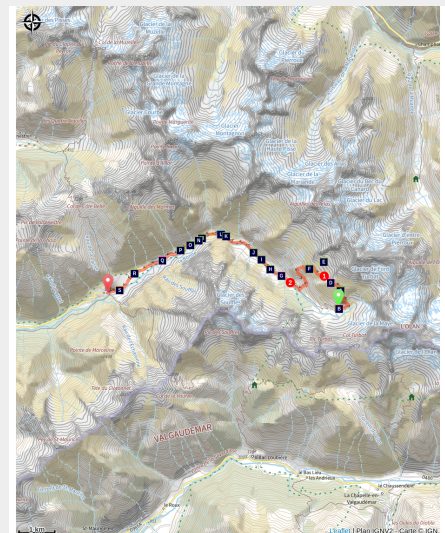


# From Font Turbat refuge to Le Désert-en-Valjouffrey via Petit Vallon

Valbonnais - Valjouffrey



Face nord de l'Olan (Pascal Saulay - PNE)



*From the Col des Lauvets, the view overlooks the Vallon de Font Turbat, with the Cascade de la Pisse and a clear view of L'Olan.*

This return to Le Désert-en-Valjouffrey via the Petit Vallon allows you to appreciate the majestic Olan a little longer, and from other angles. Let yourself be carried along by the descent, and enjoy this splendid valley shaped by glaciers, where scree is mixed with low vegetation of juniper and heather. If you feel like it, take the time to make a detour to the Cascade de la Ferrière, also known as Cascade de la Pisse.

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 3 h

Length : 10.9 km

Trek ascent : 303 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Stage

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Hut

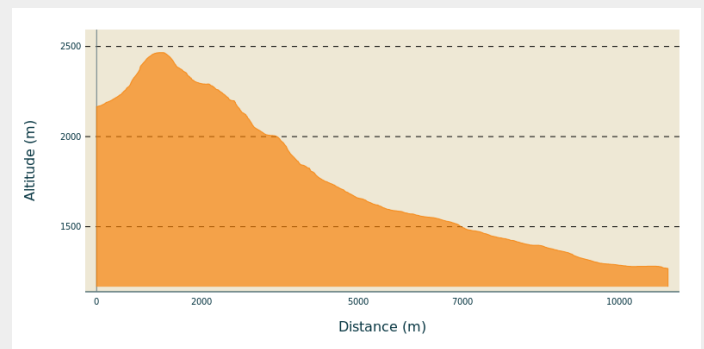
# Trek

**Departure** : Font Turbat refuge

**Arrival** : Le Désert-en-Valjouffrey

**Cities** : 1. Valjouffrey

## Altimetric profile

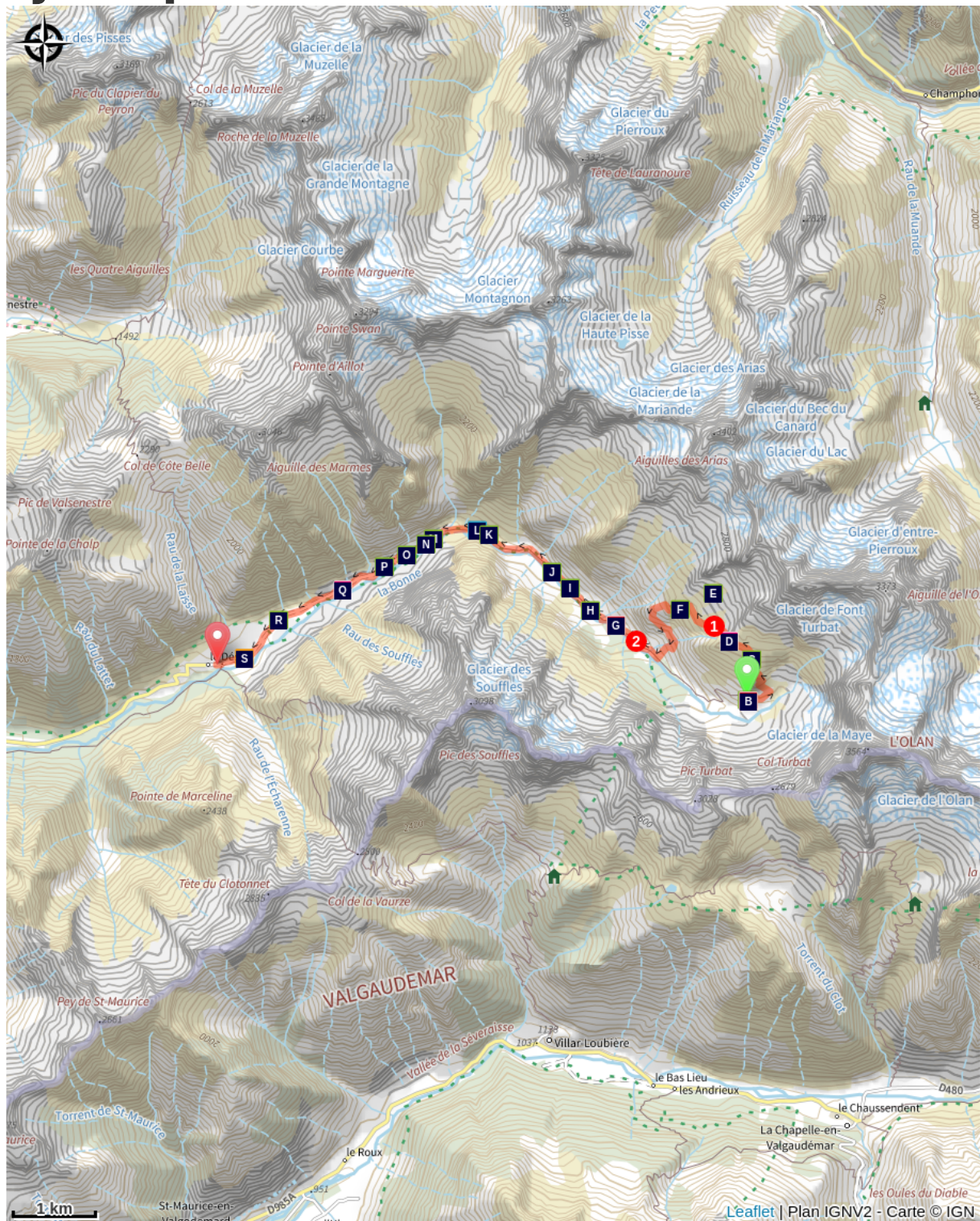
















Min elevation 1268 m Max elevation 2467 m




From the Font Turbat refuge, walk past the old refuge to start the climb to the Col des Lauvets.

1. Follow a series of switchbacks to reach the Petit Vallon hut. At the intersection, follow the signs for the Cabane de Chatellerat.
2. Return to Le Désert-en-Valjouffrey by the same route as the outward journey.

# On your path...



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Common Pipistrelle (A)    |  Font Turbat Refuge (B)  |
|  The alpine accentor (C)   |  View of L'Olan (D)      |
|  The griffon vulture (E)   |  The ring ouzel (F)      |
|  Châtellerat Cabin (G)     |  Red Fox (H)             |
|  Ring Ouzel (I)            |  Eurasian Siskin (J)     |
|  Mountain Hare (K)         |  Cascade de la Pisse (L) |
|  White-throated Dipper (M) |  Apollo (N)              |

 Rhododendron (O)  
 Glacial valley (Q)  
 Hay Fields (S)

 Cob web House Leek (P)  
 Common Chiffchaff (R)

# All useful information

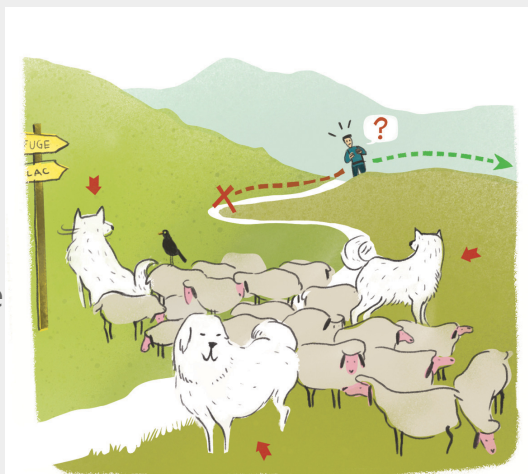
## Herd protection dogs

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](#).



## Is in the midst of the park

The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors.



## Information desks

**Maison du Parc du Valbonnais**  
Place du Docteur Eyraud, 38740  
Entraigues

valbonnais@ecrins-parcnational.fr  
Tel : 04 76 30 20 61  
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



## Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

# On your path...

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## Common Pipistrelle (A)

Brown with relatively short ears, the Common Pipistrelle and the Soprano Pipistrelle fight over the title of the smallest bat in Europe... The Common Pipistrelle can be seen in very diverse environments even above an altitude of 2 000 m. At the time of Jules Ferry, school books boasted about the merits of bats. In fact, insectivores, they consume every day a quarter to a third of their own body weight in mosquitoes and other insects.. They emit ultra-sounds which are inaudible to the human ear but detectable thanks to a captor. This technique enables them to orient themselves when moving about at night to capture their prey. They can often be seen around street lighting hunting the insects that have been attracted by the light.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Jean-Pierre

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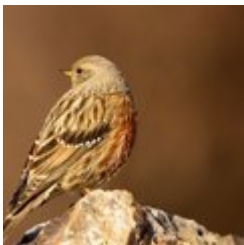


## Font Turbat Refuge (B)

During the summer of 1923, the guide Célestin Bernard took charge of the construction of the refuge at Font Turbat. Several great mountaineering names are associated with it like Guery, Ripert, Frendo, Fourastier, Boell, who came to explore the mountains at Valjouxfrey. In 1934, Devies and Gervasutti traced a historic itinerary in the North-West face of the Pic de l'Olan. 22 years later, the direct Couzy-Desmaison (ED) was opened to the left of the previous one, surmounting the steepest part of the face. The construction of the refuge As it stands now dates from 1962. It was extended and renovated in 1996-1997.

Attribution : PNE - Albert Christophe

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## The alpine accentor (C)

The alpine accentor is a bird just slightly bigger than a sparrow, very hardy, grey in colour but speckled with russet on a grey belly. It lives in open alpine meadows and feeds on the ground on the many invertebrates, often close to the snow line. You might also spy it near the refuge because it comes for the crumbs dropped by hikers.

When winter comes, the cold and the snow force it to drop down into the valley and it often comes to the villages, seeking the protection offered by houses.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE

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## View of L'Olan (D)

L'Olan stands at 3,564 metres above sea level and it consists of three peaks, the highest of which is the most northerly. For the first time L'Olan was climbed up to the top of the central peak on 8 July 1875, and then up to the top of the north peak on 29 June 1877, by the famous William August Brevoort Coolidge and his guide Almer. L'Olan is the iconic peak not only of the valley but also of the western part of the Les Écrins massif. From here, you can see the north slope which is one of the highest and wildest mountain faces in the Alps, like Les Drus (in the Mont-Blanc massif). Its name is a distortion of the word l'auran which used to mean «windy mountain».

Attribution : Parc national des Ecrins

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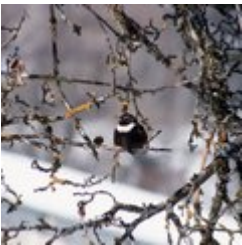


## The griffon vulture (E)

This enormous bird of prey with a wingspan of almost three metres is a relatively recent sight here in the mountains, after a reintroduction programme in the late 1990s. In summer, they constantly circle the skies in groups, on the lookout for the corpses of sheep or large wild mammal to take apart and devour. This impressive carrion bird plays a valuable cleaning-up role in the alpine pastures.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE

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## The ring ouzel (F)

The ring ouzel is easily identifiable: it sports the same plumage as the black ouzel but is distinguished from it by a large white bib on its breast and light edges on the feathers of its wings and underside. Its diet is largely made up of insects, grasshoppers, worms and berries. This shy, swift-flying mountain-dwelling ouzel lives on the edges of forests of larch, Scots pine, spruce and Swiss pine, at altitudes of between 1,000 and 2,500 metres. It nests in low branches or hollow tree trunks or crevices in rocks or buildings. Essentially a migratory bird, the ring ouzel overwinters in Spain or North Africa and returns to the Alps in March.

Attribution : Pierre Dumas - PNE

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## Châtellerat Cabin (G)

In 1908, Châtellerat pastoral cabin was hastily built by the community of Valjouffrey. Destroyed several times in avalanches, is still sheltered numerous mountaineers. It was rebuilt in 1921 in a less exposed place and already ideas about a « real » refuge were growing.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Jean-Pierre

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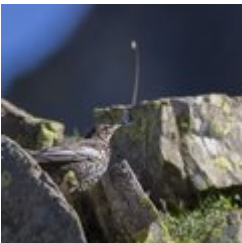


## Red Fox (H)

The Fox was originally called the goupil in French and this animal was the central character of the hugely famous “novel” written in the 12th century about a goupil called "Renart" (later “Renard”), who was, a clever knight tricking and making fun of the clergy and the powerful who were unable to deal with the people. Renart made fun of them and was sometimes cruel. He was so popular that his name became that of the animal species he portrayed. Another literary reference to this animal is by Jean de la Fontaine whose character « Maître Renard » features in twenty of his fables...

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien

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## Ring Ouzel (I)

The Ring Ouzel is easy to identify: it endorses the black feathering of the blackbird, but is distinguished from it by the big white bib on the chest, the light borders of its wings and abdomen. Insects, grasshoppers, worms and berries make up its menu. This shy mountain blackbird, that flies fast, lives at the edge of forests of larch, Scots pines, Spruce and Swiss Pines pins at an altitude of between 1 000 to 2 500 m. Present in the mountainous massifs it nests in the lower branches or in the hollow trunk of a tree, a crack in the rock or building. Essentially a migrator, the Ring Ouzel hibernates in Spain or in Northern Africa. It comes back to the Alps from the month of March.

Attribution : PNE - Saulay Pascal

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## Eurasian Siskin (J)

Feeding principally on the seeds of the Alder, the Birch and conifers, the Eurasian Siskin only nests in conifer forests in the mountains of the Northern Alps during the reproduction period... The male, more colourful than the female, can be recognized from its bright green-yellow feathers its black forehead and its little white bib under the beak. It is in winter, that you can observe them, sometimes in big groups, descended from the mountains in search of food...

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien

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## Mountain Hare (K)

There are many Mountain Hares or Blue Hares that observe you; the opposite is rarely true... Brown in summer, white in winter, the Mountain Hare is present across the Alps. Like the European Hare from which it differs being smaller, with a white tail and shorter ears, It leaves Y shaped tracks in the snow due to the way it moves in little jumps (it brings its back legs in front of the front legs.). However, it is often its tracks and its little dry, round droppings that indicate its passage. Its large fluffy feet are like snowshoes enabling it to stay on the surface of the snow even when it is powdery.

Attribution : PNE - Couloumy Christian

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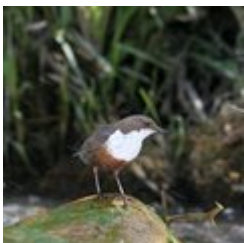


## Cascade de la Pisse (L)

With its origin in the high crystalline ground, the torrent bounces down waterfalls and cascades until it meets the Pisse at a height of 40 m.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Jean-Pierre

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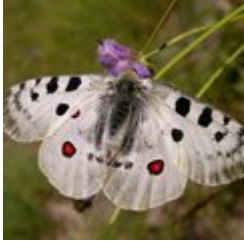


## White-throated Dipper (M)

Easier to observe than the Common Chiffchaff, the White-throated Dipper lives beside rivers and mountain torrents... A little red and grey bird, with a short tail, it has a fine beak, a white mark on the chin and on the chest. This astonishing sparrow has the particularity of being able to walk under the water against the current in search of food. It flattens itself down and grips on to the bottom with its claws, opens its eyes, which are protected from the flow by a fine membrane and spots worms, larvae, little crustaceans and fish.

Attribution : PNE - Chevalier Robert

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## Apollo (N)

A big white butterfly with black and red markings is not shy; the Apollo is easy to see between the middle of June until the end of July... It lays its eggs on the White Stonecrop, a perennial plant with white flowers living on scree and gravel... The male Apollo is born before the female and waits patiently to procreate. It is to be noted that it benefits from national protection; its transport and destruction are forbidden.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien

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## Rhododendron (O)

Nicknamed the rose of the devil, the rhododendron ferrugineum has the capacity of placing itself between the rocks and boulders where the soil is rare. It keeps its stiff leaves which are dark green and shiny and rust coloured underneath right through the winter. It gets its name from this rust colour. Every year, between the end of July and the beginning of August its branches are crowned with bouquets of flowers coloured rose and purple.

Attribution : PNE - Vincent Dominique

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## Cob web House Leek (P)

Thick leaves organized in tight rosettes shoot up towards the sky twists of white hairs which are quite similar to the traps woven by certain spiders. Not less competitive than the rhododendrons, The Cobweb House Leek is adapted to resist drought. The main rosette and the smaller shoots well grouped together; make a real water reserve which is then marvelously stocked by the fleshy leaves... It also develops many kinds of hairs that collect the dew.

Attribution : PNE - Warluzelle Olivier

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## Glacial valley (Q)

The high valley of Bonne, or Font Turbat, is a typical glacial valley in the form of a trough with morainic bars marking the stages of the retreat of the glacier. The lower shelves or glacial shoulders are suspended above the trough 500 to 600 m in size of which the steep sides dominate the layers of scree and the alluvial fans (mass of debris transported by the water). It finishes upstream by a vast cirque at the imposing foot of the rocky wall of the Olan (3 564 m), hemmed in at its foot by the Maye black glacier. At the time of the last glaciation of Würm, 10 000 years ago, the two glaciers of Font Turbat and Maye joined together and fed into a powerful glacial tongue in the Bonne valley. It formed the valley in the shape of a basin by scraping and polishing rocky walls in the granite. The lowest moraines, masses of rocky debris transported by the glaciers are situated around Châtellerat cabin.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard

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## Common Chiffchaff (R)

A bird that you hear but do not see, the Common Chiffchaff nicknamed the "écu counter". Its song, which is very easy to identify, evokes the sound of gold coins falling one by one in to the cash register as they are counted. Green-brown and greyish on top, its feathers are off white underneath, beige on the chest with a barely visible pale brow.

Attribution : PNE - Saulay Pascal

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## Hay Fields (S)

The hayfields where the grass is mown have been improved over the generations by the extraction of stones which have then been stacked in piles which are known locally as "clapiers". These piles of stones mark the boundaries between the crops and the flocks.