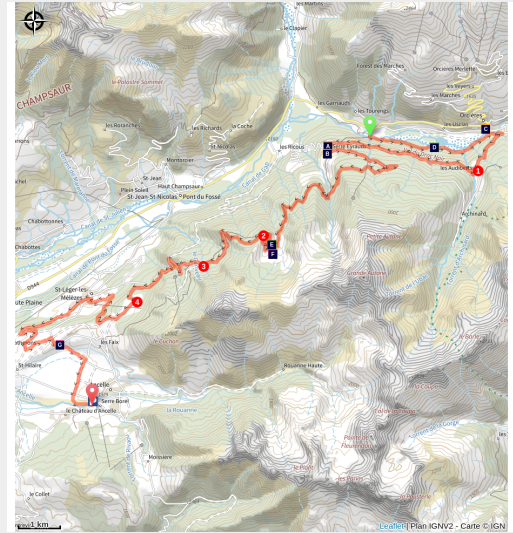


## Stage 6: Orcières - Ancelle

Champsaur - Orcières



Site de Saint-Léger (Michel Francou - PNE)



*The last stage begins with a very long climb to the mountain pastures of Combeau beneath the summits of Les Autanes. After a gentle descent towards Saint-Léger-les-Mélèzes, you arrive in Ancelle across the plateau of the same name... we've reached the end!*

For this last stage, you can gently limber up as far as Serre-Eyraud. The slope then rises and you need to call on your reserves to make your way up to La Croix de la Vire (with a panorama rewarding your efforts)!! The big climb is now behind you, and you can enjoy the end of the adventure with an easy return trip to Saint-Léger-les-Mélèzes and Ancelle.

### Useful information

Practice : Mountain bike

Duration : 5 h

Length : 34.0 km

Trek ascent : 1086 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Stage

Themes : History and architecture, Panorama, Pastoralism

# Trek

**Departure** : Base d'Orcières

**Arrival** : Ancelle

**Markings** : ➡ VTT

**Cities** : 1. Orcières

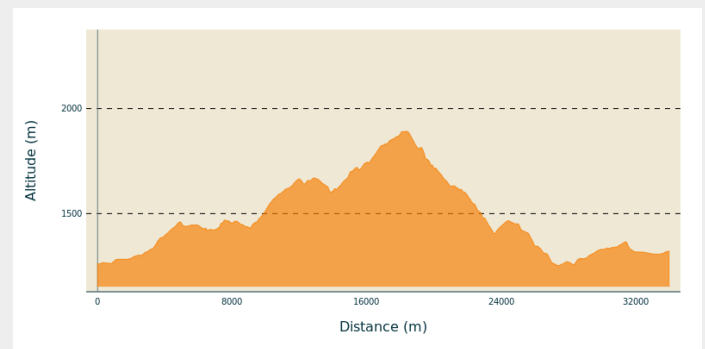
2. Saint-Jean-Saint-Nicolas

3. Saint-Léger-les-Mélèzes

4. Ancelle

5. Chabottes

## Altimetric profile



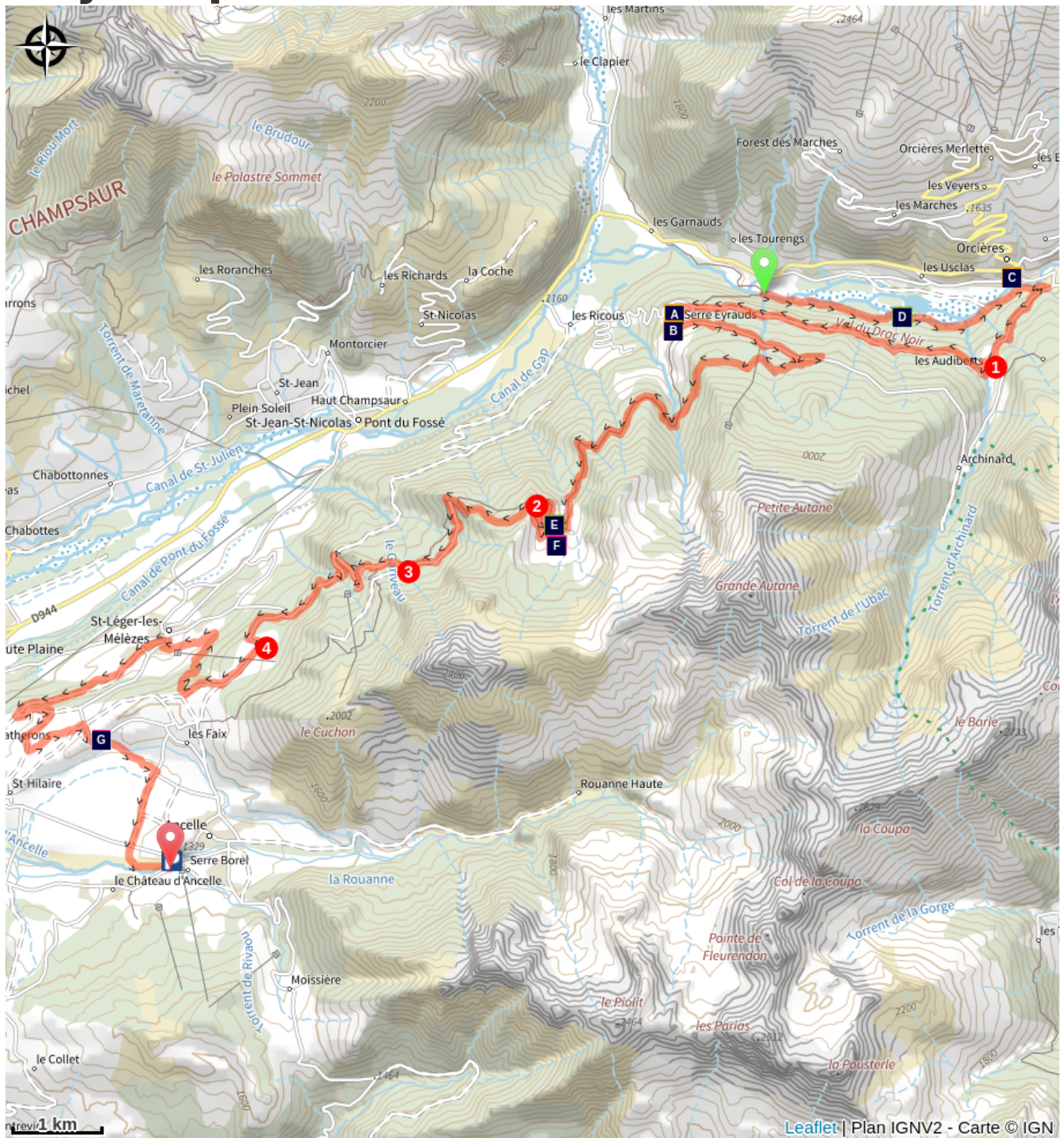
Min elevation 1253 m Max elevation 1893 m

Go up via Pont Peyron to the road and follow it as far as Les Audiberts.

1. At the spring, make for Serre-Eyraud along an easy and hilly track. Continue climbing the Serre-Eyraud road and then turn right into a long track leading up to Combeau.
2. Above the "Tante Yvonne" cabin (don't go near the shepherd's cabin, where the sheep are guarded by Pyrenean Mountain Dogs) /!\ you arrive at La Croix de la Vire (1900 m) with its superb panorama over upper Champsaur! After a well-deserved rest, go down a fairly steep track /!\ that gradually gets easier.
3. After a first crossing where you continue the descent (keep right), the track arrives at a hairpin bend leading to a second, bigger crossing, where you turn left. The road leads to the short climb to Libouse.
4. From Libouse, head for Saint Léger-les-Mélèzes along a small path and cross the village near the church. After passing a group of houses and a large beech forest (along a sports trail), you arrive at the top of the Plateau d'Ancelle. One last descent into the Village and the tour is complete!



# On your path...



-  Serre-Eyraud (A)
-  Orcières 1850 (C)
-  Patou (E)
-  The Ancelle plateau (G)
-  Pastoral plants (B)
-  Trout (D)
-  The Combeau alpine pasture (F)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

Démarrer tranquillement, la montée à Combeau est assez longue. Attention à ne pas prendre trop de vitesse sur la piste facile qui descend sur St Léger.

# 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](mailto: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 2450m.

## Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

# On your path...

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## Serre-Eyraud (A)

Serre-Eyraud is both a mountain village and a winter sports resort which overlooks the Champsaur and the confluence of the Drac Noir and the Drac Blanc, 1,450 metres above sea level, opposite the Champoléon valley.

The resort was created in 1962 by a handful of inhabitants: eight runs lead through a larch forest which is exposed to the north, which helps to conserve the snow cover. Serre-Eyraud is the smallest ski resort in the Champsaur valley.

Attribution : Parc national des Ecrins - CDTE05

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## Pastoral plants (B)

Around the shepherds' cabins can be found plants with pale colours that are useful in the kitchen : nettles, which cause rashes, but are used to make delicious soups, wild spinach, also known as Good King Henry , a plant eaten as a gratin (the famous 'oreilles d'âne' (donkeys' ears) dish), with the sour leaves of the Alpine dock. For dessert, the petioles of Monks' rhubarb leaves are served as jams and compotes.

Attribution : Marcel Chaud - PNE

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## Orcières 1850 (C)

Thanks to Camille Ricou, the mayor of Orcières, and a handful of visionaries, in January 1962 the Orcières-Merlette ski resort was born. Soon, buildings, shops and ski lifts were built. Even though the 1960s architecture has not aged well and the pylons disfigure the landscape, the pioneers have achieved their aims: they were able to stay in the region, guarantee their children a future and create jobs.

Attribution : François Labande - PNE





## Trout (D)

Fishing fans have always loved the Drac. You also need some hiking skills to follow the course of the river or reach the high-altitude lakes. Whether you prefer lure fishing, spoon casting or fly fishing, here you'll find all kinds of trout: brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), Mediterranean in origin, and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) from North America.

Attribution : Parc national des Écrins



## Patou (E)

The patou is once again being used in the Alpine pastures by breeders and shepherds, following the reintroduction of wolves. Its role is to protect the sheep, not to herd them together like a sheep dog. The dog lives with the sheep from a very young age and considers them as members of its family. It barks and stands between the flock and whatever it sees as a threat. Since it is very protective towards the flock, hikers should make sure they keep their distance.

Attribution : Jean-Pierre Nicolle - PNE



## The Combeau alpine pasture (F)

The Combeau alpine pasture, lying 2,000 metres above sea level.

Don't miss the superb panoramic view from the Croix de Combeau belvedere.

Attribution : Parc national des Écrins - Marc Corail



## The Ancelle plateau (G)

After the retreat of the glaciers flowing from the Durance and Roanne valleys, the frontal and lateral moraines formed a natural dam at the end of the Ancelle basin. Over time, a large glacial lake was created. Between the fifth and sixth centuries, the lake dried out. The forest then took over the fertile plateau, and it was only in the eighth century that it was deforested by man for crops.

Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE