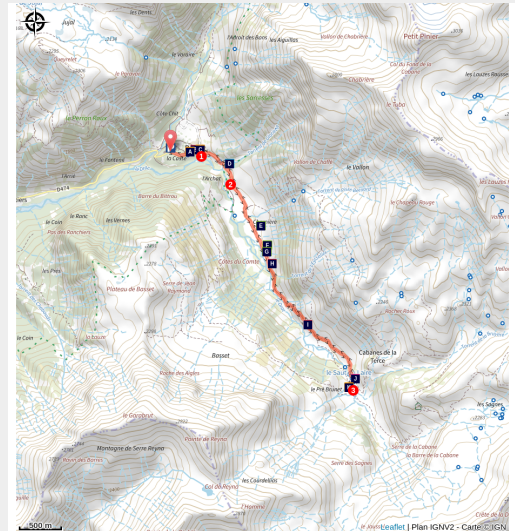


The Saut du Laire

Parc national des Ecrins - Orcières



Alpage au Saut du Laire (Marc Corail - PNE)



An easy hike in the open Drac Noir valley. The grassy slopes, the hayfields, and the pastures are the marmots' favourite places.

"On this warm June evening, I cross the Charnières plateau. I notice a strange shape in the middle of the prairie that is most full of flowers. No, it is not a marmot. I approach, hidden by the alders hanging over the Drac. A perfect lotus position, in the simplest of clothing but respecting decency and decorum, thanks to square of material, a man is meditating. A childlike smile lights up his face."

Daniel Briotet, park ranger in Champsaur

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 2 h

Length : 8.9 km

Trek ascent : 412 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Return trip

Themes : History and architecture, Pastoralism

Accessibility : Joelette

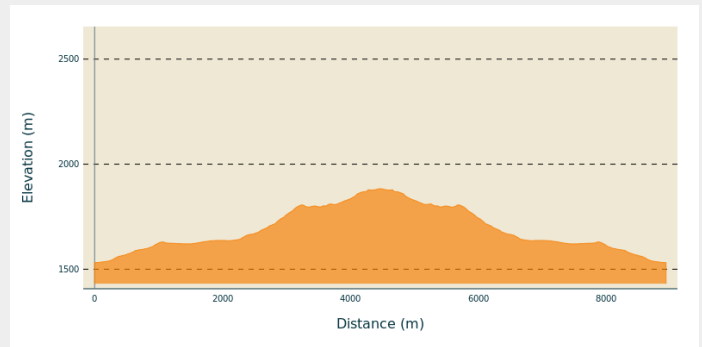
Trek

Departure : Prapic

Arrival : Prapic

Cities : 1. Orcières

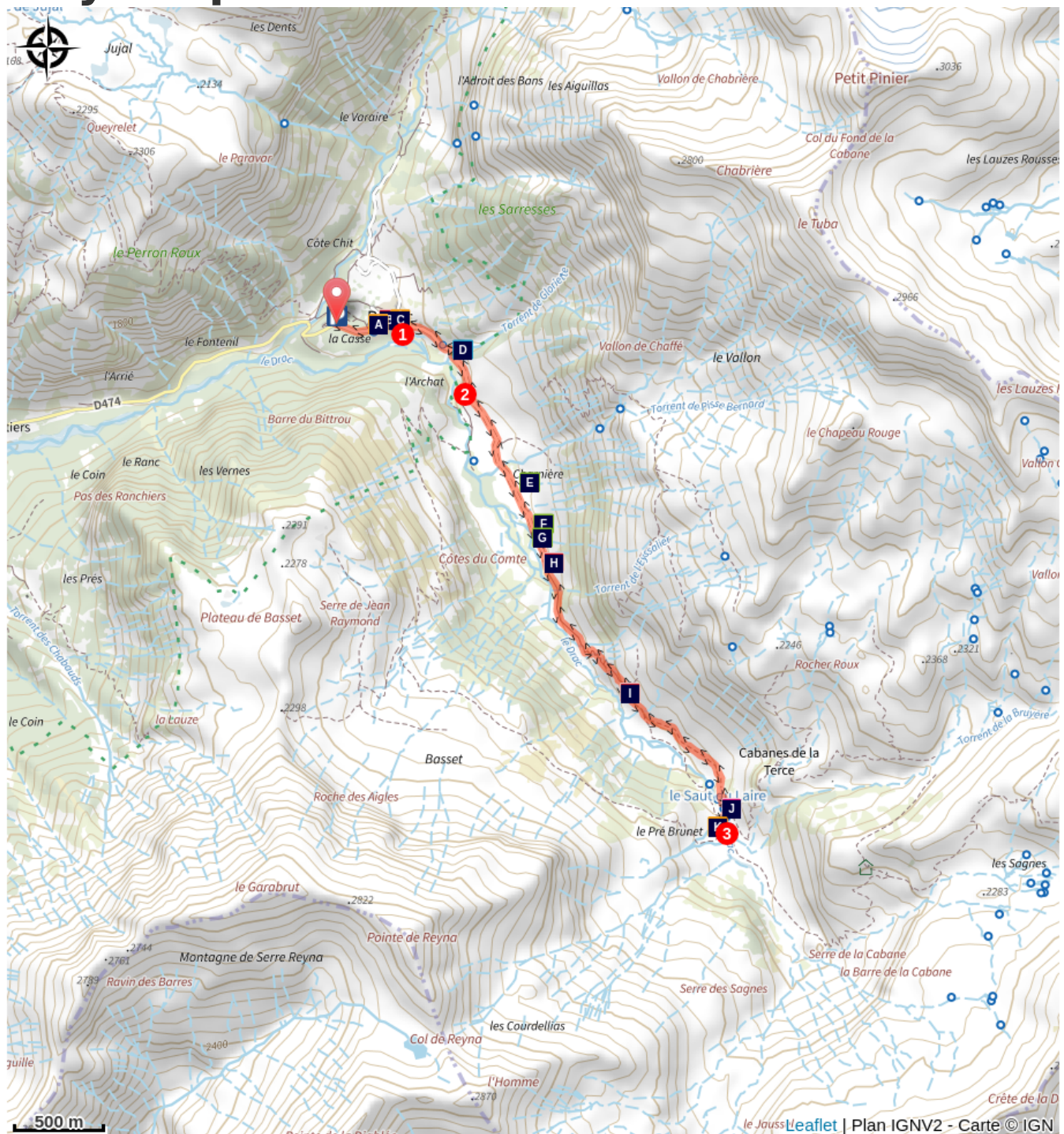
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1532 m Max elevation 1884 m

From the car park, at the entrance to Prapic hamlet, go up in the direction of the hostels. At the fork (signpost), go right. The track follows the right bank of the Drac going up to the Charnières plateau. At the oratory, turn left to cross the plateau. Climb the bends which lead to the Saulce chapel. Stay on the right bank to reach the Saut du Laire walkway which will give you access to the eponymous valley, which is the goal of this hike. Return using the same itinerary in the opposite direction.

On your path...



-  Prapic Church (A)
-  Running water (C)
-  Marmot (E)
-  Asphodel (G)
-  Saulce Chapel (I)
-  Pastoral Cabin at Saut du Lait (K)
-  Prapic Hamlet (B)
-  The Drac Noir (D)
-  Hay Fields (F)
-  Small stone walls and stone piles (H)
-  Glacial Relief (J)

All useful information

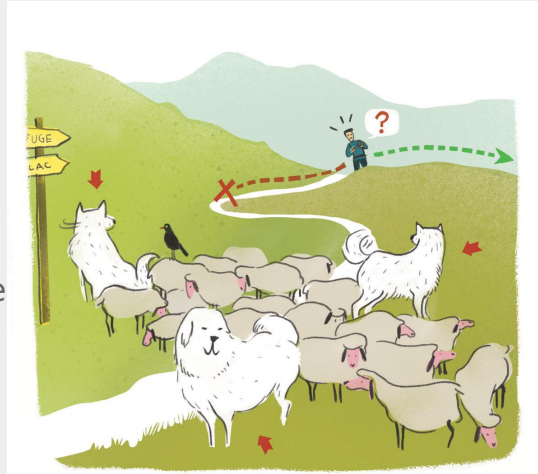
Herd protection dogs

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

This itinerary which is suitable for children is best if you avoid setting off too late. Depending on meteorological conditions, vigilance is necessary when crossing the steep slopes under the Saulce chapel.

How to come ?

Transports

Coach from Gap to Orcières.

Access

In Orcières village, take the direction to Prapic hamlet where the car park is situated.

Advised parking

Prapic hamlet (signposts with park regulations and information).

Accessibility

Obstacles : Aucun obstacle jusqu'à la montée de la Chapelle de la Saulce. Montée de la Chapelle : deux passages à 45%, moyenne 20% sur 500m, la largeur permet des aides sur les côtés de la Joëlette. Montée du Saut du Laire : nombreux emmarchements : en marche isolée jusqu'à 30 cm, en suite de marches type 'pas d'âne' ou en volée jusqu'à 5 marches. 150 derniers mètres avec passages à 40% sur pavé, glissant si humide.

Parking : Places non matérialisées. Le revêtement est stabilisé au fond du parking.

Sanitaires : Inaccessible aux fauteuils sur le parking. Les plus proches se situent à la station d'Orcières Merlette 1850, à l'Office de tourisme.



Joelette

Accessibility level : Experimented

Slope

La traversée du village et le passage des gorges en sortie du village sont raides : le village propose 18% sur pavé de lauze, puis de 6 à 12% en sortie de village et les 100 derniers mètres, au passage des gorges, est à 28%. Légère descente et légèrement montant jusqu'au pied de la montée de La Saulce. La suite est pour les courageux.

Width

3m50 jusqu'à la montée vers la Chapelle, se réduisant progressivement jusqu'au Saut du Laire.

Signage

Panneaux jaunes (de faible dimension), suivre la direction 'Saut du Laire'.

Covering

Bonne piste jusqu'à la Chapelle de la Saulce et large sentier de montagne jusqu'au Saut du Laire mais avec de nombreux petits obstacles.

Exposure

Largement exposé.

Advice

La montée du Saut du Laire, particulièrement les 150 derniers mètres, sont déconseillés aux joëlettes, notamment dans la perspective du retour en descente sur pavé pouvant être glissant, sur des pentes avoisinant les 40%.

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 2400m.

Information desks

House of Champsaur

champsaur@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 92 55 95 44
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

On your path...



Prapic Church (A)

Dedicated to Saint-Anne, Prapic Church dates back to the 1860s. It was built following the request of the inhabitants for a place of worship, who were faced with the hazards of winter and the distance from the parish church in Orcières. On the stained glass choir window, you can admire the portrait of Prapicois: Jean Sarrazin (1833-1914), nicknamed the «the poet of the olives», a different poet from that in the tomb ... Can you find it?

Attribution : Michel Francou - PNE



Prapic Hamlet (B)

Surrounded by vegetable gardens, piles of stones and mown terraces the village nestles on the banks of the Drac and gives the best land over to agriculture. The typical house is most often perpendicular to the slope, based on an architecture created from materials collected locally and showing great intelligence in its elaboration. From course plasterwork to the delicacy of walnut wooden doors, shale roofing with gables made from plaited alder, this is the architectural vocabulary that punctuates your visit.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE



Running water (C)

Running water came to Prapic in 1924. The first pipes were made from metre long sections, hollowed out trunks of larch. Their fitments probably did not enable all the water collected from the six village fountains to be transported!

Attribution : Michel Francou



💧 The Drac Noir (D)

This denomination is due to the nature of the terrains that it crosses: the limestone is very sensitive to erosion and the metamorphic rocks in Champoléon valley (Drac Blanc) darken the waters of the river Drac in this way. Bouncing from waterfalls to pools, opening up a passage through the riverside alders, the Drac expresses its nature as a mountain torrent. Brown Trout, White Throated Dipper and delicate ephemerals reveal themselves to the attentive observer.

Attribution : Robert Chevalier - PNE



🐹 Marmot (E)

If you are patient, you will probably be lucky enough to discover it on the Charnière plateau whose prairies it particularly appreciates, which sometimes poses a problem to the farmer mowing there. Even so, they do represent an undeniable attraction in the valley. Do not be fooled by their easy going appearance, they are wild animals who fight for survival and battles between males can be fierce.

Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE



🌼 Hay Fields (F)

These natural prairies have never been cultivated. You can find a cavalcade of flowers growing freely. From this botanical diversity flourishes a multitude of insect species especially butterflies, who find an environment favourable to their development. Also, the hay they produce has a very high nutritional value. Maintaining the equilibrium of these environments is essential.

Attribution : Michel Francou - PNE



🌼 Asphodel (G)

Asphodels blossom on the old hayfields. They open out from the bottom to the top over the course of July. It is for this reason that flowers at the base of the flowering stem may go to seed while the flowers at the top are still in bud. The long narrow leaves that grow up from the bottom of the stem early in the spring have given it the nickname "Dogs' leek".

Attribution : Michel Francou - PNE



Small stone walls and stone piles (H)

Creating land from the mountain rocks, this is the combat that the mountain-dwellers have carried out since Antiquity. These piles of stones are the witnesses to the time when numerous children piled up stones so that their families could grow food on the conquered land. The family plot, bordered by walls, was ready to be mowed. The Park participates in the maintenance of this inheritance.

Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE



Saulce Chapel (I)

You will be able to see it from the first bends up to the Charnières plateau. It is characterized by its apse forming a stem post whose bulk protects the unique roomed vaulted edifice from avalanches. Built from stones from the site, its lime mortar is filled with earthy grit taken from the immediate environment.. It resists the ravages of time and natural phenomena.

Attribution : Hervé Cortot - PNE



Glacial Relief (J)

The polished rocks that you find just after the walkway are traces of the passage of quaternary glaciers. These are striped; stones once set in the ice, carried by glacial movement have strongly marked them. The flat bottomed valley with a glacial cross cliff is another characteristic of this landscape modelled by glaciers.

Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE



Pastoral Cabin at Saut du Laire (K)

Protected from avalanches by a big rock, this small cabin shelters the shepherd from June to the end of July. In order to exploit the supply of grass as it grows, another cabin is situated above the bar which closes the valley completing the equipment of the pasture. For the tranquility of the shepherd, it is best to observe the cabin from a distance.

Attribution : Jean-Pierre Nicolle - PNE