

Le col de la Coupa

Embrunais - Réallon



Vue depuis le col de la Coupa (Thierry Maillet - Parc national des Ecrins)



This valley, which is a mountain pasture for a flock of sheep, leads to La Coupa mountain pass which is the passage between the Réallon valley and the Rouance valley that links up to Ancelle in the Champsaur area.

"The presence of griffon vultures makes this hike interesting during the summer. In the morning, around 9 o'clock, they leave the cliff to the right of the pass, gain altitude and separate. Throughout the day, they glide over the surrounding summits and ridges. The end of the day is a good time to watch them as they return to the 'dormitory'. The best idea is to plan a picnic for the evening and descend before nightfall.

Mireille Coulon, warden in the Embrunais area

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h

Length : 9.9 km

Trek ascent : 830 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Pass

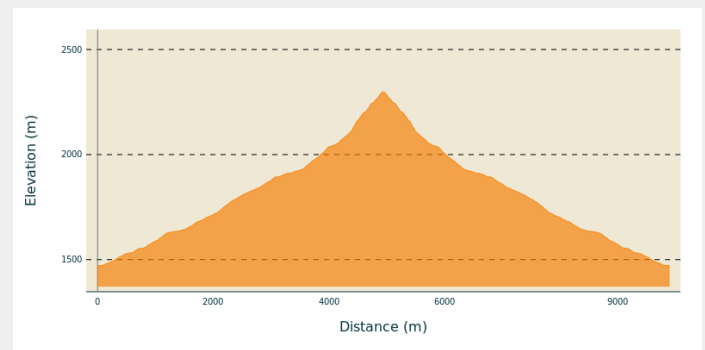
Trek

Departure : Les Gourniers

Arrival : Les Gourniers, Réallon

Cities : 1. Réallon

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1472 m Max elevation 2300 m

From Les Gourniers car park, cross the bridge over the Réallon and take the paved road on the left. Follow this road for 1 km to the end of the tarmac at "Les Tomelles". Take the track to the right. At the next fork in the road, go right on the footpath that heads into the larch forest then reaches the Gorge stream. Cross it 3 times over roughly 500 m to reach the meadows of the south facing slope on the left bank. When you arrive at the terrace, go up the slope to the right. Go past the shepherd's hut. From there, the footpath is not clearly defined but the pass to the north-west certainly is. Head towards it by following the slope that straightens out regularly until you reach the meandering footpath that leads to the pass. The return trip is made by the same route.

On your path...



-  Turk's cap lily (A)
-  Alpenrose (C)
-  Ortolan bunting (E)
-  Walls and clapiers (B)
-  Black grouse and management (D)
-  Griffon vulture (F)

All useful information

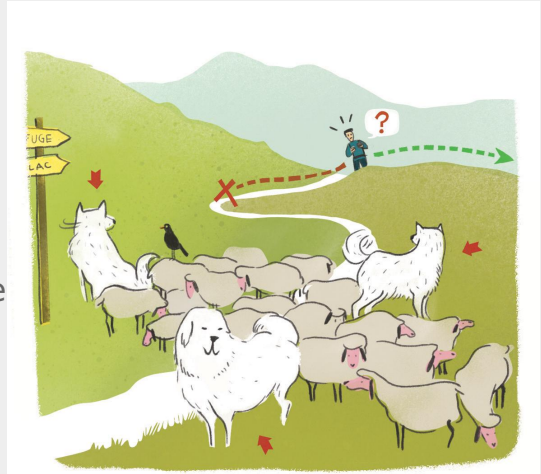
Herd protection dogs

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](#).



Advices

The valley is a pasture where there are grazing sheep. Keep dogs on a lead, stay a good distance from the flock and near to the hut, respect the peace and quiet of the shepherd. Do not forget your binoculars to observe the vultures.

How to come ?

Access

From Savines-le-lac, take the D41 to Réallon. Then follow the D241 as far as the hamlet of Gourniers at the bottom of the valley.

Advised parking

Gourniers car park (before the bridge)

Information desks

Information center "les Gourniers" (summer only)

Les Gourniers, 05160 Réallon

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

Tel : 04 92 43 23 31

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



Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

On your path...



✿ Turk's cap lily (A)

In the undergrowth at the beginning of the route, then in the meadows, it stands out with its long upright flowering stem. It is embellished by three to ten flowers that are a purple-pink and crimson and have long orange stamens. Admire them without smelling, as they are as beautiful as they are smelly!

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



🕒 Walls and clapiers (B)

On the left bank of the stream, the walls and the piles of cleared stones are a sign that there were once hayfields here. The cut hay was taken down to the village in cloth bags that were carried by donkeys or on sleds when it was not by the men themselves.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



✿ Alpenrose (C)

At the end of June, the slopes on the right bank are covered in a carmine pink colour thanks to the flowers of this shrub. There are usually blueberries, green alder and other small willows nearby. Its stiff leaves are shiny on the upper side but rust-coloured underneath (which is where it gets its French name "ferrugineux" from). It was also nicknamed the Devil's rose because its leaves were said to attract lightning.

Attribution : Ludovic Imberdis - PNE



👉 Black grouse and management (D)

Every year BTS students in "Nature protection and Management" assist in a clearing operation that frees a part of the slope of its alpenroses that spread too much. The reason is twofold: to gain back grazing land and to improve the habitat of the black grouse.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



Ortolan bunting (E)

It is present on the sunny slopes and sings ruefully from its perch on the top of a bush. This bird is barely larger than a sparrow. The male has a salmon-coloured chest and a grey-brown rump. Its green-grey head is embellished with a pale yellow moustache that starts at the beak and marks a comma shape down the neck. The female is not as colourful.

Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE



Griffon vulture (F)

A large scavenging bird of prey, that can have a wingspan of 2.50 m, has been present in the massif for about 10 years. Not long after the flocks have arrived on the pastures, the vultures settle in for the duration of the summer pasture. They spend the summer patrolling in search of corpses. In the evening, they return to their 'dormitory' at the top of the rock face to the right of the Coupa pass. Up to sixty have been counted.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE