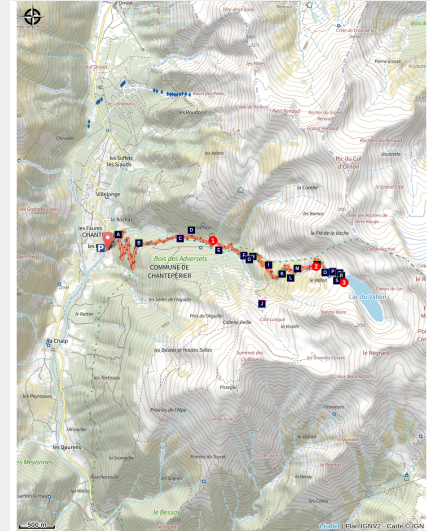


# Vallon Lake

Parc national des Ecrins - Chantelouve



Lac du Vallon (Parc national des Ecrins - Labande François)



*Cut out for experienced walkers, the ascent towards Vallon Lake touches the limit of the heart of the Park. Here, the geological diversity and the view of the massifs give an informative insight in to the formation of the Alps.*

This beautiful large scale itinerary leads from the bottom of the valley to the rocky cirque which reaches up to 3000 m. Minerals are omnipresent and the surrounding summits hide our view of the clouds which can arrive from the South: Be careful of the weather, because you can be surprised by storms up there-haut, the descent will be eventful!

*Samy Jendoubi, Park ranger at Valbonnais*

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 8 h

Length : 14.1 km

Trek ascent : 1374 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Geology

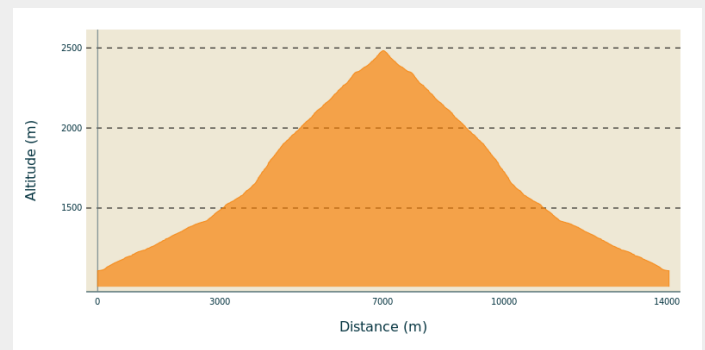
# Trek

**Departure** : Les Bosses

**Arrival** : Les Bosses

**Cities** : 1. Chantelouve

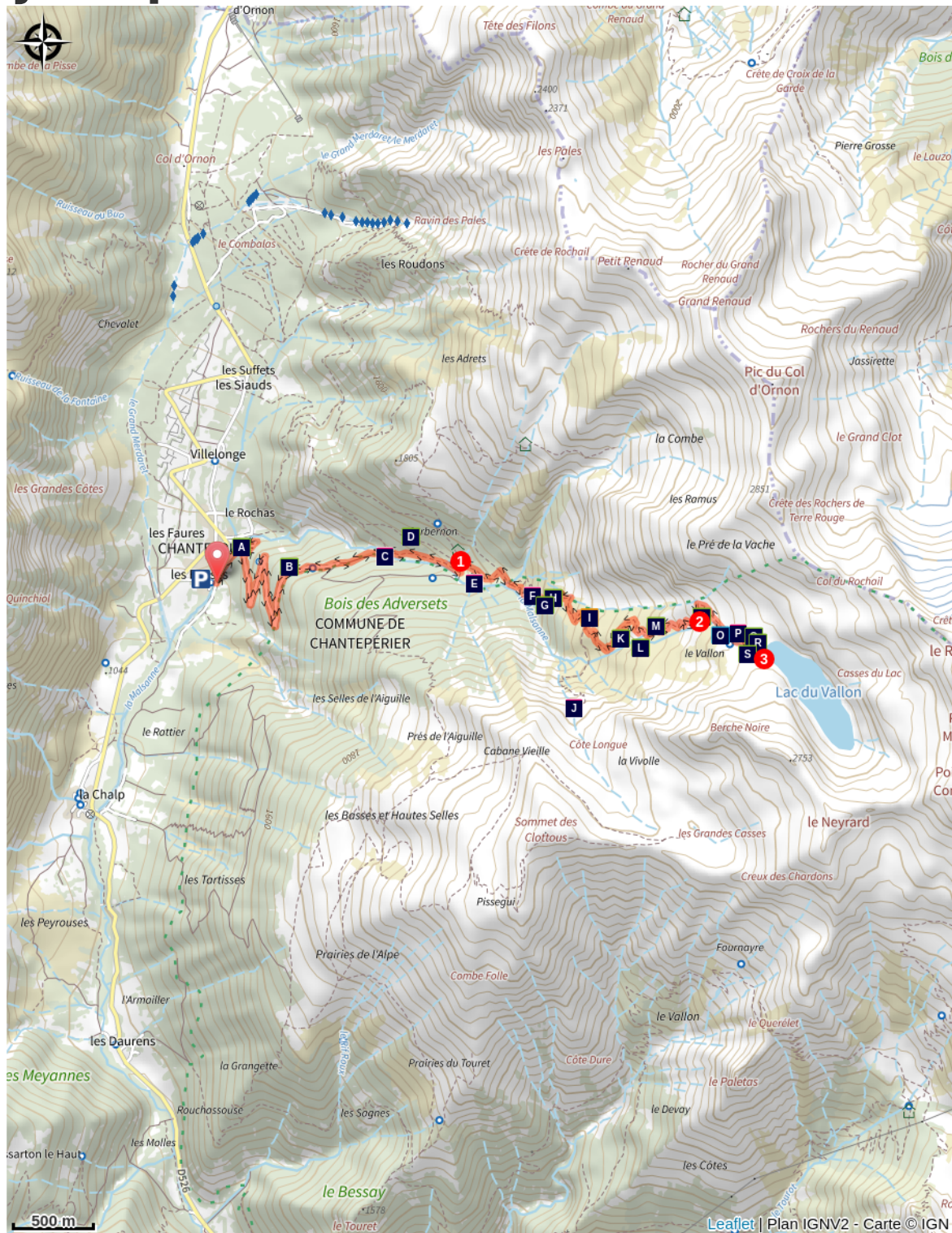
## Altimetric profile













Min elevation 1110 m    Max elevation 2484 m





It is best to leave your vehicle beside the Chantelouve church in the hamlet of Bosses. Cross the Malsanne on a wooden walkway, then, on a track traced across a vast shale slope, reach the place which is a timber depot... From there, continue on the forest trail, cross the gorge of the Malsanne on Moulin bridge and follow diagonally right on the path going through a little wood coming out into a vast valley scattered with boulders. At the bottom of the valley, going into the heart of the National Park cross follow a passage between, the steep rocky slabs then the track leads to the pastoral cabin (where there is water). The track continues with several bends through alpine lawns at altitude... It follows a wonderful waterfall originating in Vallon lake. The landscape becomes very mineral when you arrive at the first glacial polishes. Return using the same itinerary.


# On your path...



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Alder Forest (A)                          |  Forest Flora (B)                      |
|  Tuff waterfall (C)                        |  Forest Fauna (D)                      |
|  The Grand Armet (E)                       |  Dolomie (F)                           |
|  Ring Ouzel (G)                            |  Savin Juniper (H)                     |
|  Mountain Cabin (I)                        |  Folds in the Ravine at Argentière (J) |
|  Alpine Swift and Common House Martins (K) |  Green Tiger Beetle (L)                |



-  Big gliders (M)
-  Waterfalls (O)
-  Alpine Chickweed (Q)
-  Ibex (S)

-  Rock Ptarmigan (N)
-  Spilite bars (P)
-  Rock flowers (R)

# 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.



## **Advices**

There is the possibility of joining the trail (although it is difficult) by car but there is sometimes a problem to find parking (at least a 1h of walk).

## How to come ?

### Access

D526 Entraigues Col d'Ornon.

### Advised parking

Parking au hameau des Bosses devant la mairie et à coté de l'église

# 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.

## Short-toed snake eagle

Sensitivity period: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

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

Nidification du Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec le Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc en période de nidification sont principalement les pratiques aériennes comme le vol libre ou le vol motorisé.

Attention le survol motorisé dans la zone cœur Parc National des Écrins est interdit en-dessous de 1000m sol et une réglementation spécifique s'applique au survol non-motorisé.

Voir la réglementation pour les survols non-motorisés : <https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/les-survol-non-motorises>

Voir la réglementation pour les survol motorisés : <https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/les-survol-non-motorises>

## Alpine ibex

Sensitivity period: June, July, August, September

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

Zone de présence du Bouquetin des Alpes

En période de mise bas et d'élevage des jeunes (juin à septembre) les bouquetins peuvent être très sensibles au dérangement notamment en cas de survol à basse altitude. Dans leur fuite les risques d'accidents sont multipliés. Merci de rester à bonne distance et d'éviter le survol de la 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**

### **Maison du Parc du Valbonnais**

Place du Docteur Eyraud, 38740

Entraigues

valbonnais@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 76 30 20 61

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



## **Source**



Parc national des Ecrins

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



# On your path...

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## Alder Forest (A)

From the track, looking towards the Ornon mountain pass, in the North, you can observe the most vast Alder Forest (a forest of white Alders) in France. It is an Alder Forest of national interest one of the registered sites in the Natura 2000 European network.

Attribution : Samy Jendoubi - PNE

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## Forest Flora (B)

The oozing banks are the place where the Alternative Leaved Golden Saxifrage lives, a plant with rounded yellow leaves which grows from March onwards. In the shade, on old rotting wood, Bugmoss flourishes: A moss which puts out a minuscule bright green bag enclosing spores (« seeds ») from the beginning of Spring, the rest of the plant consists of almost invisible filaments.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE

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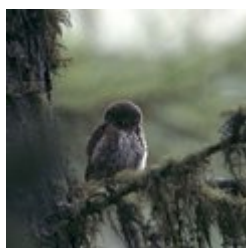


## Tuff waterfall (C)

From the Moulin bridge, an enormous waterfall seems to be mummified: the water that falls slowly deposits the dissolved minerals that it contains. The rock in place is covered with tuff, a porous yellow rock that traps vegetable debris and minerals that come to rest over time.

Attribution : Jonathan Le Roi - PNE

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## Forest Fauna (D)

The Adversets woods shelter fauna which is rich and diversified: wild boar, deer, which is the favourite prey of lynx, very discreet but present around the Ornon mountain pass since 1995. If the cry of the Black Woodpecker can be heard up to a 1 km away, the call of the Boreal Owl or the Eurasian Pygmy Owl as night falls is very discreet. These species are linked because these owls sometimes use holes made in the trees by the woodpeckers.

Attribution : Christian Couloumy - PNE



## The Grand Armet (E)

In the descent to Vallon Lake towards Chantelouve, you will be without a doubt impressed by this massif at a height of more than 1500m, striped with abrupt vallies and avalanche corridors, facing you. Armet massif separates the valley of Malsanne from Roizonne, and shelters the most Western glacier in the Alps. At the foot of the Grand Armet (2792m), beside the hamlet of Chalp, a geological anomaly generated curiosity among geologists in the 1980s and enabled them to imagine a new scenario concerning the formation of the Alps. The theory of the “tilted blocks”.

Attribution : Daniel Fougeray - PNE



## Dolomie (F)

Before the creation of the Alps, the sea invaded our continent (-245 à -65 million years). During a tropical period, the evaporation of the sea which was not very deep in places, left space for brown-yellow rock, the dolomite, that you can see on the steep path of the lake towards an altitude of 1700 m, passing the slabs.

Attribution : Samy Jendoubi - PNE



## Ring Ouzel (G)

The tallest trees at altitude welcome many Ring Ouzels. They are often visible when they are singing, perched at the ends of branches. You will easily recognize them by the white big that decorates the chest of the males.

Attribution : Pierre Dumas - PNE



## Savin Juniper (H)

Savin Juniper, is a spreading bush, dark green and mat, it is not covered with spines but smooth fleshy scales. Do not pick the berries, even if they look like those of common juniper, these are toxic and can provoke hemorrhaging.

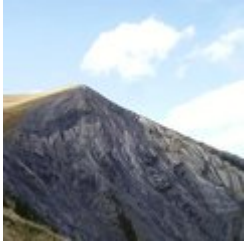
Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## Mountain Cabin (I)

Above an altitude of 1 800 meters the alpine grassland is the domain of the chamois and the marmot. In summer, it makes up vast pastures for the flocks from the Midi grazing during the summer. The cabin at Pré de la Vache could be your shelter in case of bad weather, unless it is occupied by the shepherd (for a part of August).

Attribution : Jonathan Le Roi - PNE



## Folds in the Ravine at Argentière (J)

Witnesses to upheaval in the Alps, the spectacular folds in the sedimentary layers (marly limestone) in the left bank of the ravine at Argentière are 200 million years old. These layers were first horizontally positioned under the sea which covered the region at that time which then progressively receded. The continental plates were then brought into to contact with each other during the surrection of the Alps, deforming all the rocks.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## Alpine Swift and Common House Martins (K)

The end of the summer is the moment when numerous Alpine Swifts and Common House Martins gather. Before leaving the Alps for warmer countries these birds gather together and stuff themselves with insects in the warm air currents rising from the slopes at the end of the day. Once their batteries have been recharged they can begin their migration.

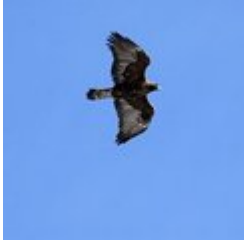
Attribution : Denis Fiat - PNE



## Green Tiger Beetle (L)

This beautiful green insect spotted with white is in fact a formidable hunter, running across the sandy paths, in the heat of the sun, after its prey. It finds them thanks to its big eyes, follows them on the ground or in the air and breaks them in to pieces with its powerful jaws before eating them.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## Big gliders (M)

The Royal Eagle roams the slopes looking for an imprudent marmot to catch for its meal. It is sometimes followed by wild vultures that move in groups in the currents of rising air les courants ascendants or gliding down the long reliefs searching for the cadavers of animals. An enormous black triangular silhouette sometimes accompanies them: the Monk Vulture.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## Rock Ptarmigan (N)

The Alpine level is the habitat of a discreet bird, changing its feathering to better camouflage itself: The Rock Ptarmigan. Repatriated across the entire continent during the Quaternary glaciations, the species has now gone back to the places offering it the climatic conditions that it prefers... This fragile population is monitored by the National Park within a program concerning the whole Alpine arc: l'OGM. It is not about « doping » wild animals but following their reproduction over the years for the Observatory of Mountain Galliformes.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE



## Waterfalls (O)

Present at several times between -1,8 million and -18 000 years, the glaciers have marked the passage of polished rocks in the form of giant flights of steps where the torrent falls in waterfalls.

Attribution : Samy Jendoubi - PNE



## Spilite bars (P)

During periods of intense tectonic activity (the movements of continental plates), outcrops of larva are produced on contact with the water... Dark Spilite cliffs are the result of this; you can see them on the right bank of the Combe Chave and under the Rochail mountain pass.

Attribution : Jonathan Le Roi - PNE



### Alpine Chickweed (Q)

This little white plant, with leaves covered in long hairs, only lives on polished glaciers. Since it cannot tolerate manure, contact with the flocks of sheep can be fatal to it.: this is why grazing is not advised the lake at Vallon.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE

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### Rock flowers (R)

On the black cliffs, you can easily see any point of colour. This is the case with the Forget-me-Not whose bright blue flowers with a yellow heart attract the insects and the Artemisia eriantha, the biggest of the Artemisia génépis, covered with hairs and very aromatic which is built for the fight against the cold and drought. Be careful in the heart of the Park or not, these plants are protected, so observe them, but let them survive in this hostile place.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE

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### Ibex (S)

Having disappeared in the middle of the 19th century. , the Ibex was reintroduced into the Ecrins National Park in the Valbonnais 1989 and 1990. The cliffs that surround the Vallon lake, are an area of reproduction and rearing of young Ibex, welcoming small groups in the summer season. If you see them, do not hesitate to communicate your observations to the Park House, especially if they have coloured loops in their ears.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE

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