

# Labarre Lake

Valbonnais



Le lac Labarre (Xavier\_and\_Caroline - Parc national des Ecrins)



*The pastel green colour of the lake is in contrast with the dark rock around it. The immaculate white quiffs of the cotton grass complete a unique picture.*

*The walk begins in a mosaic of old flowered prairies, scree with a few scattered trees, orange lis and asphodels. Soon there will be no more trees but lush grass through which flows the Fayolle stream. The pastures and their hut appear as the relief softens. The last rocky protrusion can be seen. They are the base of the small glacial cirque in which the lake is set itself surrounded by a short alpine lawn or gentians and small buttercups that group together in a carpet of colour.*

*Bernard Nicollet, Warden in the Valbonnais area*

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 7 h

Length : 10.9 km

Trek ascent : 1095 m

Difficulty : Hard

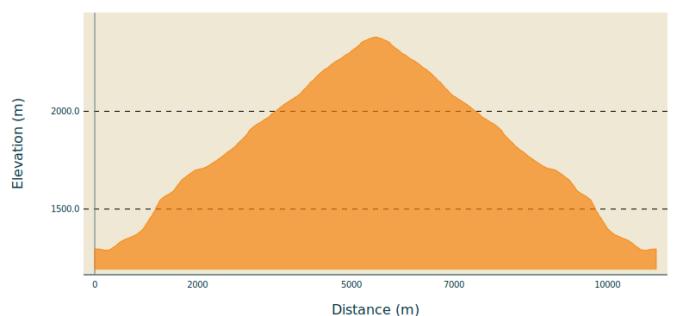
Type : Return trip

Themes : Lake and glacier

# Trek

**Departure** : Valsenestre  
**Arrival** : Valsenestre  
**Markings** :  GR  
**Cities** : 1. Valjouffrey

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1290 m Max elevation 2379 m

Go through the hamlet of Valsenestre and turn left after the chapel. Take the footpath that heads West, cross the footbridge over the Rif and continue on the overhang above the Béranger valley, towards the Combe Guyon valley. After a steep climb, cross the footbridge over the Fayolle stream and continue on the right bank. After a few bends through the grass and a long upward crossing, you will reach the Combe Guyon pastoral hut (water source). Continue up the bottom of the valley until you reach 2082 m in altitude, cross the stream and follow the large bend that will take you above the rocky ledges that circle it. You will soon arrive at the Labarre Lake. Return to Valsenestre by the same route.

# On your path...



Alpine garden (A)

Restored village (C)

Giant scabiosa (E)

Orange Lis (G)

White asphodel (I)

Griffon vulture (K)

Labarre Lake (M)

Viewpoint over the hamlet of Vasenestre (B)

Alpine ibex and golden eagle (D)

The aspic viper (F)

Mountain Apollo (H)

Combe Guyon pastures (J)

Common rock thrush (L)

# All useful information

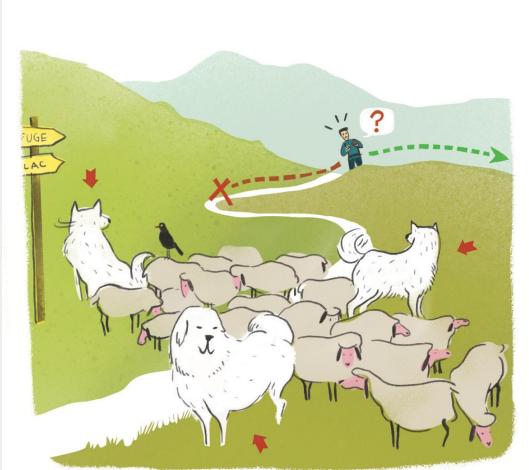
## Herd protection dogs

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

Avoid going to the Combe Guyon hut out of respect for the shepherd and his dogs.

## How to come ?

## Transports

Transisère bus to Entraigues

## Access

D26 from La Mure then D117 at Entraigues and D117a at La Chapelle en Valjouffrey.

## Advised parking

Park at the entrance to Valsenestre

# 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>

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## Information desks

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[valbonnais@ecrins-parcnational.fr](mailto: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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## Alpine garden (A)

More than fifty years ago, a botany lover, who is now elderly, created a small alpine garden in the centre of the village. Although it is less well kept nowadays, it still presents a stunning array of colour and a collection of spectacular plants belonging to alpine flora.

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## Viewpoint over the hamlet of Valsenestre (B)

In the 19th century, the hamlet of Valsenestre had roughly one hundred inhabitants. The main activity was breeding. In 1851, a marble quarry opened in the bottom of the valley on the way up to the Muzelle pass. This was an opportunity for the village. It welcomed the quarry workers and benefitted from an improved road. Marble production stopped in 1905. Up until 1926, children laughing and shouting could still be heard in the village. The school had about thirty pupils. It was closed a few years later and the last permanent inhabitant of the village left in 1948.

Attribution : Marion Digier - PNE



## Restored village (C)

Valsenestre is a flower-filled village that has been superbly restored and is now made up of holiday homes. The road is not cleared of snow in the winter. When the village had one hundred or so inhabitants it had a school (that has since been changed into a gîte d'étape (bed and breakfast halt), that closed in 1936. It was entirely buried by an avalanche in the 19th century. The main activity was still breeding but the opening of a marble quarry from 1840 brought complimentary resources to workers in the village. The last permanent inhabitant left Valsenestre in 1959.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## ❖ Alpine ibex and golden eagle (D)

Reintroduced into the Valbonnais area in 1989 and 1990, the number of ibex is slowly increasing on the high summits of Valouffrey. A population of about fifty spend the winter on the well-exposed slopes of the Valsenestre valley. Some of them spend weeks on the rocky ledges of Peys above the village, waiting for brighter days. Some years, the golden eagle also comes to build its nest and raise its young. It is not rare to see it or hear it yapping above the footpath.

Attribution : Robert Chevalier - PNE



## ❖ Giant scabiosa (E)

This giant of the subalpine lawn looks like and is the size of an artichoke? In addition, it has a large round deep pink flower head with a pearly rim. Its huge leaves, that are white and velvet-like on the underside, are impressive and make it easy to identify. Sound nutrition for several species of beetle, its flower head is also a treat for butterflies. This plant species is not common and is protected on a national level even outside the Park.

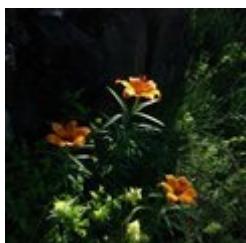
Attribution : Cédric Dentant - PNE



## ❖ The aspic viper (F)

It has been a victim of legends and a bad reputation for centuries, but walkers that have been bitten are rare. This reptile that is, on average, fifty centimetres long, has a snubbed nose and a black, thin, vertical pupil, likes the well-exposed slopes. It seeks refuge in piles of stones and thorny thickets where it has no trouble catching small rodents and insects.

Attribution : Jean-Philippe Telmon - PNE



## ❖ Orange Lis (G)

Due to its original and bright colour, it is easy to recognise on the steep terraces and rocky ledges. The orange lily is a rock lover that needs light and warmth, but not too much. This is why it blossoms at the beginning of summer to avoid strong heat. It is forbidden to pick it within the mountain National Parks, but also in several counties including the Hautes Alpes. Elsewhere picking is limited by decree.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## ▢ Mountain Apollo (H)

One of the most beautiful butterflies you will come across in the mountains, its generally calm behaviour means it is easy to observe. It is linked to "camel" plants such as houseleeks that grow in dry conditions. They lay their eggs on this host plant, so that the larvae will be able to eat them.

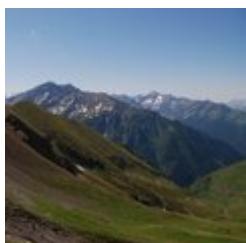
Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## ✳ White asphodel (I)

They grow in groups, often accompanied by the yellow gentian, on the old hayfields, which have deep soil. Its tall candle-like appearance is easy to recognise and its flowers that are grouped together in a flower spike, blossom one after the other over several weeks at the beginning of summer. Its fleshy tuber attracts underground rodents. It was previously used in the form of flour, to feed the mountain people in times of food shortage.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE



## ▢ Combe Guyon pastures (J)

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Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



## ▢ Griffon vulture (K)

This enormous bird of prey, that has a span of almost three metres, is new to the mountains, thanks to a programme to reintroduce them dating from the end of the 20th century. In the summer, they swirl in the sky incessantly as a group looking for sheep corpses or other large wild mammals that they can tear apart for food. This impressive scavenger plays a welcome role in the healthy condition of the pastures.

Attribution : Marion Molina



## Common rock thrush (L)

Generally known as the rock blackbird, the male thrush stands out due to its bright contrasting colours and its melodic song. African in winter and alpine in summer, this magnificent migratory bird chooses open areas above the forests where it settles on rocky perches to sing and nests in the scree or other rocky nooks and crannies.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE



## Labarre Lake (M)

This medium sized lake, like many in the Alps, formed in the natural hollow or a cirque at the time of the great glacier retreat at the end of the 18th century. It was due to their force that, over time, they were able to sink into the soft rock and pass over the harder ones. Melt waters from the surrounding névé form runoffs filled with fine rock debris that flow into the one and a half hectare, 8 metre deep Labarre Lake. This is what gives it its distinct colour.

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Attribution : Jean-Pierre Nicollet - PNE