are used to make a beverage that is very much appreciated by the mountain dwellers but the White Hellebore roots are toxic.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## ✿ Larch forest (I)

This is an inviting forest that changes colour according to the season: from a gentle green in Springtime to red-gold in Autumn, it is slender and stripped bare when the snow covers the valley. Always bright, the larch forest, welcomes flocks and hikers, it filters the light and encourages the growth of grass and many flowers.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE



## 🇫🇷 Apollo Butterfly (J)

The Apollo is a large protected butterfly, translucent white, sprinkled with black marks and with four bright red ocellae. It needs the heat of the sun to be able to fly. If a cloud passes it lands on a Thistle or a Centaurea whose nectar it appreciates. The closing down of its environment and abnormally warm winters have led to its disappearance in certain regions in France. For want of something better, it seems to choose to live in wild thick wooded areas of scree.

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - PNE



## ✿ Northern Holly Fern (K)

This elongated fern, stiff and tough, particularly likes the large scree where it takes a foothold in fresh rock cavities that the boulders and rocks provide. In the Middle Ages it was considered to be a particularly useful plant for mankind. Capable of treating every illness, it was also doted with a divine character: where it grew, thunder and lightning could not strike, and the Devil himself was driven away.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## Japanese Gentian (L)

Japanese Gentian, just like its big sister the Yellow Gentian, can be recognized by its upstanding carriage and its yellow flowers. The latter are slightly different since they are speckled with brown and positioned in the axil of the leaves. Growing in small groups this Gentian spreads through the Alps, to the Carpates and colonizes the scree in the company of other species that like the stones and the space.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE



## Ring Ouzel (M)

It is easily identifiable, since it has the same plumage as the common Blackbird, from which it can be distinguished by its white bib and light coloured edges to its wings and stomach. This mountain blackbird, timid, fast flying, lives at the edge of Larch, Scots Pines, Norway Spruce and Swiss Pine forests at an altitude of between 1000 and 2500 m.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## Wallcreeper (N)

The Wallcreeper inspects the cliff by clinging onto the rock face thanks to its long toed feet with efficient claws. Its long tapered beak enables it to catch the most well hidden insects in cracks in the rock. This ability is only equaled by its deep red plumage which makes it look like a butterfly during its aerial acrobatics.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## Chamois (O)

Emblematic animal of the Alps, the Chamois is at home anywhere in the mountains notably in the Celse Nière valley. It has been protected for a long time even before the creation of the Ecrins National Park. Bearer of black curved horns, this close cousin of the far away Antelopes has a very well developed sense of smell and hearing which makes it difficult to approach. Goats and kids like to group together in herds while the billy goats stay isolated until the mating season which begins in October-November.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE

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## Scree (P)

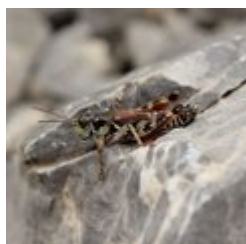
For the botanist, scree is a mosaic of finely entangled environments. Plants from surrounding environments benefit from the smallest patches of humus. You can distinguish big scree, defined by their stability, fine scree which moves because of its small elements (gravel, sand, silt).



## Evergreen Orpine (Q)

There are plants that get under your feet and others that reach up to the sky. The Evergreen Orpine is in the first group. Its thick leaves form sparse little rosettes between the boulders and rocks of the big scree slope over which the path winds. Its numerous blotchy red flowers are grouped at the summit of the stalk.

Attribution : PNE



## Nordic Mountain Grasshopper (R)

The Nordic Mountain Grasshopper is one of the crickets that are most representative of the Alpine entomofauna at high altitude. It is an orophilous species whose habitat is situated at Alpine level up to the limit of the snow fields. Its colouring, more or less bright is very variable, but its body is always covered with hairs because of the weather! The interior of its legs are red, and its wing covers are distinctively tapered at the back.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE



## Ancient Sélé Refuge (S)

Built in 1925, the first Sélé refuge was situated at 2700 m under a rocky canopy which collapsed in 1954. It was rebuilt two years later by a company from Briançon belonging to Ferdinand Bayrou, it was still made from wood, but 600 m lower down from the first one. Still used as a refuge in winter, it is open to the public from the middle of September.

Attribution : Thierry Maillat - PNE



## Sélé Refuge (T)

Topping the rocky outcrop which closes the Celse-Nière valley, this stone refuge was built in 1983 to replace the old wooden shelter which had become insufficient. This modern building has 76 places which belong to the French Alpine Club; it is guarded between the middle of June and the beginning of September. It is at the entrance to the summits which have marked the history of mountaineering: the Ailefroide, the Pointe des Boeufs rouges, and the Pic du Sélé...

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - PNE