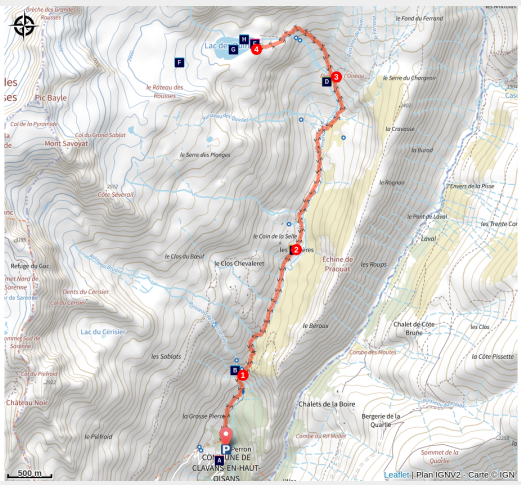
Lake Quirlies

Parc national des Ecrins - Clavans-en-Haut-Oisans

Lac des Quirlies (Thierry Maillet - Parc national des Ecrins)



A wonderful hike in the Ferrand valley, between the Grandes Rousses mountain range and the Emparis plateau to reach a lake that appeared only recently after the retreat of the glacier.

The impetuous Ferrand bridge waterfall sets the scene. There is running water everywhere, irrigating the pastures that thousands of sheep will graze on during the summer. The existence of carcasses means that it is an area well-known to vultures. Higher, the Suirelies glacier and the lake that is surrounded by granite moraines remind us of the high mountains, with a breathtaking viewpoint over the immense Emparis plateau, to the boundaries of l'Isère and La Savoie.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 6 h

Length : 13.5 km

Trek ascent : 946 m

Difficulty : Medium

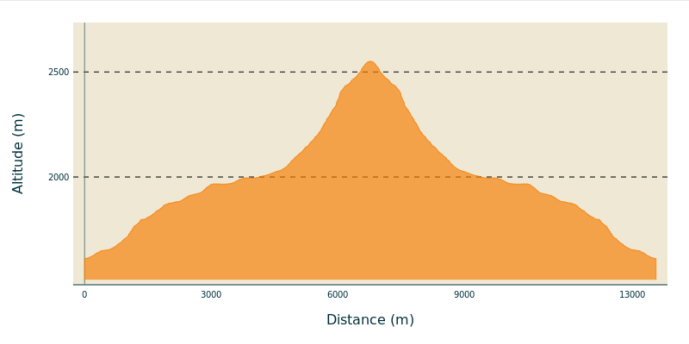
Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Lake and glacier

Trek

Departure : Le Perron (Clavans-le-Haut)
Arrival : Le Perron (Clavans-le-Haut)
Markings : PR
Cities : 1. Clavans-en-Haut-Oisans

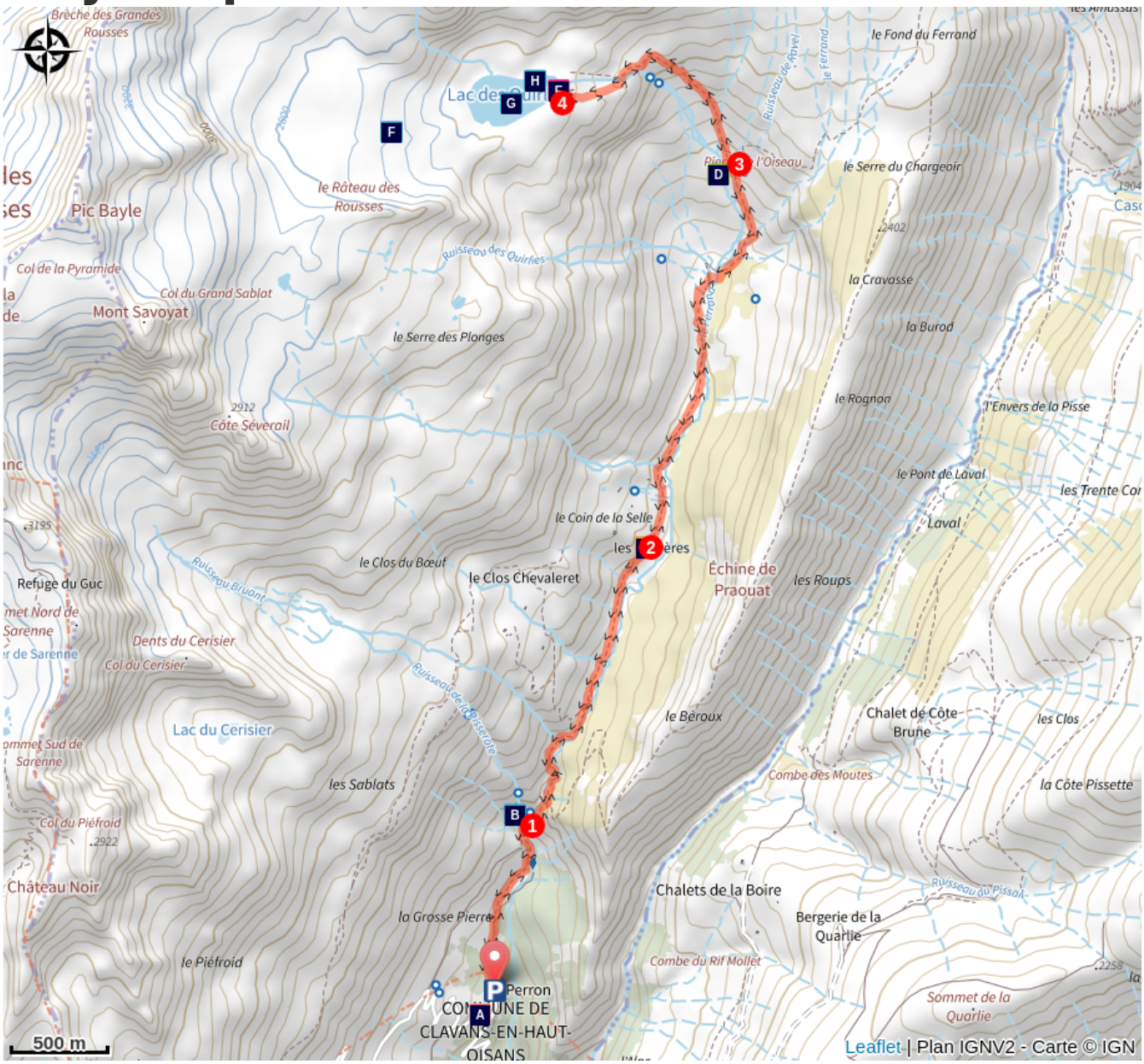
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1612 m Max elevation 2552 m

Follow the Sarenne pass road above Clavans-en-haut-Oisans to reach the hamlet of Perron. Park at the information board of the classified site of Le Ferrand. Before leaving with you rucksack, take a look at the house that is backed against the rock. Set off on the signed footpath to get to the Ferrand footbridge and the majestic waterfall. Head up the wide track overlooking it, then cross another footbridge that leads progressively into a very green valley by staying on the right bank of the stream. The footpath then takes a pleasant route crossing many small streams coming from the higher valleys. Walk successively past the footpath that leads to Clos Chevaleret (a hike for another day), the Bruyères pastoral hut and close to a sheep pen and the bottom of the valley. On this large flat terrain, you will need to cross the stream to head further up to Pierre de l'Oiseau. Leaving the footpath to the Sauvage summit to the right, turn left to follow the one that leads up to the lake. This route is only ice-free as of mid-July. The return trip is made by the same itinerary up to Le Perron.

On your path...



- The house under the rock (A)
- The Bruyère sheepfold (C)
- View from the spillway of the Quirlies lake (E)
- The Quirlies lake mineralogy (G)
- The Ferrand bridge waterfall (B)
- Bird's stone (D)
- The Quirlies glacier (F)
- Lake Quirlies (H)

All useful information

How to come ?

Access

At the Chambon dam (N91: Bourg-d'Oisans>Col du Lautaret) turn onto the D 25 go past Mizoën then Clavans-le-Bas and Clavant-le-Haut as far as Perron. From l'Alpe-d'Huez, in the summer, follow the Sarenne road beyond the aerodrome. Go over the pass and down into the Ferrand valley as far as Perron.

Advised parking

Parking du Peron, Clavans-le-Haut

Information desks

Oisans Park house
Rue Gambetta, 38520 Le Bourg d'Oisans
oisans@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 76 80 00 51
http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/

Source

Parc national des Ecrins

https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr

On your path...

The house under the rock (A)

Ingenious setting for a house backed up against the rock for protection in the case of an avalanche. The hamlet, that used to be inhabited all year round, now has mainly holiday homes. The surrounding fields are no longer mowed as they were previously and a herd of cattle more or less maintain the open landscape.

Attribution : Jean-Pierre Nicolet - PNE

The Ferrand bridge waterfall (B)

This is an impressive waterfall that reunites all of the Ferrand valley waters. Even when water levels are low, the water flow is still high as the glaciers on the east side of the Grandes Rousses provide a constant flow to the streams.

Attribution : Pascal Soulay - PNE

The Bruyère sheepfold (C)

Pastoralism is omnipresent in the entire valley due to the variety of grasses that grow on loose soil made up mostly of shale. 20 000 sheep graze on this vast area during the summer.

Bird's stone (D)

A name that makes you think of the frequent position of the wheatear as it searches for grasshoppers The wheatear is a migratory sparrow that waits until the snow has melted before settling in the pastures. It builds its nest in a small hole in the ground or under turf and rears its chicks before September.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE

View from the spillway of the Quirlies lake (E)

A halt at the lake's spillway enables you to take in the wide open landscape from the Aiguilles d'Arves to the Mont-de-Lans glacier or the Meije massif. At the lowest stage, the immense green cover waves its way across a more gentle relief due to the shale soil.

Attribution : Daniel Roche - PNE

The Quirlies glacier (F)

The Quirlies glacier went right down to the lake up until the 1990s. Due to climate disturbance it has retreated considerably leaving the entire lake visible today. You will notice the moraines that were left as the glacier retreated. Life is quickly renewed on such moraines, particularly with plants that are well-adapted such as moss campion and creeping avens.

Attribution : Daniel Roche - PNE

The Quirlies lake mineralogy (G)

Jade and turquoise waters are characteristic of lakes that are said to be proglacial. It contains fine silica particles that make up a "glacial powder" suspended in the water, as a result of the overlooking glacier eroding the granite base.

Attribution : Daniel Roche - PNE

Lake Quirlies (H)

This is one of the most recent lake of the Oisans area. It only appeared in the 1960s as a consequence of the melting glacier. It is true that topographical maps edited before then do not mention it. We can only imagine how far the glacier has retreated over the last 50 years.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE