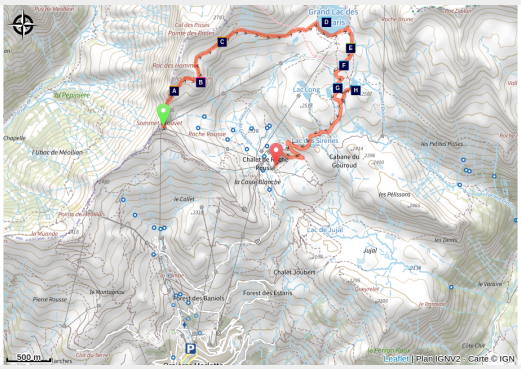
Orcières Lakes

Parc national des Ecrins



Lac des Sirènes (Nicolas Fragiacomo)



From Orcières Merlette or the summit of Le Drouvet with the hybrid lift, this trail is a great classic in the valley. Landscapes, fauna and flora - it's all there, with a chance to enjoy a great experience and fill your head with memories.

Lac des Estaris, at 2550m, is the biggest of the Orcières lakes and listed as a nature reserve. The descent then unveils the Jumeaux, Profond, Long and Sirènes lakes...

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 7.1 km

Trek ascent : 96 m

Difficulty : Easy

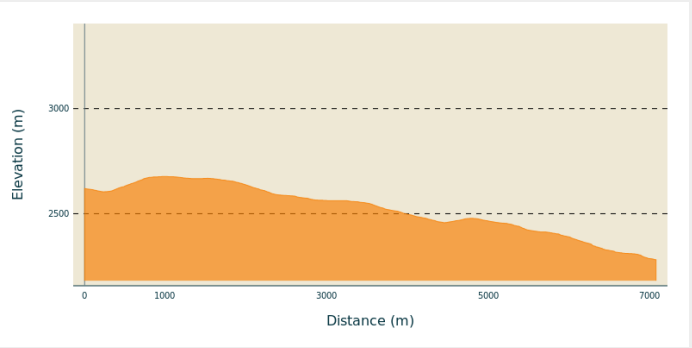
Type : Loop

Themes : Lake and glacier

Trek

Departure : Orcières Merlette 1850
Markings : PR
Cities : 1. Orcières
2. Champoléon

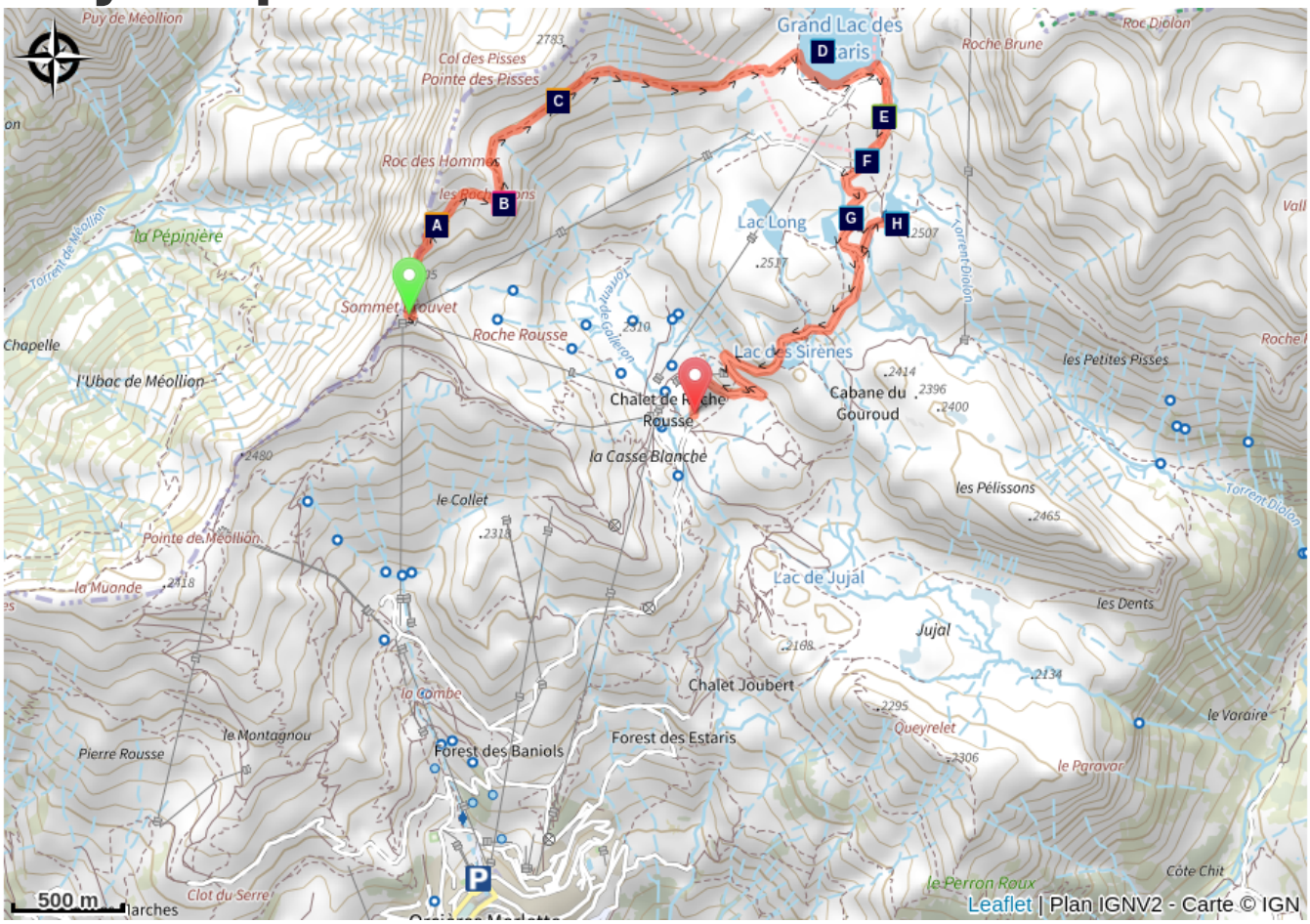
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 2282 m Max elevation 2678 m

Take the hybrid lift at the summit of Le Drouvet and make for Lac des Estaris (1 hr). Then continue on to the Jumeaux, Profond and Long Lakes. Carry on to the Chalet de Rocherousse. For the return, you take the hybrid lift from Rocherousse to the resort. Also possible to return on foot via Jujal, Pré La Baume, Forest des Estaris, then Orcières Merlette 1850.

On your path...



Flocks of sheep (A)

A valley of pastoralism (C)

White cotton grass (E)

Lake wetlands (G)

Point de vue sur l'ubac d'Orcières (B)

Grand lac des Estaris (D)

Monitoring of high altitude lakes (F)

Altitude lakes (H)

All useful information

How to come ?

Access

From the RN85, take the D114, then the D944 to the Orcières Merlette 1850 resort.

Advised parking

P4 car park, Orcières Merlette 1850

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.

Alpine ibex

Sensitivity period: June, July, August, September

Contact: Parc National des Écrins
Julien Charron
julien.charron@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Zone de présence du Bouquetin des Alpes

En période de mise bas et d’élevage des jeunes (juin à septembre) les bouquetins peuvent être très sensibles au dérangement notamment en cas de survol à basse altitude. Dans leur fuite les risques d’accidents sont multipliés. Merci de rester à bonne distance et d’éviter le survol de la zone à moins de 300m sol (3380m d'altitude).

Attention en zone cœur du Parc National des Écrins une réglementation spécifique aux sports de nature s’applique : https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/thematique/sports-de-nature

Source

Maison du Tourisme du Champsaur et Valgaudemar

http://www.champsaur-valgaudemar.com

On your path...



Flocks of sheep (A)

Out of respect for the work of the shepherd, certain precautions are to be taken should you encounter a flock of sheep. Walk widely around the flock when possible; avoid walking through it. Sometimes flocks are guarded by "patous", large dogs that are trained to protect the flock against intrusion. It is considered part of the flock. In its presence, stay calm; stop to give it time to see who you are. Do not stroke it, do not make any sudden movements.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Jean-Pierre



Point de vue sur l'ubac d'Orcières (B)

Here you have a view of the mineral framework of Orcières and its terraces.

Attribution : PNE - D'Houwt Stéphane



A valley of pastoralism (C)

Roughly 2000 cattle graze in the Orcières valley, which is managed by mountain breeders. The pastures are divided into sectors according to snowmelt. As the summer progressively settles in, the flock goes to a higher altitude to graze on the fresh grass. Along with salt blocks, these meadows are the sole source of nourishment during the summer season.

Attribution : PNE - Telmon Jean-Philippe



Grand lac des Estaris (D)

The lakes were created in different ways. "Barrier" lakes were formed by either moraine deposits left by glaciers that scooped out the basin or flat terrain, or by landslides coming from the steep slopes. "Basin" lakes were formed by the large glaciers of the quarternary age that carved out the softer rock as they advanced from Lyons to Sisteron. When the glaciers melted, 8000 years ago, these dips became lakes known as "basin lakes" The Estaris lake is a 'mixed' lake as it was created by a combination of both phenomena.

Attribution : PNE - Telmon Jean-Philippe



White cotton grass (E)

As is often the case, it is when the plant has its fruit that it catches the eye. White cotton grows mainly near to lakes and on high altitude wetlands. Feather-like, packed white balls blow in the slightest mountain breeze. The smooth, round stalks only have a few sheathing leaves.

Attribution : PNE - Albert Christophe



Monitoring of high altitude lakes (F)

The lake monitoring network was established by several concerned parties in order to create an observatory of altitude: to keep check on species but also on temperature, depth (bathymetry), turbidity, dissolved oxygen concentrations, conductivity, sediments, etc. The purpose of monitoring the lakes is to better understand their function and to anticipate the effects of global changes (climate, pollution, introduction of species of fish and so on) at the level of a catchment area.

Attribution : PNE - Warluzelle Olivier



Lake wetlands (G)

The wetlands are a crossover area between the lakes and the land. They are home to considerable biodiversity. Their hydrological function means they can take water, stock it and restore it. Wetlands are part of a complex network made up of groundwater, lakes, streams, coombs...

Attribution : PNE - Corail Marc



Altitude lakes (H)

Just as the glaciers, lakes are emblematic of the mountain landscape. They are an invaluable source of water and represent a priceless aesthetic and touristic heritage that well deserves our attention. Their altitude ecosystems are home to fauna and flora that are specific to such an environment. Their stability is fragile however. Indeed, the lakes "collect" waste from the mountain refuges, animal droppings and even atmospheric pollution from further afield.

Attribution : PNE - Gonsolin Gabriel