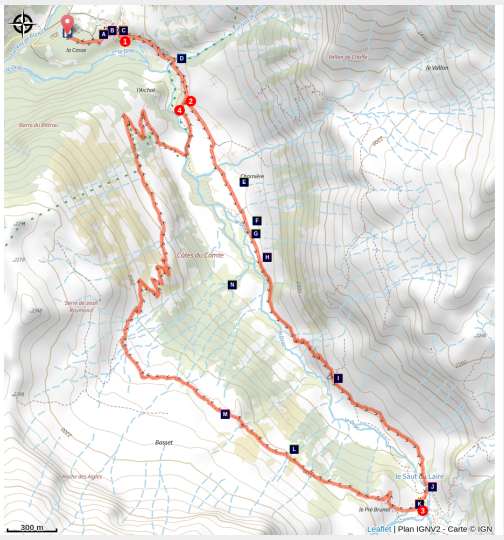
Le Saut du Laire via le Basset

Parc national des Ecrins

Alpage de Basset (Marc Corail - PNE)



In this open valley of the Drac Noir, the grassy slopes, hayfields and pastures are a favourite spot for marmots. The walk across the Basset plateau gives an outstanding view of the Charnières valley.

"On the Basset plateau, the griffon vultures are feasting on the raw flesh of a dead sheep. They fly away somewhat disappointed as I approach. However, the greediest one has to climb the slope in order to launch itself. Wings spread at last, it sets off on a comical, risky slalom through the rocks that are scattered across the pastures. With the extra kilos that it had gulped down it took quite some time for it to gain altitude!"

Daniel Briotet, warden in the Champsaur area

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h

Length : 11.4 km

Trek ascent : 607 m

Difficulty : Medium

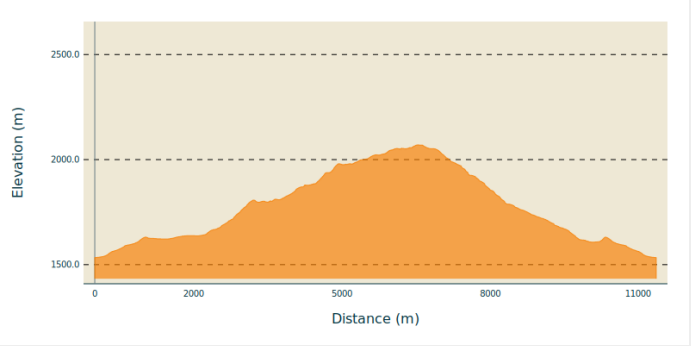
Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Panorama

Trek

Departure : Hamlet of Prapic
Arrival : Hameau de Prapic
Cities : 1. Orcières

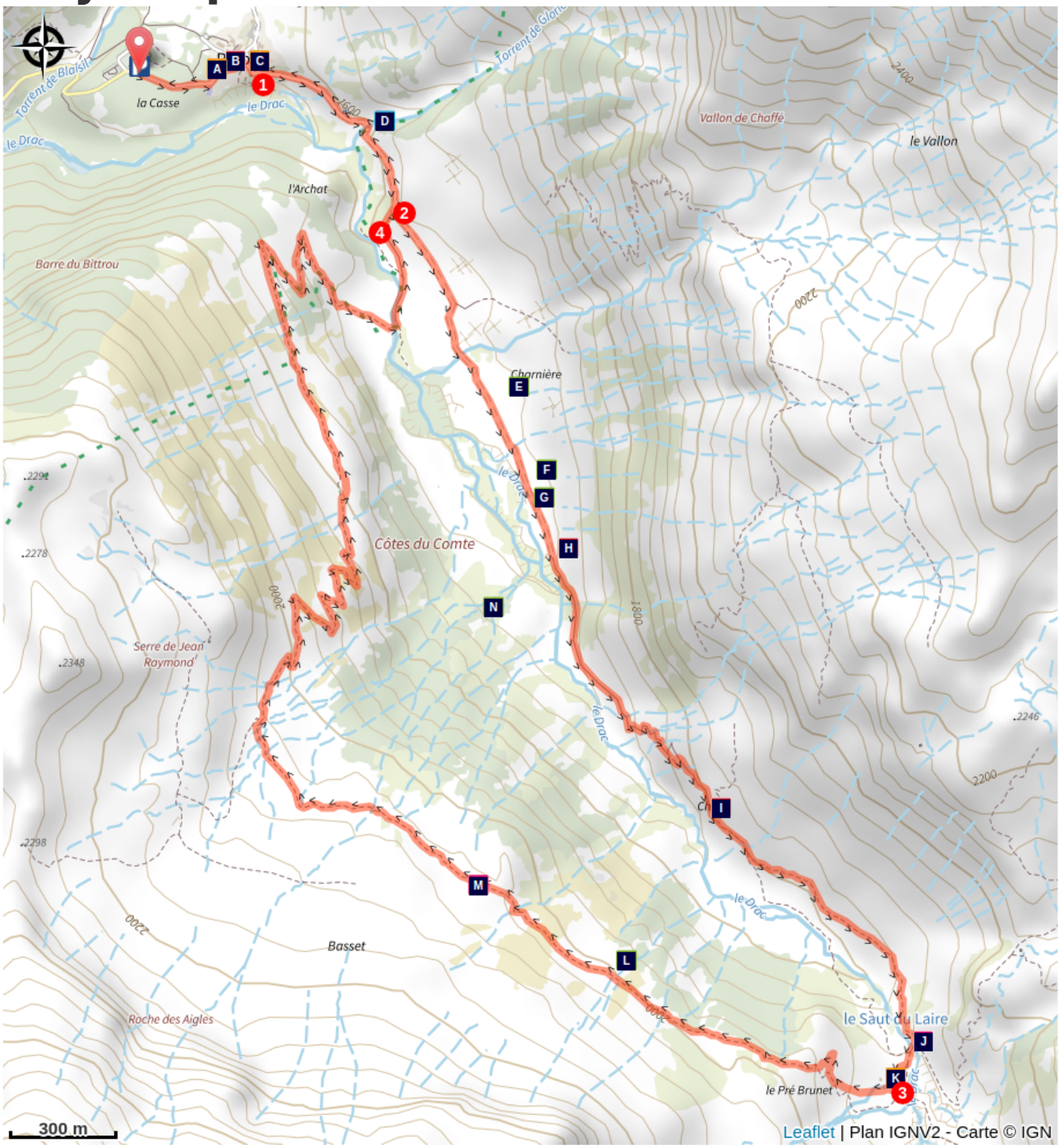
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1533 m Max elevation 2070 m

From the car park head up towards the hostels. At the fork in the road (sign) go right. The track runs up along the right bank of the Drac to reach the Charnières plateau. At the oratory, go left to cross the plateau. Walk up the bends that lead to the Saulce chapel. Stay on the right bank until you reach the Saut du Laire footbridge that leads to the valley of the same name. From there, take the footpath that bypasses the shepherd's hut. After a short climb, turn right, on the slope of the "balcon de Basset" itinerary. After crossing several streams, the path then heads down to Prapic. It skirts several rocky ledges, then after two large bends, reaches the bridge over the Drac. Follow the same route in the opposite direction

On your path...



- Prapic Church (A)
- Prapic Hamlet (B)
- Running water (C)
- The Drac Noir (D)
- Marmot (E)
- Hay Fields (F)
- Asphodel (G)
- Small stone walls and stone piles (H)
- Saulce Chapel (I)
- Glacial Relief (J)
- Pastoral Cabin at Saut du Laire (K)
- Green alder (L)
- View point over the Charnière plateau (M)
- Chamois (N)

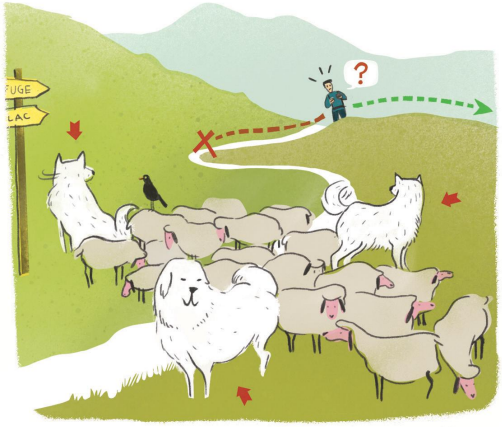
All useful information

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 route is more enjoyable with an early start. Depending on weather conditions, be careful when crossing the steep slopes beneath the Saulce Chapel and during the descent from the Basset plateau.

How to come ?

Transports

Bus route Gap-Orcières (05voyageurs).

Access

At the village of Orcières head towards the hamlet of Prapic where the car park is.

Advised parking

Car park at the entrance to the hamlet of Prapic

Information desks

House of Champsaur

champsaur@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 92 55 95 44
https://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 participes 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 Nicollet - PNE

Green alder (L)

Holding onto the rocky slopes, the green alder is a perfectly adapted pioneer in such an extreme environment: the snow slides over it and the strong roots hold it in place on the steepest of slopes. Alders are ideal camouflage for birds, roe deer, chamois and even boar. They reproduce not only by seed but also by shoots. When they settle in the pastures, the shepherd is in for a hard time due to their conquering qualities.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE

View point over the Charnière plateau (M)

The walk across the Basset plateau gives an outstanding view of the Charnières valley. Signs of human activity are everywhere: walls, rock mounds, meadows... The beauty of the site is proof of the ecological balance of the Charnières plateau. Maintaining this balance is a vital challenge.

Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE

Chamois (N)

The Basset plateau is overlooked by the foothills of Reyna and Garrabrut. The shady slopes and their névé are a delight for chamois who find cool and calm conditions there. Indeed, this antelope does not like hot weather. Seeing a kid prancing on a névé will be a marvel for young and not so young alike.

Attribution : Rodolphe Papet - PNE