

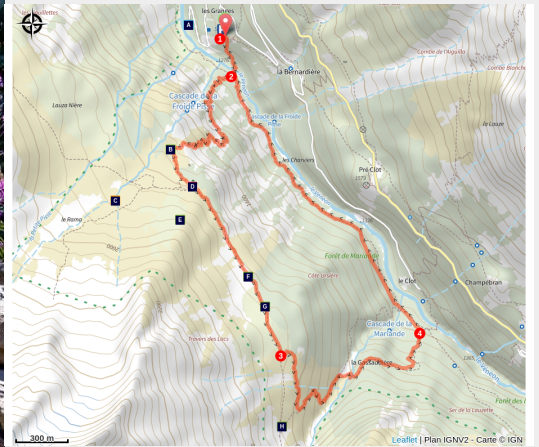
Travers des lacs par l'Alpe du Pin - Mountainside crossing between the lakes via the Alpe du Pin refuge



Parc national des Ecrins - Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans



Refuge de l'Alpe du Pin (Kinaphoto - Parc national des Ecrins)



Between the Alpe du Pin mountain refuge and the glacial rock bar of La Mariande, this itinerary takes you across the tranquil plateau of the mountainside crossing between the lakes (known as a "travers" in the region), passing through a variety of habitats characteristic of the Vénéon valley.

Sensations come thick and fast along this tranquil trail. The power of the waterfall, the tranquillity of the refuge and the breathtaking view over some of the highest peaks in the massif, fill us by turn with elation and a feeling of calm. An excursion that gives us the full measure of the wild beauty of Les Écrins.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 4 h

Length : 7.3 km

Trek ascent : 668 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Hut, Pastoralism

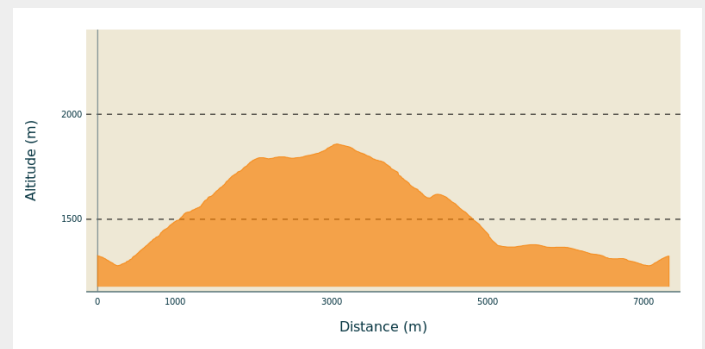
Trek

Departure : Les Granges

Arrival : Les Granges

Cities : 1. Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans

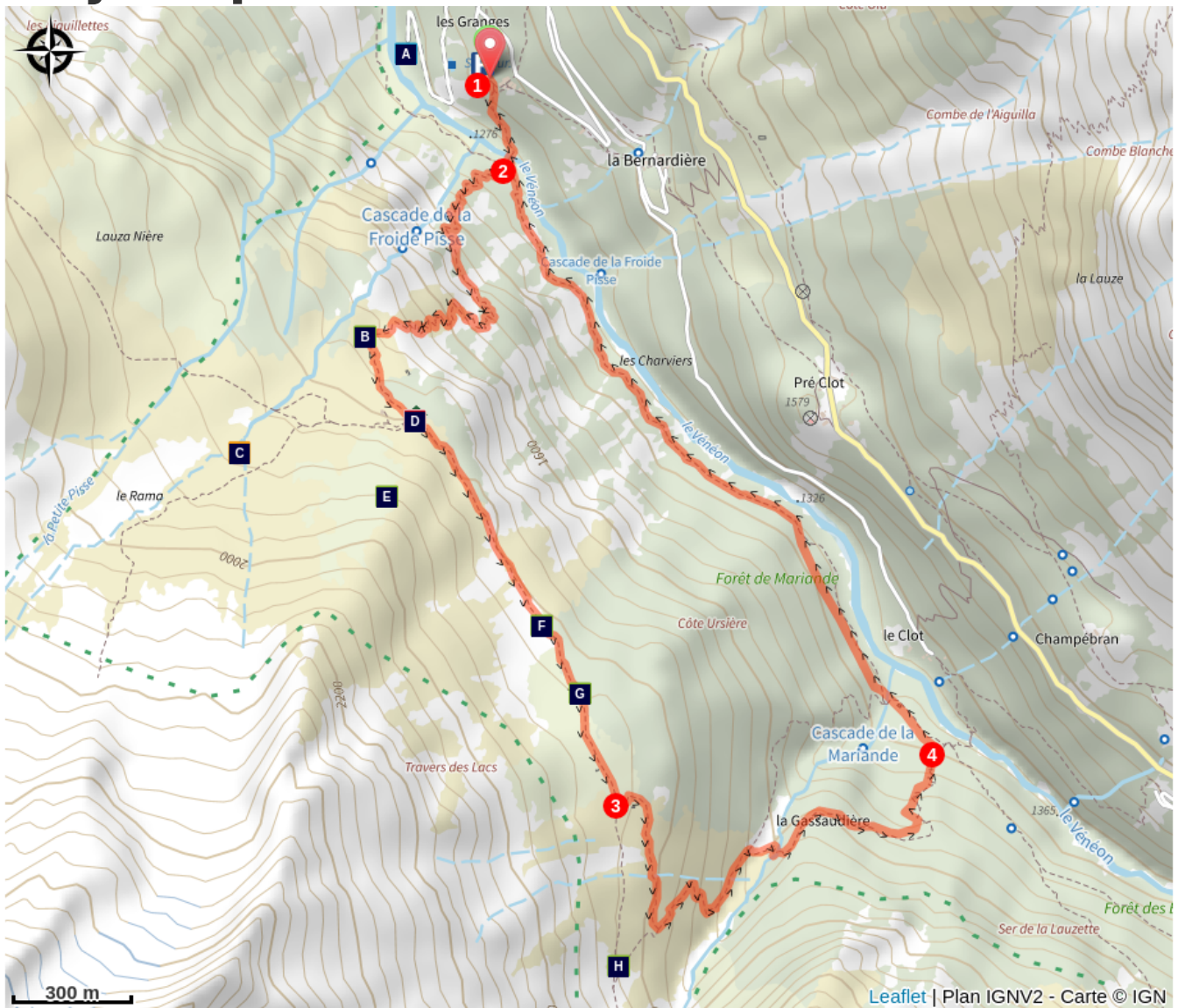
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1280 m Max elevation 1859 m

1. From the car park in Les Granges, take the path signposted « Refuge de l'Alpe du Pin ». Drop down below the hamlet and then cross the small stone bridge spanning the Vénéon (be sure to close the gate behind you).
2. Then take the path winding up towards the Cascade de la Froide Pisse waterfall, which could be seen on the right as you climbed uphill. Follow the path until you come to the small Alpe du Pin refuge for a meal and/or refreshment break. Then follow the path signposted « Vallon de la Mariande ». Cross wetlands, heather moors and glacial screes and enjoy a succession of impressive views of the Tête des Fétoules and the Barre des Écrins along the gentle flat area on the mountainside crossing between the lakes, and on to the glacial rock bar of La Mariande.
3. Just before climbing up to the rock bar at the intersection, turn left towards Le Clot (Forêt de la Gassaudia). Drop down on the path which twists and turns through the forest until you come to a waterfall, the Cascade de la Mariande.
4. Turn left towards Saint Christophe and back along the Vénéon, rising gently uphill. Cross the bridge, again being sure to close the gate behind you, and then carry on up to the car park in Les Granges.

On your path...



-  Hydroelectric station (A)
-  Animal husbandry in the valley (C)
-  The habitat of the black grouse (E)
-  Wetlands (G)
-  Rhododendron ferrugineum (B)
-  Alpe du Pin Refuge (D)
-  The European blueberry (F)
-  The golden eagle (H)

All useful information

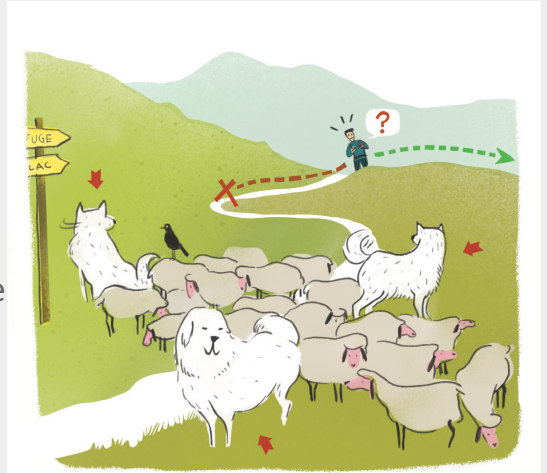
Herd protection dogs

In mountain pastures, protection dogs are there to protect the herds from predators (wolves, etc.).

When I hike I adapt my behavior by going around the herd and pausing for the dog to identify me.

Find out more about the actions to adopt with the article ["Protection dogs: a context and actions to adopt"](#).

Tell us about your meeting by answering this [survey](#).



Advices

To make the most of the flora featured on this trail, plan it in June or early July. The loop can be completed in the opposite direction, from the car park in Le Clot.

How to come ?

Access

From the RD1091, Bourg d'Oisans - Col du Lautaret, take the RD530 towards Venosc, Saint Christophe en Oisans, La Bérarde. Just before Saint-Christophe, turn right towards Les Granges. Go down the narrow winding road to the car park in Les Granges.

Advised parking

Car park in Les Granges

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 !

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>

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...

Hydroelectric station (A)

On the right bank of the River Vénéon is a small hydroelectric station. It is called a run-of-the-river station, which means it has no capacity to store water. Water is channelled along a pipe to drive the turbine, which is connected to a generator producing the electricity. There is no dam, so production varies according to the amount of water immediately available, with the maximum amount reached, of course, in spring, when the snow melts.



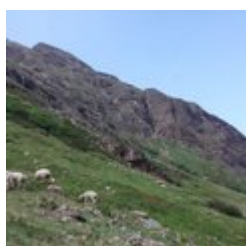
Rhododendron ferrugineum (B)

The rhododendron ferrugineum is a member of the family Ericaceae, like the cranberry, lingonberry and bilberry. It is a bushy shrub, 30 to 100 cm tall and common at altitudes of between 1,400 and 2,500 metres. It retains its leaves all year round. Its leaves are tough, elongated (3 to 5 cm long and 1 to 2 cm across), dark green and glossy on the upper side and yellowish changing to rust on the underside, hence its name "ferrugineum". This particular colouring is due to the presence of russet coloured glands.

In late June to early July, the rhododendron plants are covered in clusters of pink scented flowers which are very attractive to pollinators: it is a bee forage plant.

Just one or two rhododendrons can result in the colonisation of an entire slope.

Attribution : PNE



Animal husbandry in the valley (C)

In summer, some 300 sheep graze the valleys of L'Alpe du Pain and La Mariande.

They are herded up the mountain in early June and brought back down again, lovely and plump, in early October. For four months they are free to roam the high mountain pastures, happily feeding on the rich alpine grass. From time to time, their young owners go up the mountain to tend them. At the end of the season, some linger and it is not unusual to come across them even in late October. They will be gathered by the farmers before the onset of winter.

Attribution : PNE



Alpe du Pin Refuge (D)

The Alpe du Pin Refuge is little known and discreet, and stands on the mountain pasture of the same name. It belongs to the Jarrets d'Acier association. It has everything needed to delight the heart, the soul and the calf muscles! Built in 1947, it has preserved its humble origins down the years by making reasonable adaptations to the needs of contemporary comfort. The Alpe du Pin Refuge is located at an altitude of 1,805 m, at the foot of the Tête de Laurantou (3,325 m), the view of which from St-Christophe leaves no one indifferent. With a capacity of 20 places in a single dormitory, the visitor soon feels at home, and the layout of the refuge helps promote meetings and conversation. You can count on a simple, warm and friendly welcome from the refuge keepers.

Attribution : Parc national des Ecrins - Mireille Coulon



The habitat of the black grouse (E)

The black grouse is a galliforme (fowl-like) bird and lives at altitudes of between 1,400 and 2,300 metres. It thrives in the semi-open patchwork habitats. These criss-cross habitats of heather moors, grassland and bushes or open woodlands enable it not only to find food for its young (insects, small flowers) in the breeding season (July) but also offers sufficiently tall vegetation cover in which to hide and escape the attention of predators. Song counts are carried out in spring to estimate the number of singing males. Summer counts, using pointer dogs, are also carried out to assess the number of broods in the year.

Attribution : Robert Chevalier - PNE



✿ The European blueberry (F)

The European blueberry belongs to the Ericaceae family. It is sub-shrub with dense foliage growing 20 to 60 centimetres tall. Its small leaves are supple, alternating, oval and finely toothed. From August, the edible berries with purplish red pulp, hence its popular name gueule noire (meaning black mouth). They turn the slopes of the sub-alpine meadows a beautiful red colour in late summer. It sometimes grows with the bog bilberry (Vaccinium myrtillus) which has white flesh and smooth leaf edges.

The picking of this berry is subject to special regulation. Within the Parc National des Écrins, it is limited to 1 kg per person per day, and the use of comb-type berry pickers is prohibited. In the area covered by the Parc National des Écrins and throughout the Department of Isère: 1 kg per person per day and the use of comb-type berry pickers is prohibited before 15 August.

Attribution : Marc Corail



✿ Wetlands (G)

Wetlands are special habitats characterised by the presence of water - fresh or salt, permanent or temporary. Diverse yet threatened, these environments contribute to shaping the landscapes and constitute an important habitat for numerous animal and plant species. Their conservation is vital if wide biodiversity is to be maintained. High-altitude marshlands or bogs exemplify this.

Attribution : PNE



🦅 The golden eagle (H)

Once you arrive below the glacial rock bar of La Mariande, you might spot the golden eagle. This majestic bird of prey has dark plumage, the juveniles with beautiful white markings under the wings, soar close to the sunny slopes in order to gain height, looking for prey. It flies alone or with its mate, unlike its cousin, the griffon vulture, which is usually seen in groups. The pair of eagles occupies a large home range, in which several eyries are built. The female usually lays two eggs in the spring. These hatch into eaglets although generally only one will survive. So if you are out walking in late July, keep an eye out - you may be lucky enough to spot a fledged juvenile!

Attribution : Cyril Coursier
