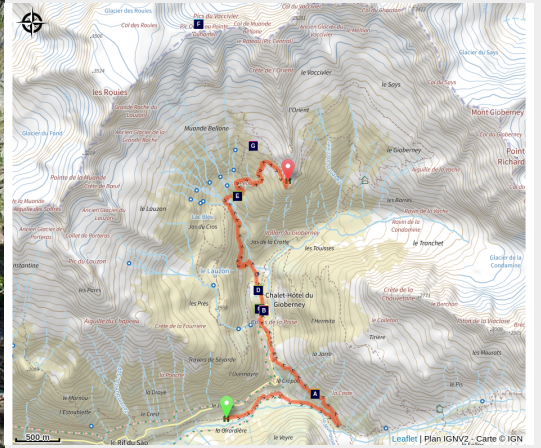


# From the Refuge du Clot Xavier Blanc to the Refuge du Pigeonnier

Valgaudemar - La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar



Le refuge du Pigeonnier (© Parc national des Ecrins - Jean-Pierre Nicollet)



*This Stage offers an exploration of the bottom of the Valgaudemar valley and the glacial cirque of the Gioberney.*

*The transition from valley to high mountain terrain is stunning. You see the plant kingdom gradually giving way to the mineral kingdom.*

*Tommy Bulle*

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h

Length : 8.0 km

Trek ascent : 1070 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Stage

Themes : Lake and glacier,  
Panorama, Top

# Trek

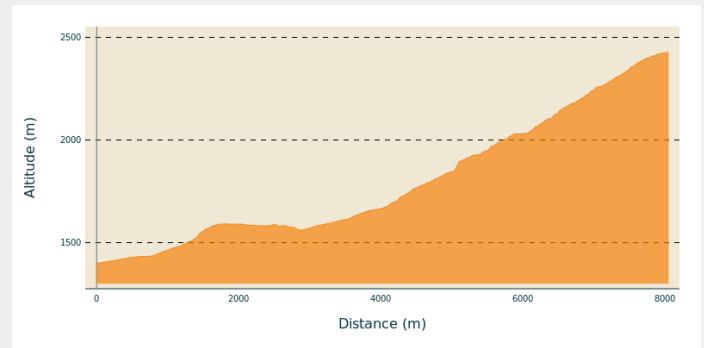
**Departure** : Refuge du Clot Xavier Blanc

**Arrival** : Refuge du Pigeonnier

**Markings** : — PR

**Cities** : 1. La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

## Altimetric profile










Min elevation 1401 m Max elevation 2429 m

From the Refuge du Clot (Xavier Blanc), follow the signed GR54 path heading towards the ancient hamlet of Le Clot. Cross the mountain stream Le Gioberney via a footbridge and you come to the hamlet of Le Clot. All that remains of this hamlet is a restored house for the shepherd. The path runs through a small meadow. It is closed in by two stone walls which at one time served to prevent animals from straying from the path and grazing the crops on their way to the alpine pastures. A little further on, leave the GR54 and climb up to the left to join the path called the Sentier du Ministre. When you reach it, head towards the Chalet Hôtel du Gioberney, which can be made out clearly from here. The path is flat, but be alert as the slope is very steep. Enter the Le Crépon car park, which is the start of the Sentier du Ministre. This is located at the southern end of the car park which runs along the edge of the road to the Chalet Hôtel. The path follows the road for a short distance, cross it and pass almost underneath the Voile de la Mariée waterfall. From here, you reach another car park which is the starting point of the path to the Refuge du Pigeonnier, at the signs marking the entrance to the Parc National des Écrins. The path heads due south along a very flat stretch before rising through some steep twists and turns and then levels out again. Cross the footbridges and after a winding section you reach the refuge, overlooked by the southern face of Les Rouies.

# On your path...



-  The Minister's footpath (A)
-  Northern Bat (C)
-  Common frog (E)
-  The summits (G)

-  Châlet-hôtel in Gioberney (B)
-  The different environments (D)
-  The glaciers (F)



# 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.



## **How to come ?**

### Transports

[www.05voyageurs.com](http://www.05voyageurs.com) between Gap and La Motte en Champsaur  
Possible connection with the Gap-Grenoble coach

## **Information desks**

### **Valgaudemar Park house**

Ancien Asile Saint-Paul, 05800 La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

[valgaudemar@ecrins-parcnational.fr](mailto:valgaudemar@ecrins-parcnational.fr)

Tel : 04 92 55 25 19

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



## Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

## On your path...

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### The Minister's footpath (A)

A strange name for a footpath... Two explanations are given. The first, simply suggests that a minister inaugurated, or at least used, the footpath. The second, which is more likely, explains that donkeys were also known as ministers. Indeed, these animals were priceless to peasants of the time and they were pampered and treated accordingly. This path, which is mostly flat would have been well suited for them, and it would seem logical that it was given this name.

Attribution : Dominique Vincent - PNE

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### Châlet-hôtel in Gioberney (B)

The construction of the chalet-hôtel at Gioberney started during the Second World War as part of a youth project. It enabled some young people the possibility of escaping obligatory work service in Germany (STO). The stones for the building were taken on the spot, cut and put together using cement mortar. At that time the road to Gioberney did not yet exist, and would only be built in 1963. You had to go up on foot, for « tired intellectuals », it was possible to be helped by a mule in order to reach the refuge. There was not much frequentation until the construction of the road...

Attribution : PNE - Bodin Stéphane

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## Northern Bat (C)

The Northern Bat is a boreal bat, a glacial relict in the Alpine arc. Adapted to the cold, it resists temperatures close to  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  for short periods of time. The Northern Bat is a discreet species that lives in boreal forests scattered with humid areas. It sometimes hunts near to public lighting, one of the only places where it is easy to observe it. The capture of females at this site has enabled us to believe in the presence of a colony at Gioberney. It would be the first known reproducing colonies in France.



## The different environments (D)

From an altitude of between 1600 m to 2450 m, this itinerary invites you to cross different kinds of environment. Blueberry bushes and rhododendrons on the minerals of the scree slope, the green larch pastures, and this trip will be punctuated by different environments with their specific flora and fauna.

Attribution : Stéphane D'houwt - PNE



## Common frog (E)

Sometimes in the water, sometimes out of it, this is the amphibian of the summits. With the Alpine Newt, it occupies the smallest puddle of water up to the most impressive altitudes. (2800 m). In a state of lethargy during more than 8 months of the year due to the bitter winter it is a symbol of adaptability to altitude. In the winter it burrows into the mud or slides out of the water under leaves, a tree stump or a rock to shelter from the frost.. It lays up to 4000 eggs on average, since it is confronted with climatic conditions and predators (newts, fish...), only a few individuals will reach adulthood in order to ensure the sustainability of the population. A real example of adaptability at altitude !

Attribution : Jean-Philippe Telmon - PNE



## The glaciers (F)

Gioberney glacial cirque offers a 180° panorama of the magnificent Rouies glaciers, the Condamine at the foot of the Bans... Today, in retreat, (the polished glaciers remain as slabs smoothed by the erosive action of these 'ice monsters') a witness to their past.

Attribution : Olivier Warluzelle - PNE

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## The summits (G)

At the bottom of Valgaudemar, this loop enables you to fully appreciate « Himalayas of the Alps ». This cirque du Gioberney is topped with superb summits easily more than 3000 m altitude. From the west to the east, The Rouies and their 3589 m, the Pic du Says (3420 m), the Mont Gioberney (3352 m), the Pointe Richardson (3312 m), the famous Bans (3505 m) and the Aupillous at 3458 m. With three glacial cirques which blend in to one and its high summits, one really touches the domain of mountaineering here.

Attribution : Bernard Guidoni - PNE