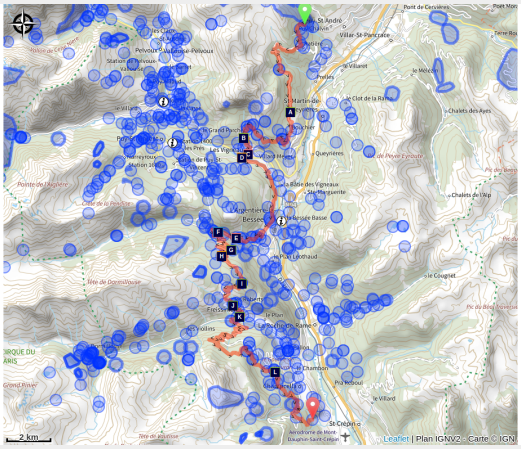
The Grande Traversée des Hautes-Alpes (GTHA) in the Pays des Écrins

Parc national des Ecrins

GTHA (Thibaut Blais)



A sensational circuit which crosses the territory of the Pays des Écrins from north to south.

The GTHA is the highest medium-altitude mountain bike route in France. It starts in La Grave-Villar d'Arène and ends in Laragne-Montéglin, thus taking you through 50 kilometres of the territory of the Pays des Écrins. Along the way you will get to know the territory and its communities through its remarkable landscapes and heritage. So, all you need to do is jump on your bike and set off on the adventure.
For more information on the GTHA itinerary, visit the Département des Hautes-Alpes website .

Useful information

Practice : Mountain bike

Duration : 8 h 30

Length : 52.2 km

Trek ascent : 2231 m

Difficulty : Hard

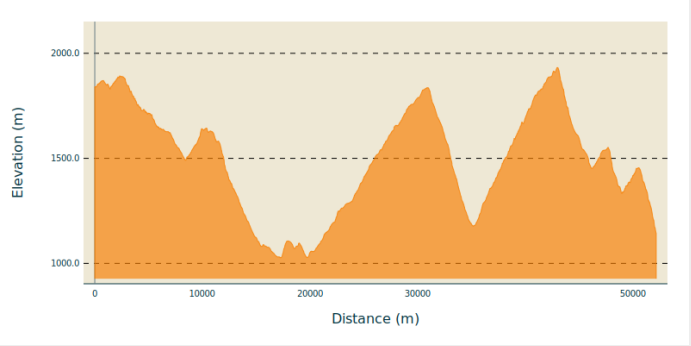
Type : Crossing

Themes : Fauna, Flora, History and architecture

Trek

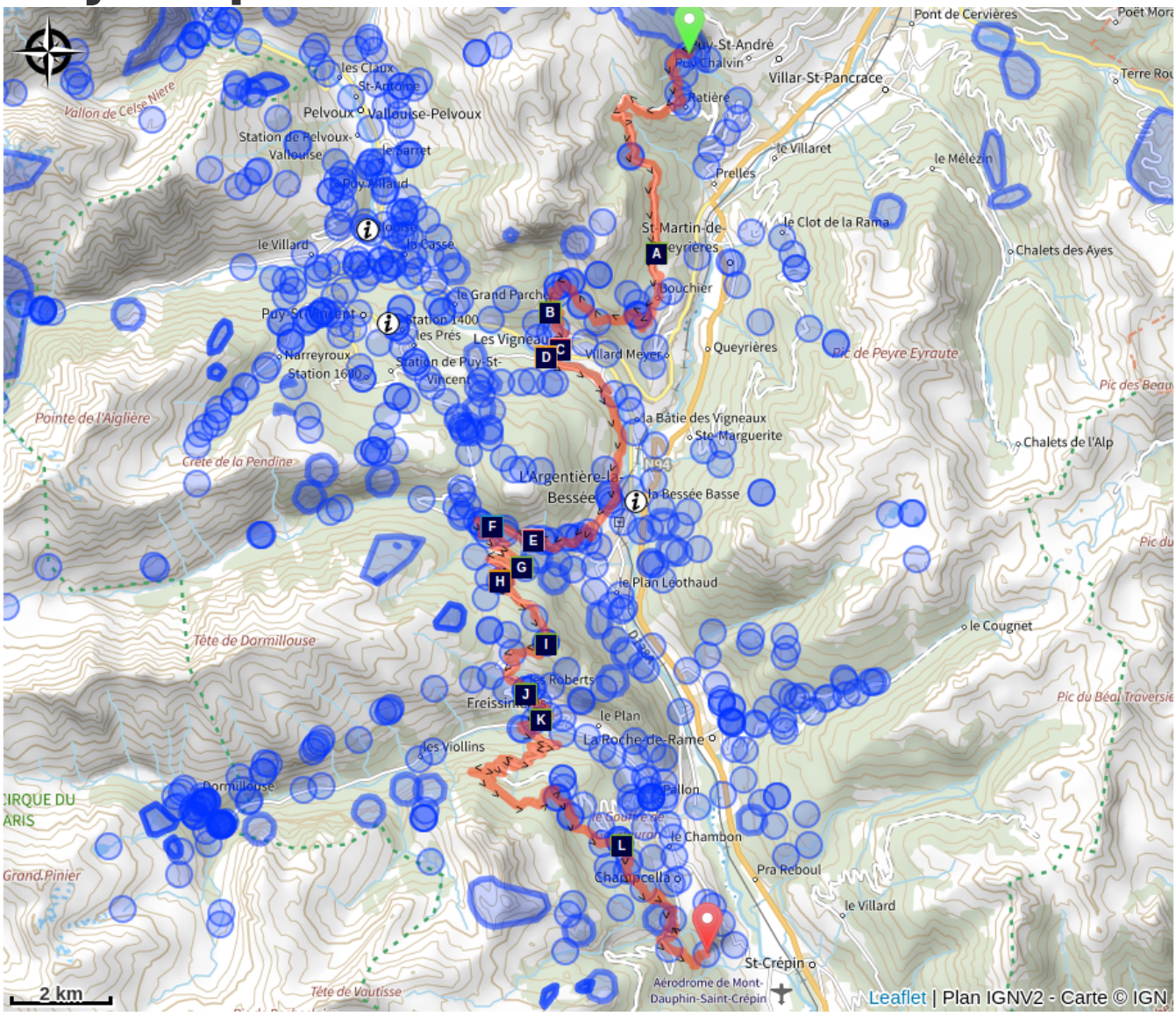
Departure : Rocher de Roure, Puy-Saint-André
Arrival : Torrent de Bouffard towards Lauriberne, Champcella
Markings : Itinérance VTT
Cities : 1. Saint-Martin-de-Queyrières
2. Les Vigneaux
3. L'Argentière-la-Bessée
4. Freissinières
5. Champcella
6. Saint-Crépin

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1027 m Max elevation 1932 m

On your path...



Achnatherum calamagrostis or silver spike grass (A)

The eagles of the Tête d'Aval (B)

The communal oven (C)

The village of Les Vigneaux (D)

The silver mines (E)

The Fournel (F)

The blue globe thistle (G)

The Crouzet-les-Lauzes alpine pasture (H)

The four-spotted chaser (I)

The common redstart (J)

Huile de marmotte - marmot oil (K)

The marbled white (L)

All useful information

⚠ Advices

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

How to come ?

Transports

Public transport >> www.pacamobilite.fr
Consider car-sharing >> www.blablacar.fr

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

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.

RNR Partias

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, Decembre

Contact:

LPO PACA antenne de Briançon
0492219417
hautes-alpes@lpo.fr

The Partias Regional Nature Reserve is managed by the LPO PACA and the commune of Puy Saint André. This is a protected and regulated area: dog leash, forbidden harvest, stay on marked trails, climbing prohibited except Meurseult pilami track, etc.

Peregrine falcon

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

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

Un site de nidification est actuellement utilisés par un couple de faucons pélerins dans une falaise équipée pour l'escalade, un secteur est à éviter jusqu'au 15 juin :

Au site dit du Ponteil, le niche dans la partie haute de la falaise, au-dessus de la vire, entre les voies "le grand dièdre" et "rôle en dalles".
Pour préserver leur tranquillité, il est donc préférable d'éviter la partie supérieure de ces voies.
La partie inférieure, jusqu'à la vire, ainsi que les autres voies de la falaise peuvent être grimpées en étant discret. Pour la descente, afin de limiter la fréquentation dans ce secteur à gauche de la falaise, il est proposé de prendre les rappels du "nid d'aigle", de "la fuite enchantée" ou bien le câble à droite de la falaise.

http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/amis-grimpeurs-attention-aux-pelerins-voies?fbclid=IwAR2Z8hX_38vpdW3mS499aRnY08jarhfm-5-eNV8K29k3WB3q3Ik2US_Alec

Merci d'éviter cette zone !

En cas de survol merci de rester au-dessus de 2010m d’altitude à une distance de 300m sol.

Short-toed snake eagle

Sensitivity period: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

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

Nidification du Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec le Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc en période de nidification sont principalement les pratiques aériennes comme le vol libre ou le vol motorisé.

Merci d’essayer d’éviter la zone ou de rester à un distance minimale de 300m sol quand vous la survolez soit 1850m d'altitude !

Short-toed snake eagle

Sensitivity period: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

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

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Merci d’essayer d’éviter la zone ou de rester à un distance minimale de 300m sol quand vous la survolez soit 1900m d'altitude !

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/

Bureau d'Information Touristique de Puy Saint Vincent 1400

110 route des Alberts - Station 1400, 05290 Puy Saint Vincent 1400 m
Tel : +33(0)4 92 23 35 80
https://www.puysaintvincent.com/office-tourisme

Bureau d'Information Touristique de Vallouise

Place de l'Eglise, 05340 Vallouise

contact@paysdesecrins.com
Tel : +33(0)4 92 23 36 12
https://www.paysdesecrins.com/

Source

Pays des Ecrins

https://www.paysdesecrins.com

On your path...

Achnatherum calamagrostis or silver spike grass (A)

This member of the Gramineae family (now called Poaceae) forms large clumps on stony, dry and sunny ground. It grows in abundance here on the track embankment, taking advantage of the sunlight allowed through by the break in the forest. Its inflorescences reflecting silvery-gold glints are made up of flowerets with long edges. They create a very misty effect in the late summer when the plant is mature, forming large shimmering bouquets in the evening sunlight. .

Attribution : Denis Fiat - Parc national des Écrins

The eagles of the Tête d'Aval (B)

Eagles can be seen gliding around the Tête d'Aval. In the hottest part of the day, they circle on the thermals rising above the limestone cliffs. Having gained height in this way, they can reach their hunting territory without having to flap their wings.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - Parc national des Écrins

The communal oven (C)

Legend has it that the Lord caused a communal oven to be built and kept it maintained. The local people could use this oven in exchange for the payment of a levy. Families would prepare and knead their own dough at home and then bring it to the oven for baking. Names were drawn by lot to establish their turns.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins

The village of Les Vigneaux (D)

In spite of the altitude, the region's dry climate and the local growing conditions of limestone and sediments facing due south made the planting of grapevines possible as far back as the tenth century. The municipality owes its name to the presence of these vineyard operations, which were very significant in the late nineteenth century. The almost simultaneous appearance of the phylloxera aphid and the Briançon train, bringing wine from Provence, spelled the end of this activity here.

Attribution : Blandine Reynaud - PDE

The silver mines (E)

The path passes close to the silver mines which gave L'Argentière its name (argent meaning "silver"). They were first worked in the early Medieval period and later abandoned before exploitation resumed again in the nineteenth century. They were finally closed in 1908. Since 1992, the site has been the subject of archaeological excavations, with major work to clear materials carried by the Fournel when in flood. They can be visited with a guide (by appointment), leaving the visitor in awe: how much ingenuity has been involved in extracting the silver-bearing galena!

Attribution : Thibault Blais Photographie

The Fournel (F)

The Fournel mountain stream gives generously. Its water makes up a large proportion of the town's drinking water, supplies the irrigation canals, is used for hydropower and offers a recreational area valuable to the local economy in the form of its canyon, located in the gorge connecting it to the Durance. Being a mountain stream, it is impetuous, but sills have been built lower down and it has been dammed to prevent natural disasters. Numerous mountain streams have received the same treatment...

Attribution : Jan Novak Photography

The blue globe thistle (G)

The Fournel valley is well known for having the biggest colony of blue globe thistles in the Alps. This colony is growing in Les Desliours, at the end of the road. But there are other colonies in the valley, like this one. Because this rare species is adapted to high-mountain hay meadows, agro-environmental measures have been introduced to delay grazing or hay cutting until the late summer so that it has time to set seed.

Attribution : Jan Novak

The Crouzet-les-Lauzes alpine pasture (H)

This trail passes close to the Cabane des Lauzes, the "base camp" used by the shepherd or shepherdess responsible for the Crouzet-les-Lauzes alpine pasture. The lower areas of this pastureland are difficult to oversee as they are covered by forest where it is easy to lose sight of animals among the larches. The higher areas, exploited in August, are very remote.

Attribution : Blandine Delenatte - Parc national des Écrins

The four-spotted chaser (I)

Dragonflies can be seen gliding around the lake One of them is relatively easy to identify: the four-spotted chaser. It is called this because there is a spot on each of its four wings. The female lays her eggs on floating vegetation and the larvae are aquatic. The dragonfly feeds primarily on mosquitoes and midges which it catches in mid-air. The male and female also mate while in flight... A real acrobat!

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - Parc national des Écrins

The common redstart (J)

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

Huile de marmotte - marmot oil (K)

In times past, the inhabitants of Freissinières used oil for cooking and lighting. Walnut or almond oil was difficult to produce at this high altitude. The Briançon plum tree or marmottier, however, can withstand the mountain conditions, and the yellow fruits of this tree contain kernels. These kernels were pressed in mills to produce an oil with medicinal virtues: marmot oil. .

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins

The marbled white (L)

Numerous butterflies can be seen enjoying the sunshine along the way. One is very easy to recognise. Completely black and white, maybe the person who gave it its French name demideuil («half in mourning) was a pessimist! In England, however, its name "marbled white" puts the emphasis on its white colour. It is a common butterfly and its caterpillars feed on grasses.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins