

# Rortie Bleue (trail route no. 7)

Vallouise - Freissinières



Trail Rortie Bleue (Ayesta - Parc national des Écrins)



*A unique trail with its stretches across ridges and its descent in part at the foot of the cliffs.*

“Of course, the main things you remember from this itinerary might be its impressive sections on the ridge or past the limestone cliffs, but the rustic descent below the hamlet of Les Roberts is one of the loveliest you'll see, not to mention the stretch along the Biaysse. All these contrasts make it really fascinating.” Marie-Geneviève Nicolas, park ranger at the Parc National des Écrins

## Useful information

Practice : Trail

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 10.1 km

Trek ascent : 635 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna, Flora

# Trek

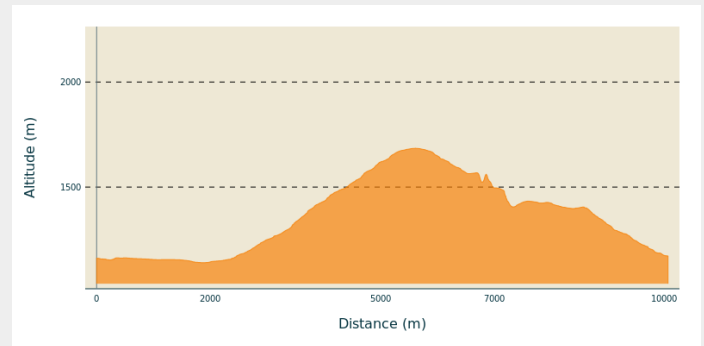
**Departure** : Valley Centre ("Maison de la Vallée"), Freissinières

**Arrival** : Valley Centre ("Maison de la Vallée"), Freissinières

**Markings** :  Trail

**Cities** : 1. Freissinières

## Altimetric profile

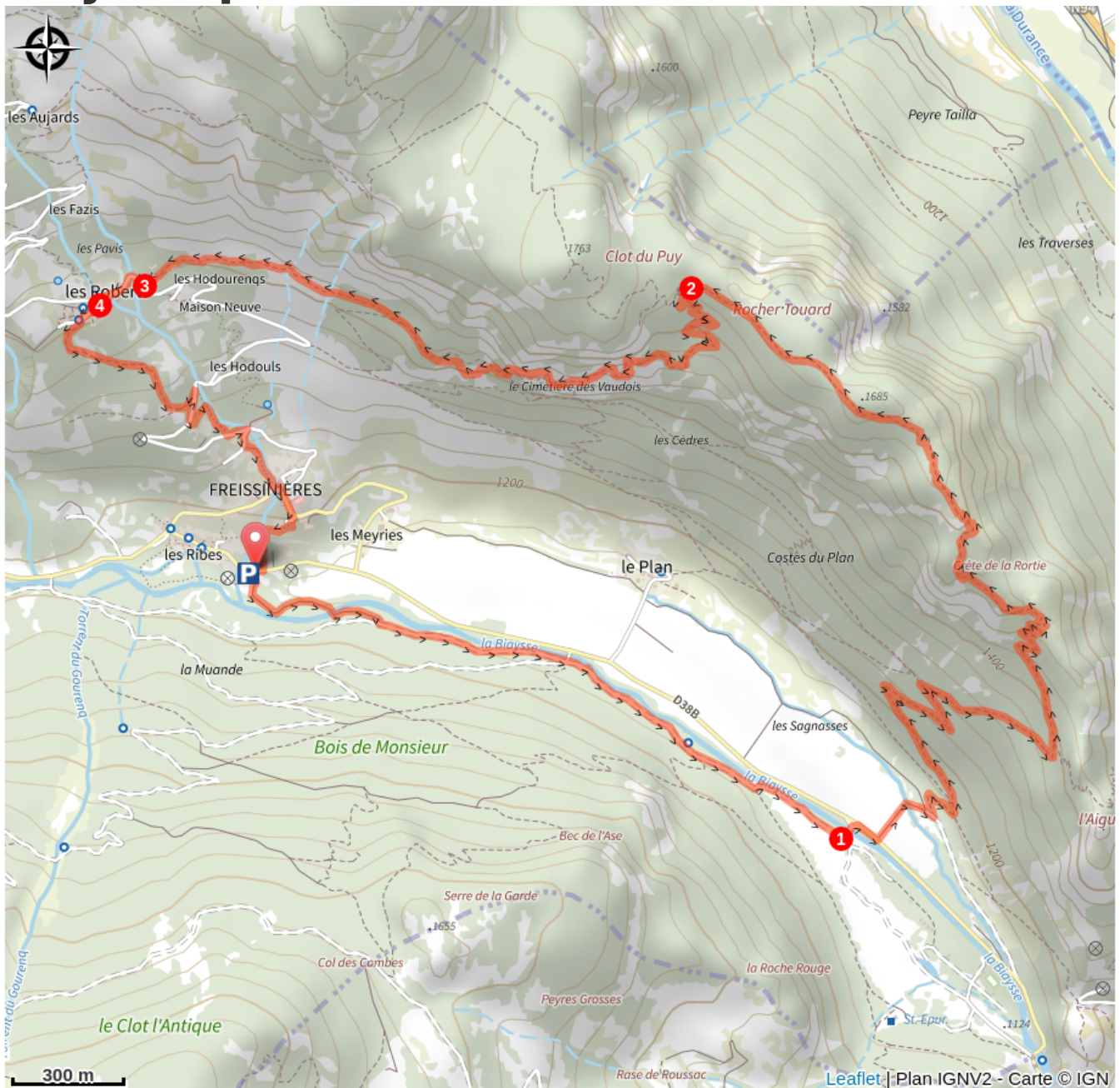











Min elevation 1141 m Max elevation 1686 m

From the Valley Centre ("Maison de la Vallée"), head down into the meadow to cross the Biaysse and follow the track along the right-hand bank of the river.

1. Two bridges further down, cross back over the Biaysse and go right along the road for 50 metres until you come to another track on the left. This crosses a bridge over a stream and leads to the bottom of the path to the Col de l'Aiguille. Head up this path towards the Col de l'Aiguille, and then towards Le Clot du Puy. The path offers some beautiful vantage points and takes you down steep little paths among the rocks, then it runs along ridges in the forest.
2. In Le Clot du Puy, head downhill towards Freissinières, Coste du Plan. Lower down, be sure to follow the signs for trail no. 7
3. The path leads to the road, which you follow right for a short distance until you come to the hamlet of Les Roberts.
4. Just after the waste bins, take the narrow lane leading down at an angle to the left. The old track runs down below the hamlet and then crosses the road twice before coming to Freissinières. Go past the church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine and after 50 metres turn right to make your way back to your starting point.

# On your path...



- |   |                               |   |  |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|
|  | The common barberry (A)       |  | The Freissinières valley (B)                       |
|  | The creeping lady's-tress (C) |  | The European silver fir (D)                        |
|  | The southern water vole (E)   |  | The black pine (F)                                 |
|  | The bearberry (G)             |  | The crag martin (H)                                |
|  | The fire lily (I)             |  | The Grotte des Vaudois - The Waldensians' Cave (J) |
|  | The scarce swallowtail (K)    |  | The common redstart (L)                            |
|  | Félix Neff (M)                |  | The church of Sainte Marie-Madeleine (N)           |
|  | Freissinières (O)             |   |  |

# All useful information

## **Advices**

Follow and apply the internal rules of the Bike Park (displayed at the entrance

Before setting off, it is very important to check the opening periods for this route on the website: <https://stationdetrail.com/fr/stations/le-pays-des-ecrins/parcours>

Share your photographs on social networks with #stationdetrailecrins

Check weather conditions before setting off.

Rescue services contact details: Secours Montagne (Mountain Rescue): +33 (0)4 92 22 22 22 or 112

Show consideration for the work of farmers, livestock keepers and owners

Close all gates behind you

Take your litter home

Do not take shortcuts across pastureland

The trail routes are also suitable for walking

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

Public transport >> [www.pacamobilite.fr](http://www.pacamobilite.fr)

Consider car-sharing >> [www.blablacar.fr](http://www.blablacar.fr)

For more information, ask at the Tourist Information Office nearest to the trail starting point.

### Access

11.5 km from L'Argentière-La Bessée, take the N94 and then the D38.

### Advised parking

Parking Maison de la Vallée, Freissinières

# 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.

## Peregrine falcon

Sensitivity period: February, March, April, May, June

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

Nidification du Faucon pèlerin.

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec le Faucon pèlerin 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 !

En cas de survol merci de rester au-dessus de 1945m d'altitude à une distance de 300m sol.

## Information desks

### Vallouise Park house

vallouise@ecrins-parcnational.fr  
Tel : 04 92 23 58 08  
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



### Bureau d'Information Touristique de L'Argentière-La Bessée

23 Avenue de la République, 05120  
L'Argentière-La Bessée  
contact@paysdesecrins.com  
Tel : +33(0)4 92 23 03 11  
<https://www.paysdesecrins.com/>



## Source



Pays des Ecrins  
<https://www.paysdesecrins.com>

# On your path...

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## ✿ The common barberry (A)

The common barberry is a bush with long thorns arranged in threes, and with oval serrated leaves. In spring, it produces clusters of yellow flowers, which later develop into red, oval and elongated berries. These tart fruits are edible and can be made into jellies... if you have the patience to gather them! This shrub grows almost everywhere.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins

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## 🍊 The Freissinières valley (B)

The valley was created as the result of glacial overdeepening, that is to say, when the glacier came to a halt against the Pallon hard rock bar, it created a depression. When the glaciers retreated, a lake was left behind this rock bar and was gradually filled up by alluvial deposits. From a historical point of view, the Protestant pastor Félix Neff fundamentally altered life in the valley in 1826 by founding a training college for primary school teachers, developing irrigation processes and teaching new crop growing methods, among other things...

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins

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## ✿ The creeping lady's-tress (C)

This inconspicuous little orchid grows on moss, in the undergrowth of the pine forest. Growing at the base of the stem, its leaves are oval and pointed, with a network of veins. The upright stem only bears a few scales. Covered in a fine down, the white flowers are arranged in the form of a spiral spike, facing the same way. A little gem that is worth keeping an eye out for!

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - Parc national des Écrins

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## ❁ The European silver fir (D)

The fir thrives on this north-exposed slope, called the ubac. Its needles have two white stripes on their undersides. They are arranged on either side of the boughs, and not all the way around them, which distinguishes it from the spruce. The elongated cones stand upright, rather than hanging downwards. They grow in large number, often mingling with larch trees under whose shade they can grow. By contrast, the larch - the "tree of light" - cannot grow under the cover of fir trees.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins



## 🐹 The southern water vole (E)

Flattened paths through the reeds, and holes 6 to 7 cm in diameter... the southern water vole has been here! This large rodent with dark brown fur on its back digs its burrow in the banks of the stream. This species, which lives close to water, causes no damage to crops. Not a prolific breeder, its numbers are low and it is threatened with extinction.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - Parc national des Écrins



## 🌲 The black pine (F)

The black pine did not arrive here of its own accord. It was introduced by the National Forestry Agency and was planted to stabilise eroded mountain areas. It can be identified by its long needles which are grouped in pairs and by its large cones.

Attribution : Christian Bâisset - Parc national des Écrins



## ❁ The bearberry (G)

The floor of the pine forest is carpeted by a creeping sub-shrub with glossy oval evergreen leaves. In spring, the bearberry produces small bell-shaped flowers which are white and edged with pink. They will turn into red berries, edible but floury. Bears love them, hence their name. It is a drought-tolerant plant.

Attribution : Cédric Dentan - Parc national des Écrins



## The crag martin (H)

The birds that are constantly swooping around the cliff are crag martins. They are brown with a beige underside. They have built their nests under small overhangs. This species is very common in the Alps. Partially migratory, crag martins return to the Mediterranean coast in winter, where they join resident populations. So it is the first bird to reappear in the valleys of the Pays des Écrins in late February and the last to leave in October!

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins

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## The fire lily (I)

In June and early July, the rocks are brightened up here and there by large orange flowers: the fire lily is a splendid plant which grows in the mountains of Europe. It grows in rocky or bush-covered terrain and even - why not? - right on the cliff faces, in dry areas. It is a protected species.

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - Parc national des Écrins

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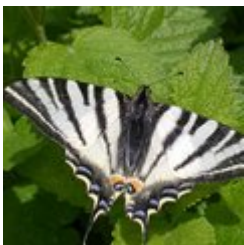


## The Grotte des Vaudois - The Waldensians' Cave (J)

The history of Freissinières is linked to that of the Waldensians, who found refuge in this valley and in other Alpine valleys in the thirteenth century. The followers of this religious movement - which later embraced the reformation - were deemed to be heretics and therefore persecuted. This cave, in which Waldensians sought refuge after being taken by surprise, witnessed massacres perpetrated by the Inquisition.

Attribution : Thierry Maillet - Parc national des Écrins

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## The scarce swallowtail (K)

A large pale yellow butterfly with black stripes flutters from bush to bush. There is a "tail" at the tips of the posterior wings, marked with an orange and blue blotch. The scarce swallowtail lives in hot, dry environments. It favours uncultivated land where blackthorn and hawthorn grow, on which the female lays her eggs and where the caterpillars develop.

Attribution : Blandine Delenatte - Parc national des Écrins

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## The common redstart (L)

The common redstart can be told apart from its cousin, the black redstart by its white eyebrow (hence its French name which is translated as "white-browed redstart") and its orange breast. At least for the male, since the female of both birds is duller and brownish, but the female common redstart also has an orangey tail. It returns from Africa in early April and searches the areas to find a hollow in a tree or in an old wall where it builds its nest.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - Parc national des Écrins

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## Félix Neff (M)

Félix Neff was a Swiss Protestant pastor. He was responsible for the Protestant Revival in the Freissinières valley in the seventeenth century. He also set up the first education college for primary school teachers in France, in Dormillouse in 1826. He was also behind new irrigation and house-building techniques, developments which improved the everyday lives of the local people.

Attribution : Manuel Meester - Parc national des Écrins

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## The church of Sainte Marie-Madeleine (N)

The church of Sainte Marie-Madeleine was built in the seventeenth century. It is thought to be a former Protestant church which escaped destruction in 1684 when Louis XIV was leading an anti-Protestant drive. The Protestant church is then thought to have undergone works to convert it into a Catholic church.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins

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## 🕒 Freissinières (O)

The name Freissinières comes from the old word freissinière meaning "black ash". This municipality, which extends as far as the Col des Terres Blanches and the Col de Freissinières, both of which overlook the Champsaur valley, is made up of thirteen hamlets, although none of them are called Freissinières!

Archaeological excavations carried out twenty years ago show that sites at high altitude (such as Faravel) were occupied on a seasonal basis from the retreat of the glaciers 12,000 years ago (Upper Palaeolithic period) and that this occupation continued after that.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins