

# Lac de Serre-Ponçon 4-day Electric Mountain Bike Tour

Parc national des Ecrins



Descente sur le lac - sentier monotrace (Parc national Ecrins - E-Pedal)



*150 kilometres and never far from the lake: the opportunity to enjoy the stunning landscapes, to dip your toes in the water, but also to make the most of electrical assistance to tackle the numerous fun trails offered by this itinerary in the southern Alps.*

With panoramic views worthy of a Riviera resort, Lac de Serre Ponçon is a small inland sea amidst the mountains. This inland sea also happens to be one of the biggest reservoirs in France. Although created artificially by its dam, this makes the mountains surrounding Lac de Serre Ponçon no less wild and they offer amazing views and memorable descents.

## Useful information

Practice : Electric mountain bike

Duration : 4 days

Length : 153.0 km

Trek ascent : 5648 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Multi-day trekking

Themes : History and architecture, Lake and glacier, Panorama

# Trek

**Departure** : Plan d'eau d'Embrun

**Arrival** : Plan d'eau d'Embrun

**Markings** : ➡ Itinérance VTT

**Cities** : 1. Baratier

2. Crots

3. Savines-le-Lac

4. Pontis

5. Le Lauzet-Ubaye

6. Rousset

7. Espinasses

8. Chorges

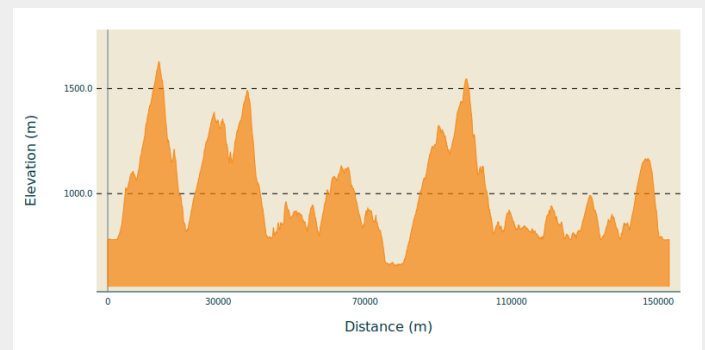
9. Prunières

10. Saint-Apollinaire

11. Puy-Sanières

12. Embrun

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 657 m Max elevation 1629 m

Day 1: After a short warm-up along the Durance, the ascent begins. Difficult in parts, the trail can be avoided by riding stretches of road. The north-facing slope offers dense forest cover. Make the most of the coolness here! The belvedere of La Cagnolle is an invitation for a panoramic break, followed by a heritage discovery at the Abbey of Boscodon. A pretty descent takes you to Savines-le-Lac and the chance to recharge your batteries before climbing again to the belvedere of Pierre-Arnoux.

The route alternates between tracks, trails, a few steep sections and a beautiful descent down to Pontis, which marks the end of the first day.

Day 2: The route follows ridable ascents on tracks and fabulous wooded descents, all off the beaten track. You then return to the lake shore, with the possibility of bathing at the Ubaye cemetery. The route then runs along an old railway line. The day's final section runs through terrain where the landscape opens out onto hills dotted with welcoming hamlets and villages.

Day 3: The explanation for the existence of the lake: the dam. After passing the belvedere of L'Escoubaye and riding down a fabulous trail, at a junction with the road you can head for the dam belvedere. The route rounds the peak of La Viste and on to the Colombis mountain. The "Ruban" is a must-ride mountain biking trail in this sector. A ridge trail offers a stunning panoramic view over the lake and a winding descent down to the Col Lesbraut. From the col, the route becomes more technical until you reach the lake shore: some steep slopes before heading directly downhill on a Provençal trail and coming to Chorges along fast tracks.

Day 4: From Chorges, you return to the lake shore. The tone is set! Uphill and downhill, you pass from bays to inlets along a succession of ridable paths and bracing trails, sometimes facing the lake, sometime Mont Guillaume. The second part of the day takes you to the belvedere of Le Pibou. From this viewing point, you can see your route over the last three days. The Descente du Tourniquet will be your finale! This is a classic in the Embrunais, a trail running down to the lake shore in a succession of bends. Crossing the dam takes you back to welcome tranquility to round this day off.

## Stages :

- 1.** From the Embrun lake to Pontis  
34.1 km / 1687 m D+ / 4 h
- 2.** From Pontis to La Bréole  
35.2 km / 1241 m D+ / 4 h
- 3.** From La Bréole to Chorges  
45.2 km / 1514 m D+ / 5 h 30
- 4.** From Chorges to the Embrun lake  
39.1 km / 1104 m D+ / 4 h 30



# On your path...



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  White Birch (A)                       |  Zygaena hilaris (B)       |
|  L'Avance Lookout (C)                  |  Addos mountain stream (D) |
|  Common magpie (E)                     |  Common juniper (F)        |
|  The field cricket (G)                 |  Messicole plants (H)      |
|  Panorama of the Baie Saint-Michel (I) |  The Occellated Lizard (J) |
|  Great Cormorant (K)                   |  Yellow-legged Gull (L)    |
|  Grass Carp (M)                        |  Mallard (N)               |
|  The fry (O)                           |  Common Perch (P)          |

# All useful information

## **Advices**

Technical in parts, you need the basics of riding in order to overcome a few difficulties. If you are in any doubt, take the "escape routes" offered. Mastering walk mode will help on certain stretches.

Book your accommodation. A trip organiser and mountain bike instructor will simplify your organisation and make your trip so much more enjoyable, as well as saving you time.

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

Direct train lines: Paris/Briançon or Marseille/Briançon  
TGV to Grenoble, Valence, Aix en Provence.

Booking information and ticketing: <https://www.oui.sncf/>

TER PACA (Provence Alpes-Côte-d'Azur) regional rail routes – Chorges railway station or Embrun railway station [www.ter.sncf.com/paca](http://www.ter.sncf.com/paca)

### Access

From Gap or Briançon, via the N94.

### Advised parking

Plan d'eau d'Embrun

# 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.

## 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 une distance minimale de 300m sol quand vous la survolez soit 1310m d'altitude !

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## **i** Information desks

### **Maison du Parc de l'Embrunais**

Place de l'Église, 05380 Châteauroux-les-Alpes

[embrunais@ecrins-parcnational.fr](mailto:embrunais@ecrins-parcnational.fr)

Tel : 04 92 43 23 31

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



### **Tourist office Chorges**

Grand rue, 05230 Chorges

[chorges@serreponcon-tourisme.com](mailto:chorges@serreponcon-tourisme.com)

Tel : 0492506425

<https://www.serreponcon.com>



### **Tourist office Embrun**

Place Général Dosse - BP 49, 05202 Embrun

[embrun@serreponcon-tourisme.com](mailto:embrun@serreponcon-tourisme.com)

Tel : 0492437272

<https://www.serreponcon-tourisme.com/>



### **Tourist office Savines-le-Lac**

9 Avenue de la Combe d'Or, 05160 Savines-le-Lac

[savineslelac@serreponcon-tourisme.com](mailto:savineslelac@serreponcon-tourisme.com)

Tel : 0492443100

<https://www.serreponcon-tourisme.com/>



## **Source**



Parc national des Ecrins

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

# On your path...

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## 🌸 White Birch (A)

This is a beautiful tree that can reach 15 m in height. Its leaves can be identified by the white tomentose down on the underside. Its white flowers are grouped together in an inflorescence and bud fruit called "alises", which appear at the end of summer. This species likes a lot of light and tolerates dry conditions well. It can be found in open woods and on sunny, even rocky, dry slopes in the mountains.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## 🦋 Zygaena hilaris (B)

This is a medium-sized butterfly (25-35 mm wingspan), often brightly coloured, with up to six spots on the inner wing. This Burnet is found on the edges of limestone meadows, steppe-like slopes, dry shrublands and clearings in dry forests. This remarkable species is indicative of the quality of the habitats. It is not nevertheless endangered, which is why it is not on the list of threatened species.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier



## 🗺️ L'Avance Lookout (C)

Learn the names of the different peaks in the Valley of l'Avance!

Attribution : Pierre Doussineau - CDRP



## 💧 Addos mountain stream (D)

The Addos mountain stream (torrent in French) is 4 kilometres long. A mountain stream is a natural water course located in the mountains. The flow regime is characterised by a steep gradient, with a very fast and therefore turbulent water flow producing significant erosion. It is also defined by a significant variation in flow rate depending on precipitation levels. In this mountain stream, as in many others, numerous small sills (small dams) have been created to slow down the water flow and limit the impact of floods.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier





### Common magpie (E)

This bird can be identified by its black and white plumage with blue-green tints on the wings and tail. Its tail is remarkably long. It can be found all year round in varied open environments. Its omnivorous diet consists of invertebrates, seeds and berries, small rodents, eggs and nestlings and even human rubbish. Except during the nesting period when it is solitary, the magpie is gregarious species which gathers into rather raucous groups in the winter.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE



### Common juniper (F)

This bush is a resinous evergreen conifer. It is characterised by its greenish to blue (glaucous) needles with a white line on their upper side, and fruits resembling blue-black berries. It usually tends to grow in warm environments receiving plenty of sunlight. It grows in grassy or scrub covered areas up to 2,000 metres above sea level.

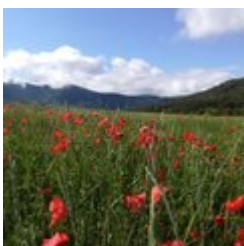
Attribution : Jean-Pierre Nicollet - PNE



### The field cricket (G)

Just 18 to 26 mm long, this little insect has a black head which looks a little like a helmet. The female can be told apart from the male by the presence of a third long appendage at the rear of the body. The cricket's song is heard from April onwards. The male sings his chirping song from the entrance to his burrow. The fertile females lay their eggs in the ground, which remain there for two weeks before the larvae emerge.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



### Messicole plants (H)

A feature of messicole plants is that they live among crops, even though not sown there deliberately. They are biologically adapted to open areas, and in particular areas that are regularly worked, such as fields. In fact, they use various strategies such as adapting their life cycle and producing large amounts of seeds in order to make up for the disturbance that occurs in their germination area. Many of them are common, such as the poppy, the cornflower and the corn buttercup...

Attribution : Amélie Vallier



## Panorama of the Baie Saint-Michel (I)

This area, which has been provided with picnic amenities, offers the most picturesque panorama over the Lac de Serre-Ponçon. In fact, the lake is 2 kilometres wide at this point, and in front of you are the Chapelle Saint Michel and the Pic Morgon, an iconic view of the lake. On your left, to the east, you can see Savines-le-Lac and its bridge. On the right, you can see the secret île de la Tortue.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier



## The Ocellated Lizard (J)

This shy lizard is familiar with dry, scrubby environments. It is hard to track down and flees noisily at the slightest danger. It can run very fast, standing up on its legs with its tail raised. Its burrow serves as a refuge and hibernation site, as it is particularly sensitive to the cold. It devours whatever it can find: insects, fruit, molluscs, eggs; small mammals can even be on the menu. It has blue eye-spots on its flanks.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



## Great Cormorant (K)

**Size:** 90 cm

Attribution : etienne.charles



## Yellow-legged Gull (L)

It has travelled up the Durance and settled on the lake, where it finds propitious conditions for its survival (open water). This gull, a cousin of the seagulls, is omnivorous. The colony can be seen around the lake all year round. They are generally grey or white, with black markings on the wings. They have a long, thick beak and yellow webbed feet. The young are grey in colour and take two to four years to acquire adult plumage.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE

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## Grass Carp (M)

This fish takes its French name (Amour Blanc) from the river it originates in, the “Amur” River, which forms the border between China and Siberia. Its powerful body resembles that of the carp, but its low-set eyes are very different. The well-thought-out and reversible introduction of this species by the town of Embrun and the fishermen is a gentle, ecological and controlled way of solving the problem of plant proliferation in the Embrun water body.

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## Mallard (N)

Not known to be shy, this dabbling duck prefers to feed on the surface or at shallow depths by moving forward with alternating circular strokes of its legs: it dips its head into the water and tilts forward. It nests on the banks of the Durance and is omnivorous, feeding on invertebrates, small fish and grasses... The male is easily recognisable during the breeding season by its bright green head. After this period, they moult and adopt a grey-brown colour close to that of the females and young.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE

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## The fry (O)

This is one of the most common 'white' fish. It has a spindle-shaped body, compressed laterally and covered with large silvery scales. Its lower fins and eyes are tinted red. Opportunistic, it eats both plants and tiny prey such as larvae and mosquitoes. It forms large shoals and most of the lake's anglers take their first steps on the water by catching them.

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## Common Perch (P)

The Perch has a grey-green body with dark stripes. Its scales are rough. It has two dorsal fins, one of which has spiny rays. Its lower and caudal fins are orange. It can grow to around forty centimetres. It is a gregarious and opportunistic carnivore. It feeds on invertebrates and crayfish, but also hunts fish in organised packs. It is a chance for many novice anglers to get their first taste of carnivorous fishing.

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Attribution : etienne.charles