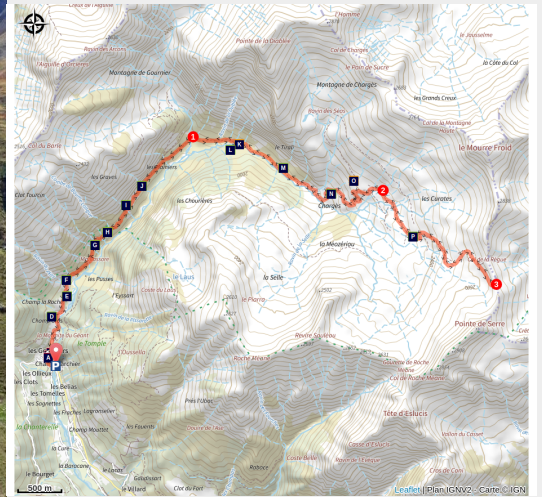


# Chargès Valley

Parc national des Ecrins - Réallon



Vallon de Chargès (Kinaphoto - Parc national des Ecrins)



*In the Spring, the flowery valley is adorned with many different colours. It leads to the Règue mountain pass which signifies « flock » in Patois.*

The green colour of the bottom of the slopes contrasts with the uppermost grey-brown summits. The freshness of the grass accentuates the austerity of the rock which is sometimes sprinkled with snow. As for the torrent, it animates the hollow of the valley where it not rare to meet a cow coming there to drink.

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 9 h

Length : 18.9 km

Trek ascent : 1283 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Pass, Pastoralism

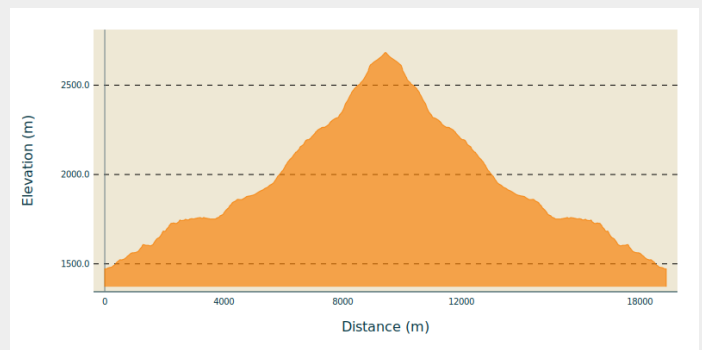
# Trek

**Departure** : Les Gourniers, Réallon

**Arrival** : Les Gourniers, Réallon

**Cities** : 1. Réallon

## Altimetric profile

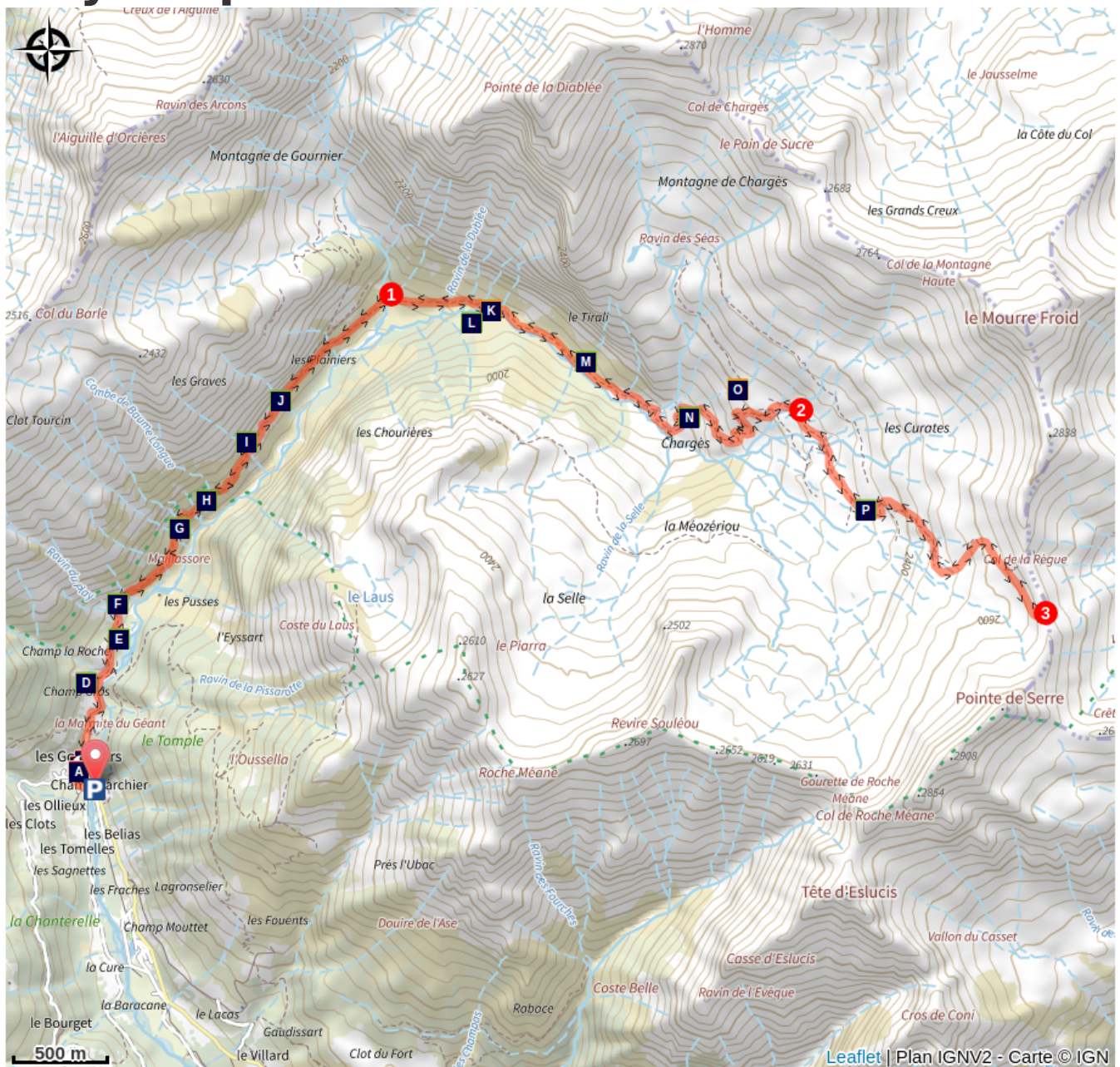


Min elevation 1472 m    Max elevation 2683 m

From Gourniers car park, cross the hamlet and follow the track until la Chapelle-Saint-Marcellin. The track follows the hillside until a walkway at (Pont la Claire) then goes up to the cabin at Pré d'Antoni. Follow along to a torrent (walkway). Climb a grassy slope to reach a lower shelf and the source of the Chargès. From the source, follow « the drailles » (local word signifying 'paths' created by the passage of sheep) and cross a little stream running from a waterfall. The path meanders towards the mountain pass, marked with red lozenges and cairns.



# On your path...



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Communal oven (A)          |  Hamlet of Les Gourniers (B) |
|  Chapel of the Nativity (C) |  Black Woodpecker (D)        |
|  Long Tailed Tit (E)        |  Rock Bunting (F)            |
|  Wallcreeper (G)            |  Short Toed Snake Eagle (H)  |
|  Red-billed chough (I)      |  Eurasian Crag Martin (J)    |
|  Cabane du Pré d'Antoni (K) |  Chamois (L)                 |
|  White-throated dipper (M)  |  Water pipit (N)             |
|  « Drailles » (O)           |  Wheatear (P)                |

# 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

Between la Chapelle-Saint-Marcellin and Claie bridge, there is a danger of falling rocks, particularly during heavy rain. At that time the itinerary is not advisable. At the end of the track, that crosses the pasture, it is not very visible. Follow the cairns. Be careful when faced with pockets of snow remaining at the bottom of the mountain pass.

## How to come ?

### Access

From Savines-le-lac, just before the bridge, take the road to Réallon. Follow the signs to "Parc national des Ecrins", until Gourniers hamlet at the bottom of the valley.

### Advised parking

Les Gourniers

# 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 et de privilégier un survol de la zone à une distance de survol de 300m sol soit à une altitude minimale de 2400m.

## Information desks

### Information center "les Gourniers" (summer only)

Les Gourniers, 05160 Réallon  
[embrunais@ecrins-parcnational.fr](mailto:embrunais@ecrins-parcnational.fr)  
Tel : 04 92 44 30 36  
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



### Maison du Parc de l'Embrunais

Place de l'Église, 05380 Châteauroux-les-Alpes  
[embrunais@ecrins-parcnational.fr](mailto:embrunais@ecrins-parcnational.fr)  
Tel : 04 92 43 23 31  
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



## Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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



# On your path...

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## Communal oven (A)

This is located in the basement of the former school (now the Park Information Centre). It is regularly used on the occasion of local festivals and events.

Attribution : Victor Zugmeyer - PNE

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## Hamlet of Les Gourniers (B)

The old houses of the hamlet are modest in appearance. They are built from stone and have sheet metal roofs. They used to be roofed with slate extracted from the nearby quarries

Attribution : PNE- Mireille Coulon

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## Chapel of the Nativity (C)

It is difficult to be sure of the chapel's date of construction, but it existed in 1700. The bell was installed in 1870, but the bell tower was built in 1956. In 2013, a new larch shingle roof replaced the old corrugated iron roof,

Attribution : Mireille Coulon

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## Black Woodpecker (D)

This funny red bird with a red helmet and a long light coloured beak is the biggest woodpecker in the Alps. It is difficult to see because it is very solitary and distrustful. However, thanks to numerous clues that reveal its presence, it is possible to place its song and its very typical and sonorous. It taps endlessly to defend its territory and to find bark beetles or carpenter ants.

Attribution : PNE - Chevalier Robert



### Long Tailed Tit (E)

This Tit is easily recognizable thanks to its ball of feathers coloured white, black, brown and pink, extended by a very long tail. Not very selective, it adapts to all kinds of forest environments as long as they are dense. Although it is more common on the plain, it is also present in the mountains up to an altitude of 2 000 m in the Alps. Unlike other tits, the Long Tailed Tit nests in a spherical and flexible nest which grows little by little as the young birds develop.

Attribution : PNE - Coulon Mireille



### Rock Bunting (F)

The Rock Bunting is mainly a Southern mountain species. In the cold season, it migrates towards the valleys or the plains. In Spring, from the top of a bush, sings his song, agreeable but not very remarkable or loud. As long as you are discreet and attentive, it is possible to sometimes hear his little "tsip", high-pitched brief cries.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



### Wallcreeper (G)

Discreetly hanging onto the cliff thanks to its long clawed feet, the Wallcreeper is on a search for insects and spiders that it's long, narrow, curved beak enables it to extract. The unique representative of the Tichodroma family, the Wallcreeper dominates the vertical mountain wall where it finds its home and safety. Not a shy species, it is emblematic of the mountain region, the Wallcreeper sometimes moves closer to the villages in Winter.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



### Short Toed Snake Eagle (H)

Spring has only just returned when you can hear cries as loud as the church bells. You have to lift your head up to admire two large birds flying together, alternating aerobatics and hovering in the sky like two silver coloured kites playing with the wind.. Their light stocky silhouette and their darker head enable you to identify the Short-toed Snake Eagle. It mainly feeds on reptiles (lizards and snakes) which it captures by the head, which it can then regurgitate in order to feed its young.

Attribution : PNE - Saulay Pascal



## Red-billed chough (I)

The cliff overlooking the path beyond the chapel of Saint-Marcellin, is home to several pairs of red-billed chough, faithful to their territory. Part of the corvid family, it is strikingly similar to the Alpine chough. It takes a little experience to tell them apart. the beak is the best guide: red, long and curved for the red-billed chough, yellow and short for its yellow-billed cousin. It specialises in plummeting through the air, spiralling and performing loops.

Attribution : Christian Couloumy - PNE

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## Eurasian Crag Martin (J)

The Eurasian Crag Martin has beige hardly contrasted feathering. It is capable of real prowess in flight, a quality that is indispensable for catching the multitude of insects that it feeds on. In Spring, once it has found a rocky ridge, the Eurasian Crag Martin endlessly transports mud and pieces of vegetation with its beak. Using this unique tool it solidly fixes each element to the edifice of the rock with a clever mix of saliva and water.

Attribution : PNE - Coulon Mireille

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## Cabane du Pré d'Antoni (K)

Perched above the rushing mountain stream, this cabin is used by shepherds - in addition to that of Chargès - during the period of summer grazing for the cows from the Réallon valley. Traditionally, on 14 July, a herd of 370 animals leaves Les Gourniers at dawn and heads up to the alpine pasture of Chargès for two months. On that day, called the amontagnage, everyone can take part.

Attribution : PNE - Coulon Mireille





## Chamois (L)

An emblematic animal in the Alps, the chamois or « rock goat » has short curled horns. Like the Ibex, it is easy to observe through binoculars. The goats and esterlons (young males aged one year) like to live in big herds ; in contrast, the billy goats stay quite isolated only rejoining the females during the mating season. In the winter, the chamois need a lot of tranquility in order to conserve their reserve of fat which they need in order to survive...

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Jean-Pierre



## White-throated dipper (M)

The white-throated dipper is easy to spot as long as you are unobtrusive. It lives on the banks of rivers and mountain streams. A small russet and grey bird with a short tail and a slender beak, with a white throat and breast. This astonishing passerine bird has the unusual habit of walking underwater against the current, in search of food. It flattens itself and anchors itself to the bottom with its claws, opens its eyes - which are protected from the force of the flow by a fine membrane - and seeks out larvae, small crustaceans and fish.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## Water pipit (N)

This small passerine bird can remain invisible, flying against the blue of the sky, which makes it very difficult to spot. On the other hand, it can make itself heard, calling out its name « pi-pit-pipit-pipit-pipit » and suddenly, at the peak of its flight, gliding earthwards, its unfurled wings acting like a parachute, uttering a joyful « piiiini » call. When it alights in the grass in the alpine meadow, it can be difficult to see among the clumps of wood fescue.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE



## « Drailles » (O)

The « drailles » are paths formed by the passage of flocks of sheep and herds of cows.

Attribution : Coursier Cyril



## Wheatear (P)

In late April, the snow gradually melts from the alpine meadow. Rocks serve as a perch for the northern wheatear, which has just return from its winter quarters. The male appears first: in his courtship plumage, he has a grey head and back, a mask of Zorro across his eyes, a yellow belly and dark wings. He can easily be recognised by his white rump and the black T on his tail. The female is paler and less contrasting. Often perched on an outcrop, they keep a lookout for nearby insects.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE