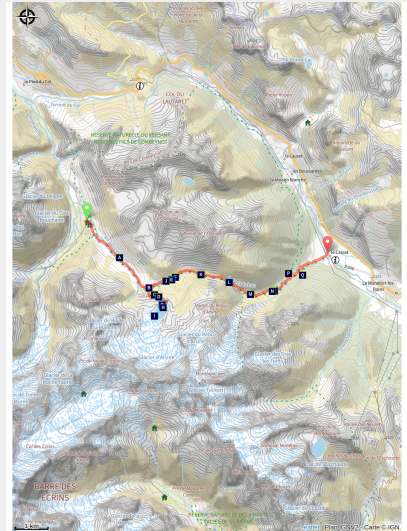


De l'Alpe du Villar-d'Arène au Casset

Briançonnais - Villar-d'Arène



Lacs du glacier d'Arsine (© Parc national des Ecrins - Thibaut Blais)



De la Romanche à la vallée de la Guisane par le col d'Arsine, cette étape s'effectue au pied des Agneaux et de Neige Cordier.

Au départ du refuge, l'ambiance est déjà à son comble tant les sommets alentour, véritables colosses de pierres et de roches, écrasent le décor. Au col d'Arsine, l'aller-retour au lac permet de s'immerger dans l'ambiance d'une moraine glaciaire avant de retrouver les alpages et leurs cabanes pastorales. Le sentier redescend sagement vers la vallée en franchissant tous les étages de végétation. De la pelouse alpine, il gagne progressivement une belle forêt de mélèzes avant de rejoindre les prés de fauche et les jardins potagers au hameau du Casset.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 4 h 30

Length : 12.9 km

Trek ascent : 416 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Stage

Themes : Geology, Lake and glacier, Pass

Trek

Departure : L'Alpe du Villar-d'Arène

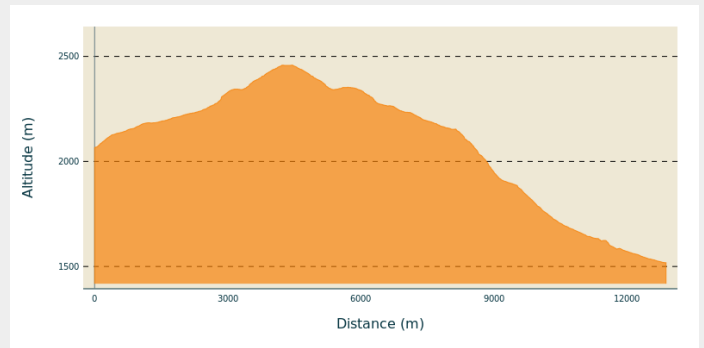
Arrival : Le Casset

Markings :  GR

Cities : 1. Villar-d'Arène

2. Le Monétier-les-Bains

Altimetric profile



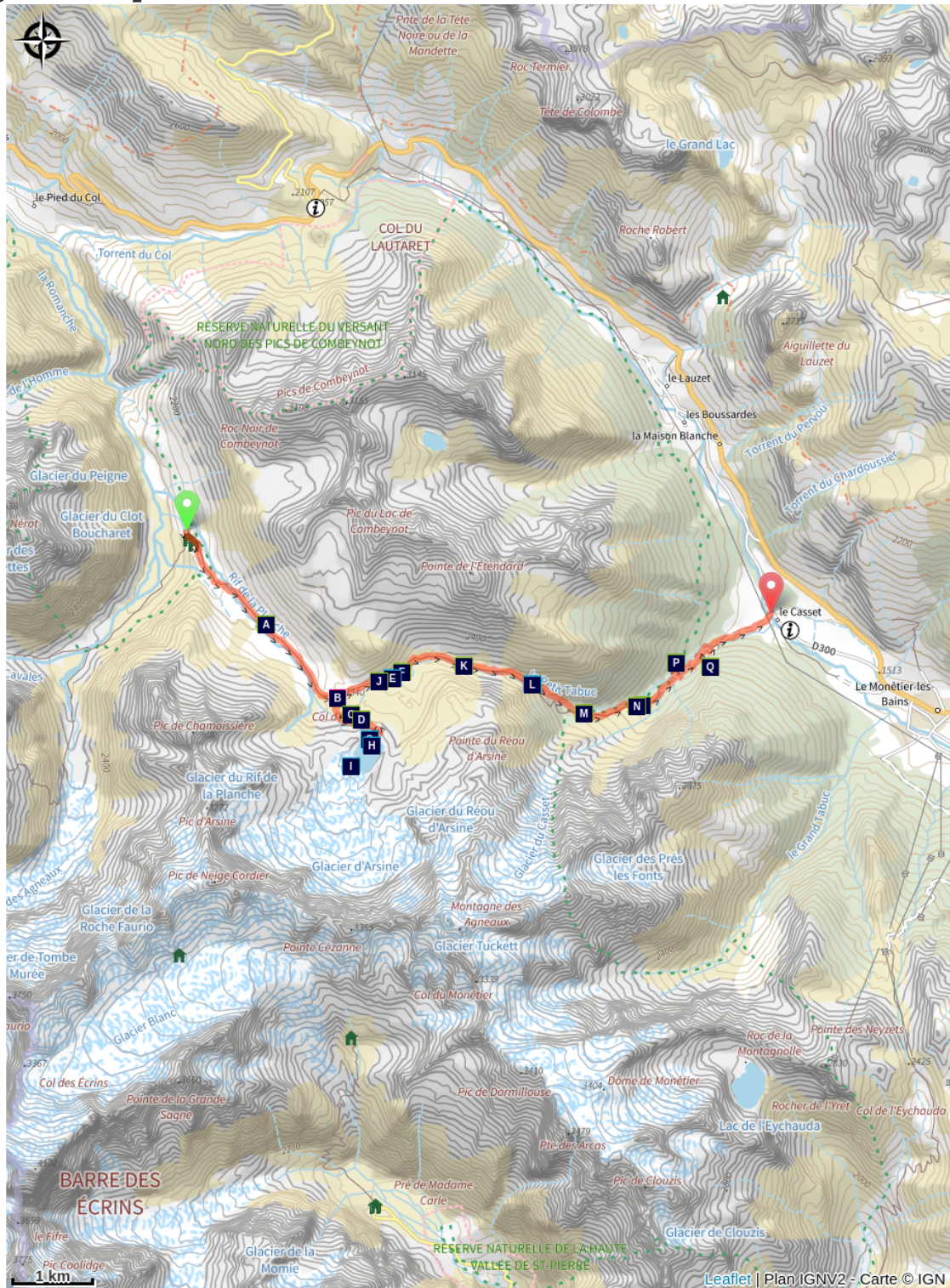
Min elevation 1519 m Max elevation 2459 m

Quitter le refuge et remonter le vallon du Rif de la Planche par un bon sentier en traversant de nombreux petits torrents issus de la Tête de Pradieu. Rejoindre le GR54. Après quelques lacets, le sentier atteint le col d'Arsine (2 348 m).


L'aller-retour au lac du glacier d'Arsine démarre sur la droite. Le sentier quitte le GR 54 pour franchir la grande moraine frontale du glacier d'Arsine. Depuis ce ressaut façonné par les mouvements glaciaires, deux grands lacs au pied d'un cirque marquent la fin de l'ascension (2 455 m). Revenir sur ses pas pour retrouver le GR 54.

A travers de gros blocs de rochers, le sentier serpente jusqu'à atteindre une série de petits lacs et la cabane pastorale (2 240 m). Suivre le torrent du Petit Tabuc en rive gauche. Après un pierrier raide et de nombreux petits lacets, atteindre le petit lac de La Douche (1 901 m). Le sentier pénètre dans une forêt de mélèzes. Il laisse bientôt place à une piste forestière qui longe le torrent en rive droite. Au Pont du Clot du Gué (1 558 m) (panneau du parc national des Écrins), la route longe le torrent en rive gauche jusqu'à sa confluence avec La Guisane à l'entrée du village du Casset (1 512 m). Au Casset, traverser la passerelle pour visiter le hameau et cloturer cette deuxième étape.

On your path...



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Felwort (A) |  Arsine pass (B) |
|  Arctic rush (C) |  Rock ptarmigan (D) |
|  Moraines (E) |  Aquatic diet (F) |
|  Ice calving (G) |  The melting Arsine glacier (H) |
|  Arsine Glacier (I) |  Skylark (J) |
|  Butterflies and moths (K) |  Water colour in the meanders (L) |
|  Ring ouzel (M) |  A flying predator (N) |

 Golden eagle, the Ecrins' mascot
(O)

 White-throated dipper (Q)

 Chamois (P)

All useful information

Advices

Cette partie de la boucle se fait depuis les Refuges à l'Alpe de Villar d'Arêne qui sont déjà en montagne. Se renseigner de l'ouverture du refuge.

Avant de partir du refuge, en cas de doute, demander conseils aux gardiens.

L'aller-retour au lac glaciaire est vivement conseillé, sauf en cas de mauvaise météo.

Pas d'ombre avant le lac de la douche, attention au soleil.

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

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 2610m.

Information desks

Information center "Col du Lautaret" (summer only)

Col du Lautaret, 05220 Le Monétier-les-bains

brianconnais@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 92 24 49 74

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



Information center "le Casset" (summer only)

Le Casset, 05220 Le Monétier-les-bains

brianconnais@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 92 24 53 27

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



Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

On your path...



✿ Felwort (A)

In early August, the felwort's violet stars open in the sunshine. At the base of each of its five petals, two shiny pits full of nectar attract insects. A member of the gentian family, this beautiful flower is a perennial that survives the cold season with its persistent winter bud close to the ground, surrounded by a rosette of protecting leaves.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



📍 Arsine pass (B)

The Arsine pass, is an important crossing point to visit on the GR54 Tour des Ecrins et de l'Oisans. It gives a remarkable viewpoint over the Angeaux massif. The pass is part of an old itinerary that was used instead of the crossing point by the Lautaret pass. It is also a crossing point between the Guisane and the Romanche area. This is an area that was mentioned as early as the Middle Ages as a place of conflict between the districts of Villar d'Arène and Monétier-les-Bains.

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - PNE



✿ Arctic rush (C)

Even though it is relatively common in some acidic marshland, the Arctic rush is nonetheless protected throughout the Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur regions. It can be recognised because of its total absence of leaves and by the few blackish flowers in the upper third of the stalk. The flower tepals open at an obtuse angle and are a little shorter than the capsule.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE



Rock ptarmigan (D)

At five in the morning in the month of May, at an altitude of over 2,000 m, the sun rises over the fields of blueberry, which appear above the patches of snow. All of a sudden, a hoarse, almost metallic cry cuts through the peaceful dawn atmosphere: the rock ptarmigan is in the midst of its nuptial parade. Originating from the Arctic tundra, the rock ptarmigan, sometimes called the snow partridge, was to be found all over Europe during the ice ages, before its living space was limited to the mountains. Even today, it finds the conditions it needs to survive. The national Alpine parks have a great responsibility in conserving this species. The inventory carried out by the Haute-Romanche nature unit in 2005 showed there was a large core group of birds on the site.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



Moraines (E)

The site of Arsine offers a complex moraine environment with a parade of ice margin flowers. The frontal moraine of the Arsine glacier is on a glacial vegetated rock complex that occupies about forty hectares at the bottom of the cirque. This complex is likely to have come about through a shifting of abandoned glacial deposits after permafrost was established. This means that the ground maintains a temperature of 0°C or less over several years. This phenomenon is likely to have taken place during the recent Dryas climatic cooling, that is to say 11 000 – 10 000 years BC.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard



Aquatic diet (F)

The grey wagtail is "hyperactive" and has a diet of flies, mosquitoes, dragonflies and all sorts of aquatic insect larvae. It hunts at the edge of the water, by jumping from stone to stone or hovers to catch its prey. It sometimes fishes for shellfish, molluscs, or even small fish to complete its meals. It does not leave the damp banks to build its nest either, and even looks for somewhere close to a waterfall or to flowing river.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



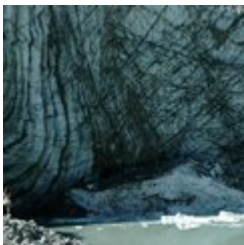
❄️ Ice calving (G)

When the lake is frozen and the air temperature rises, the ice expands, provoking what is called the “song of the lake”. The Lac Ouest is the last lake in the mountain range where it is still possible to see the fall of seracs (the front of the glacier) into the water, giving rise to this muffled noise.

Attribution : PNE - Masclaux Pierre

❄️ The melting Arsine glacier (H)

Lake Arsine came to life in the 1950s after the Arsine glacier melted. Due to its rapid development, it was measured more accurately in 1969 and 1985, showing 800,000 m³ of water contained in a moraine that had been weakened by the ice inside it. Since it threatened to break, emergency work was undertaken the following spring to stop the rise in the level of the lake using a regulation channel dug across the frontal moraine. Almost 30 years later, the glacier site is still carefully monitored by Park employees. And the risk is now completely ruled out.



🌊 Arsine Glacier (I)

The Arsine glacier is contained in the hollow of a vast corrie facing north, encircled by high walls reaching an altitude of between 3,200 and 3,600 metres. This is a glacier that is mostly hidden, with the front, currently at an altitude of about 2,470 m, behind lakes. The lakes are held back by an impressive series of old moraines, formed during the Little Ice Age (between about 1550 and 1850). Due to its size and preserved state, the old moraines of Arsine are an exception in the western Alps. Usually such morainic fronts are found in small, high-altitude glaciers, resulting water running too weakly to sweep away the accumulation of pre-glacier deposits (for example, the Réou d’Arsine glacier). The melting and shrinking of the Arsine glacier posed problems in the 1980s concerning water retention and therefore safety. RTM teams carried out work to lower the level of the lakes, the size of which raised fears of a break in the moraine with the risk of flooding the village of Le Casset.

Attribution : PNE - Masclaux Pierre



Skylark (J)

This bird is like a tightrope walker suspended in the sky, sounding out a long chorus of notes. Then, triangular wings back, and in a perfect spiral, the bird lands in the middle of the prairie. On the ground, it is difficult to see: its varying shades of brown means it is very well camouflaged. In its search for food, its movements, which are a succession of small sprints and sudden halts, enable it to spot possible predators.

Attribution : PNE - Saulay Pascal



Butterflies and moths (K)

Butterflies can be distinguished from moths by the shape of their antennae. You will also notice that when resting, the butterfly's wings are vertically folded over the body for necessary discretion while the moth's cover them. The moorland clouded yellow butterfly has another unusual habit: as soon as it becomes too cold to fly, it settles and bends its side to the sun to absorb energy. It can even lean slightly, whereas others tend to fully, and dangerously spread themselves out.

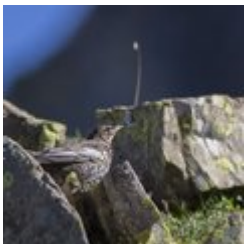
Attribution : PNE - Warluzelle Olivier



Water colour in the meanders (L)

The turquoise colour of the water that meanders from the Petit Tabuc stream gives a special character to this remarkable site. The valley is popular among photographers and artists for its photographic and pictorial quality.

Attribution : PNE - Coursier Cyril



Ring ouzel (M)

In the pastures covered with larch or 'bush', a cry of alarm followed the start of a song resounds. A blackbird? Yes, but more specifically a ring ouzel. This shy, swift mountain blackbird lives on the fringe of the larch, scots pine, spruce or Swiss pine forests between 1000 and 2500 m in altitude. The ring ouzel is a migratory bird that spends winter in Spain or North Africa before coming back to the mountains around March.

Attribution : PNE - Saulay Pascal



A flying predator (N)

The eagle is the archetypal predator. Everything about it suggests strength and daring. Its appearance, of course, with its impressive expression highlighted by the prominent brow ridge, but above all its fearsome weapons: rapid flight, which can be adapted to even the most acrobatic situations, and sharp, powerful talons. Its keen eyesight helps it detect its prey, from the marmot to the young chamois, ptarmigans and hares. In winter, it often takes its food from the dead bodies of animals, helping towards the natural cleansing of nature.

Attribution : PNE - Telmon Jean-Philippe



Golden eagle, the Ecrins' mascot (O)

The Petit Tabuc site is ideal for the golden eagle to nest. The golden eagle is amongst the protected species that are considered rare in Europe. The size of the populations that have been registered in the Ecrins massif, bestow a strong responsibility on the Park for conservation of the species. Counting takes place regularly since 1985 along with monitoring of reproduction, causes of disturbance and mortality.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien



Chamois (P)

Rupicapra rupicapra, the mountain goat was not at first solely a creature of the mountains. The species is more attached to rocky escarpments and steep slopes than high altitude. But strong human pressure on chamois made them withdraw ever higher. Coveted as a hunting target, they have found refuge here in the Ecrins National Park.

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - PNE



White-throated dipper (Q)

The mountain streams relinquish their secrets to an attentive hiker. The master of this little world is a small brown, red and grey bird with a short tail and a pure white breast, separated from the darker abdomen by a light brown stripe. We can often see it in the air, flying close to the water to snap up insects. The dipper owes its name to its eating habits to find water larva, it dips its head into the water and grips the riverbed to walk against the current.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE