



# *Honeyguide*

## **WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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# **French Pyrenees**

## **9 – 16 September 2014**



### Holiday participants

Jill Jordan  
Alice Lester and Pauline Kell  
Gill Shrimpton and John Mallinson  
Susi Lewis-Jones and  
Peter Easingwood

Suzanne Hunter  
Lesley Scott  
Shevaun Mendelsohn and David Nind  
Barrie and June Coxon  
Jean Dunn

### Leaders

Chris Durdin and Ivan Nethercoat

Report by Ivan with additions by Chris. Bird list by Ivan, other lists by Chris.

Our hosts in the French Pyrenees are Odile and Philippe Pujo at the Hotel La Brèche de Roland.

[www.pyrenees-hotel-breche.com](http://www.pyrenees-hotel-breche.com)

Photos edged blue by Ivan, edged green by Chris,  
others as indicated by initials, all taken during the holiday.

Cover photos: wallcreeper (SLJ), southern gentian *Gentiana alpina* (CD), monkshood at Troumouse (CD).

Below: watching snowfinches at the Col du Tourmalet.



This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person towards lammergeier protection was supplemented by gift aid and we were able to give €785 (£660) to the LPO's Gwenaëlle Plet in Gèdre.

Including a donation earlier this year to the LPO in the Cévennes gives us a running total for donations to LPO of £21,217 since 1991. As at September 2014, the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was £96,678.

## Daily Diary

### Tuesday 9 September – to Gèdre

Despite the horribly early start, all those meeting at Stansted were there in good time to brave the difficulties of a terminal that was being reorganised. But it all worked as it should and we emerged from the compact Lourdes Airport terminal building into a slightly damp, cool morning. That we were somewhere different was brought home by a honey buzzard drifting over the car park as a black redstart sang. We were soon onboard our Europcar minibuses and away into Lourdes itself to collect Alice and Pauline, who had flown out three days earlier. We enjoyed a cup of coffee in the sunshine outside the Hotel Beausejour before heading on to Gèdre.

A lay-by, well into the Pyrenees, was a chance to see the rosettes and dead flower spikes of Pyrenean saxifrage and ramonda, but proved productive for much more with Adonis blue, black redstart, a probable slow-worm (one was seen elsewhere during the week), Pyrenean cranesbill and pinky-purple merendera flowers bursting from the ground. An attractive oak orb web spider also caught our eye.



Camberwell beauty

After settling in at the Hotel La Brèche de Roland and refreshed by an excellent lunch, we set off in glorious sunshine for a stroll around the village, with golden eagle and lammergeier delaying us slightly at the hotel car park. The route to 'dipper bridge' gave us more Adonis blues along with many distinctly paler chalkhill blues. From the bridge the dippers duly showed, along with grey wagtail. Then a stunning Camberwell beauty caught Chris's eye as it drifted high (for a butterfly) overhead before alighting near the top of a telephone pylon, allowing great 'scope views for all.

Large wall butterfly (confirmed later as this species, see note on page 11), dusky copper and numerous large whites accompanied us to the top of the village, with wall lizards obliging us with lovely views on the numerous nooks and crannies in the walls. Another honey buzzard flew down the

valley and a red kite drifted low over the trees. We descended a short path to the Bar des Terrasse for a welcome cool beer and to look down on various plants in the rocks over the rapids on the Héas river. We returned to the hotel to finish unpacking and our evening meal. A great first day!

### Wednesday 10 September – Saugué and Bué

As in spring, one of our shortest drives results in one of the most productive and memorable days. The road to Saugué is a delight of flowers, butterflies and birds and off the tourist routes. The journey is simple with occasional stops, a bit of pottering and then moving on to the end of the road with fantastic views of the Cirque du Gavarnie from higher up than normal.

Roadside highlights at the first stop, in woodland edge, were more chalkhill blues, nettle-leaved bellflowers, autumn crocuses and a group of sunbathing firebugs. A very distant kestrel proved a challenge to see against the ridge and even in the scope it was a mere speck.

We moved on and up into open country to 'butterfly corner'. It's a convenient parking spot by a bridge over a river that always turns up something interesting. Today, groups of red-billed choughs were feeding on the ground high on the hillside on one side, while on the other side marmots came out to take in the sun. Young willow warblers were feeding in trees beside the river before continuing south into Spain and beyond, while below them in damp patches in the cool shade were abundant flowers of grass-of-Parnassus.



Autumn crocus  
*Colchicum autumnale*



Willow warbler



Just around the corner the road stops and turns into a level track that runs more or less parallel to the edge of the gorge leading to the Cirque at Gavarnie. Red kites took advantage of the updraft, while in the freshly cut meadows there were water pipits, wheatears and a whinchat. Painted lady, large wall, clouded yellow butterflies and six-spot burnet moths provided entomological interest. A young lammergeier gave distant views while closer to us buzzards ran the gauntlet of a group of carrion crows. Returning to the minibuses, those who climbed the mound near the car parking area found Pyrenean eryngo and several field gentians.



Golden eagle and kestrel

We went back to butterfly corner for lunch in the shade and within a few minutes a golden eagle was hunting the hillside opposite, moving back and forth low over the ground and occasionally perching. A little later it came back and soared overhead, causing annoyance to a pair of kestrels who attempted to make it move on by flying at it in mock charges.



'Butterfly corner': these are mostly chalkhill blues.



Spot the real butterflies!

Roesel's bush crickets were crawling through the grass and a Queen-of-Spain fritillary flew past clouds of chalkhill blues. Not only did the butterflies settle on the roadside gravel, presumably collecting salts, they also alighted on butterfly books. But the star find was a large and beautiful green lizard trying to hide in the long grass below the bridge. It was only partly successful: it was tricky to find but, once located, for many of the group though telescopes, it gave great views.

We carried on a short way to the end of another valley at Bué. From here, through the woodland, the road overlooks Gèdre. Firstly, though, having unclipped an electric fence, we took a brief look at the meadow at the top of the road. Here we added maiden pinks, two species of monkshood and red-berried alpine elder to the list. Meanwhile, birding by the bus was quiet except for a great display of aerial acrobatics by a juvenile golden eagle, with white patches on its wings and tail very obvious against the hillside. A more sedate adult also flew over a little later. A few of the group took advantage of the opportunity for easy downhill walking, some making it all the way to the hotel. The rest we met with a minibus shuttle service. The walk down the road was productive botanically with golden-rod, Welsh poppies, blue lettuce, yellow mountain saxifrage and three species of toadflax. A honey buzzard seemed to be the bird highlight of the trip down until we heard that the front party of walkers had seen a black woodpecker fly across the valley. Barrie and June also saw a large adder by the side of the track, a new addition for the Honeyguide list.



Green lizard

## Thursday 11 September – Barrage des Gloriettes and Cirque de Troumouse

With the weather holding but expected to change during our stay, it seemed wise to visit some of the higher areas and we headed along the Héas valley towards Troumouse. The route goes past the road to the reservoir – the Lac des Gloriettes – so we headed up to have a quick look, rather than walk the full circuit around the lake. The ride up is a set of hairpin bends that took us to a car park with great views back down the valley and a path onto the dam. The water was bereft of birds, as usual, but a black redstart greeted us and there were many water pipits.



Wallcreeper at the Barrage des Gloriettes

The valley is said to be a site for wallcreeper, but we have never seen them here in spring. It seemed worth a look at the large cliff face across the water from the dam, which I duly scanned. The rest of the party moved on across the dam and a few minutes later David came across and said Shevaun had seen what she thought was a wallcreeper below the dam! It wasn't long before we found not one but two wallcreepers feeding on patches of rough ground alongside the dam and then on the dam wall itself right underneath us. We watched the birds, red wings flashing as they danced, climbed and flew around the walls and the reservoir edge for over an hour. We realised there were three birds, probably a family party, and extraordinarily tame for a bird that – if seen at all – is often a distant dot on a cliff-face. Everyone had fantastic views, often very close. Cameras clicked and videos ran but there was also time to just watch and enjoy. An amazing encounter.

Rather buoyed up by the wallcreeper experience we then set off towards the cirque, via the Auberge du Maillet, surely one of the best placed cafés in the world. Our drive was made more interesting by a stage of a Pyrenean challenge cycle event ascending the road to the cirque, plus a BMW motorcycle touring group from Germany that arrived at the café just after we had. We took our coffee enjoying both the mêlée of wheeled activity and the stunning view.

We had our picnics at the car park at the top of the road, where the cyclists were simply turning for their descent. Behind us lay the broad sweep of a mountain plateau, the meadows leading to the foot of the cirque. On the nearest turf were several fine examples of a form of trumpet gentian, namely southern gentian, *Gentiana alpina*. There are damp gullies and shallow streams that criss-cross the area, the streams home to Pyrenean brook newts. Today the newts were surprising easy to find, some with a yellow stripe along their back, some without, including three together at one point. Also showing well were dragonflies: several golden-ringed, one of which perched and allowed close views; yellow-winged darters 'in tandem' and an emperor.



Pyrenean brook newt (this one without a yellow stripe); newt habitat at Troumouse; and common goldenring *Cordulegaster boltonii* on monkshood.

We pottered until late afternoon, then returned to the hotel. We were expecting Gwenaëlle from the LPO – she came the following day – and plan B was, aptly, a DVD about the wallcreepers which were still on our minds.

## Friday 12 September – Col du Tourmalet and Glère valley

It was another day of clear skies and bright sun, and again ideal for the higher parts of our itinerary. The first stop was in the riverside car park in Barèges. Alice was intrigued to notice a nightclub here and we did spend some time looking at that building ... at crag martins, some of which were juvenile, perched on ledges and beams over the cinema entrance. The river, though, was more like a building site as flood defences were being strengthened, so we didn't linger.



Off we set for the Col du Tourmalet, famous from the Tour de France as the highest peak of the race. Along the way were many cyclists attempting the ascent. For us the journey up was a little easier, spectacular views and interesting driving eventually ending up at a rather busy car park at the summit. From here we strolled to a café offering a view down the mountain. There were woolly thistles, kestrel and wheatear at the start, soon joined by many water pipits feeding among the sheep and cattle while small parties of yellow wagtails and swallows came over the Col on migration. Thousands of strange stalks covered large areas of the hillside. They were the gone-over flower stalks of English iris and Chris climbed the hill for photos and to bring us a stem that was still in flower. We could imagine the profusion of blue that would have graced this hillside a few weeks earlier.



English iris *Iris latifolia*,  
with skiing infrastructure behind.

From the café we slowly walked back to the car park and across to the other side of the summit, past the cyclist statue where two-wheeled travellers posed for selfies. Looking down we found a small flock of snowfinches, feeding among the scree. They were surprisingly well camouflaged, even through telescopes, but every now and then they showed a flash of white wings. Down the mountain, we turned through the woods into the Glère valley for a packed lunch in the sunshine among the pines and beeches. Pied flycatcher and serin joined the ever-present chaffinches.

After lunch we took a stroll up a wide open area towards the lower part of the Glère valley. Black woodpeckers called deep in the trees and we found sundews in the damper areas, including one with a flower. Serins flitted among the trees, a crested tit called but didn't show, and a dipper fed in the river below. Wall lizards basked in the sun and in the pines a firecrest called, eventually showing to all who were there. A small pond had the chunky tadpoles (or caterpillars, as Chris first said!) of midwife toads. Barrie and June walked in a more wooded area and enjoyed a good view of a red squirrel – much less likely to show for a bigger group. We all returned for tea at the Chez Louisiette café.

In the evening we had a talk by Gwenaëlle Plet from LPO about the lammergeier. In 20 years the population on the French side of the Pyrenees has grown from 14 to 39 pairs, so good news but only because of the hard work of LPO and its many partners. The Honeyguide donation from participants on this trip will go to help these magnificent birds.

### **Saturday 13 September – Col de Tentes and Ossoue Valley**

Another fine day – could this last? Again we made the most of the good weather to visit higher altitude sites, this morning the Col de Tentes above Gavarnie. Just outside the town the road climbs steeply via a series of hairpin bends onto the meadows grazed by sheep and cattle. We stopped for a while alongside the road and explored a small track and surrounding grassland. Water pipits were the common bird of the area and across the valley a group of alpine choughs were playing on the wind and occasionally landing to feed in the cropped turf. Sharp-eyed David spotted a griffon vulture perched on the distant ridge, and then a lammergeier came overhead, followed by our first ravens. As we turned back to the bus, a movement in the grass turned out to be a female bush cricket, identified later as 4<sup>th</sup> instar wart-biter (photo on page 12).

A farmer moving his sheep, sheepdog duly employed, added to the quiet pastoral scene before us as we got back in the vehicles and headed for the top. There was quite a contrast to that rural idyll as we turned the road's last corner and entered the parking area, only to find it almost full! This was the weekend and while few cars had passed us, these were early travellers walking the high mountain paths. We split up: one party headed towards Spain; Peter climbed to the top of the nearby hill and others took a seat on a hillock overlooking the valley and hills around us. Despite the number of cars, the area remained quiet as the occupants were now generally a long way up their respective trails, as a scan of many of the mountains revealed.

The weather was glorious and the birds a little quiet but regular parties of swallows heading south reminded us this was autumn and migration was well under way. Griffon vultures drifted across the hills and a goshawk put in a brief appearance as blue butterflies moved very quickly, flying very close to the ground and avoiding clear identification. Jean came back with a nice photograph of a Pyrenean rock lizard that was seen by a few of the group. Botanically it was relatively unrewarding: tiny flowers like cushion bedstraw, alpine toadflax and *Paronychia polygonifolia*, in marked contrast to the large scale of the mountain landscape.

Lunch was taken in the Ossoue valley a short drive away at a quiet spot that allowed us to watch the great and small. The sun was intense and several of us retreated to the shade of a rock to watch the large cliff face above. Scores of crag martins were feeding in one area but David again had his eyes on something bigger as a young lammergeier cast its somewhat larger shadow across the rocks. It turned out to be a dark youngster that eventually perched, allowing good but distant views, before taking off again and disappearing into another deep overhang. A young golden eagle was seen briefly just before it went behind the crag and then two adults teased us by briefly appearing and disappearing over the top of the ridge above us.



Ossoue valley

Chris meanwhile was on the hunt for smaller flying beasts and patrolled the road with net and pot in hand. Rock grayling was the first butterfly to grace the new Honeyguide net, forester and six-spot burnet moths on flowers didn't need to be netted for identification and there were ever-present chalkhill blues once again. John and Gill had perhaps the best find in a late Apollo. Houseleeks, familiar to some as a garden plant, were still just in flower on a roadside bank.

Farther up the valley, the road turned into a track and going farther was bumpy and seemed unlikely to be fruitful. Pulling off the road at a turning place, the minibuses became mobile hides as the nearest marmots of the week popped in and out of a hole in the ground.

### **Sunday 14 September – Barrage des Gloriettes and Gèdre-Dessus**

Today was the day the weather changed. With a relatively warm morning and a forecast that said rain in the afternoon we set off for the Barrage des Gloriettes again, the plan being to look again for the wallcreeper, of course, but to complete the walk around the lake this time and return to the hotel for lunch.

All was well at the start, although there was a distinct feeling that "rain in the afternoon" might be an optimistic estimate. The wallcreepers were not on show (even though they had been seen by others staying in Gèdre on the two previous days) so we straggled out as we do, on around the lake as the clouds lowered and the cardabelles closed tighter. Then lightning flashed and thunder roared at the top of the valley and rain could be seen in the distance; the wind was blowing hard toward us, carrying the wet stuff our way. By now the group had more or less separated into two halves. Ivan went back to the van with one half and Chris's group, farther along the path, carried on. Waterproofs were donned and backs held against rocks until the worst of the squall was over. Two of the forward party nearly pressed on into the valley, but were recalled to cross the bridge and complete the circuit over the hill. Here we found alpenrose in flower – chosen by Lesley as a 'holiday highlight' (see page 9) at the week's end. Curiously the rainy walk also made it into highlights, despite our thorough soaking: even Suzanne was caught by the sudden deluge, despite staying closer to the dam and having a minibus key.

Spirits were surprisingly good as we headed back to the hotel for dry clothes and to eat lunch, which for some was outside on the terrace, as the rain had blown over by now. Hundreds of house martins appeared over the village as the cloud came low. During the dry spell, griffons took to the air and ten were seen circling over the hillside opposite the hotel.

After lunch we headed up to Gèdre-Dessus, the hamlet above our village, or rather returned there for Jill and others who were regularly out walking before breakfast. One minibus drove up and most of the rest of the group walked up the steep but short hill, pausing to watch a red squirrel clambering along a fence and through some trees.



The road not only gives a fine view of Gèdre in the valley but also has interesting flora on the dry slopes and roadsides, and often good views of birds of prey. Birds were keeping dry and out of sight (except a family of blackcaps) but some plant highlights in a long list were green amaranth, sickle-leaved hare's-ear, wild candytuft and winter savory. Alice and Pauline walked to dipper bridge and saw a migrating heron that, at first at least, seemed to give up the migration idea and returned from where it came, only to press on up (and south) later. Descending from Gèdre-Dessus, several of the group took the small detour from the village square to the confluence of the rivers Héas and Gavarnie and were entertained by three dippers.

### Monday 15 September – Gavarnie and Ossoue valley

Our last day and the final destination, Gavarnie, is one of the most spectacular in the area. It is also one of the most popular, hence a weekday visit. Despite the warm morning the cloud lingered, and while it was dry as we set off we could hear thunder in nearby valleys.



Mullein moth caterpillar.

A large crag dominates the hillside above Gavarnie and on top was a griffon perched in a sentinel manner, demanding to be looked at. As we watched the crag a golden eagle appeared, flying in front of the rock face, soon followed by another, giving nice views and showing the colour of the birds.

The walk progressed up the valley towards the imposing wall of the cirque. Birds were quiet today but flowers such as horned violet and more merenderas added interest to an already spectacular walk. Mullein moth caterpillars were preparing to pupate, providing colourful static subjects on which to practice camera exposure adjustment and composition.

We had made good time so decided to head for an area of black pines beside the path, a spot we normally visit after lunch. Here crested tits showed well today for those who had not pressed on to the end of the path. And then it rained, and rained. We abandoned the cover of the trees to head back to a café, then lunch in the minibuses. Those who had walked on towards the waterfall also found shelter in a café, and some shared views of an isard with Ivan on their return.



After the rain: Gavarnie river and cirque.

We took time out for shopping, coffee or visiting the National Park centre, inside which Gill, John and Chris found and released a hummingbird hawkmoth. Eagles were still appearing over the cirque and a pied flycatcher showed in the car park before we made a return visit to the nearby Ossoue valley. The sun came through as we watched the crags at the beginning of the valley. Griffon vultures appeared, 15, 20, 30 and finally 60+ birds in the air together joined by at least three golden eagles, one of which took to harrying a griffon. Two young lammergeiers, ravens and chough and below two kestrels hunted the lower slopes of the valley. As the griffons drifted to the other set of hills they were joined by a hundred or so alpine choughs offering a nice size contrast against the hillside. Some of the group took a walk to the bridge at the entrance to the valley and the rest of us remained watching the skies. We eventually decided it was time to leave and get ready for our return home when, as if to say goodbye, an adult lammergeier flew low against the rocks in front of us.



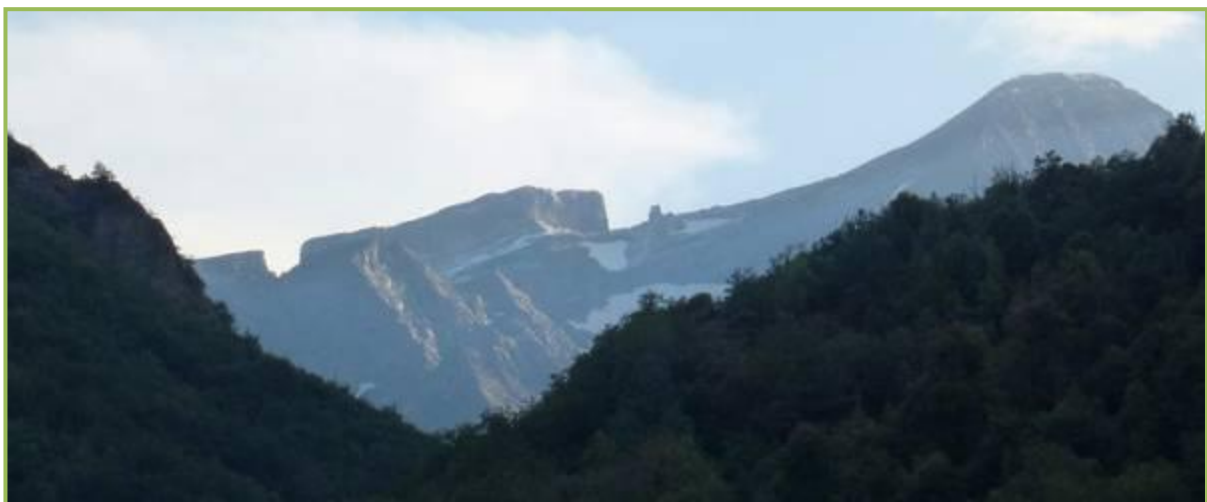
## Tuesday 16 September – Lourdes and home

Breakfast at 6 a.m. and departure in the dark at 6:45 proved surprising straightforward. The short journey passed smoothly enough, pausing only to top up fuel tanks at the Esso garage in Lourdes, and the minibus drop-off, airport and flight back to Stansted were similarly straightforward.

### The best bits

Our final evening's gathering and checklist included hearing everyone's holiday highlights. The wallcreepers were mentioned by everyone, so by popular acclaim they get star billing. The others were:

David	Monkshood patch at Troumouse; golden eagles.
Shevaun	Crag martins on the window ledge; sound of marmots.
Susi	Learning from Ivan how to use the camera; kestrels; dragonflies and newts at Troumouse.
Peter	Golden eagle pursued by a kestrel; black woodpeckers; the iris brought down from a mountain.
Jill	Scenery; Camberwell beauty; astrantia.
Jean	Lammergeier; cloud of blue butterflies; cardabelle.
Pauline	Saugué valley and the butterflies; walking in the rain; the scenery.
Alice	Scenery; Camberwell beauty; marmots; sparkling kestrels; being called a pillock by Pauline!
Barrie	Views of golden eagle; the scenery; the quietness; butterflies.
June	Enjoyed everything; isard; green lizard.
Gillian	Gentians.
John	Everything; cloud of blue butterflies.
Lesley	Alpenrose in flower at the end of the wet walk; merenderas.
Suzanne	60+ vultures; cattle and sheep; had forgotten just how good the views are.
Ivan	Ossoue valley, a glorious place.
Chris	Dragonflies and newts at Troumouse; butterfly corner.



The Brèche de Roland, from the Hotel La Brèche de Roland.  
There is quite a contrast with same view of snow-covered mountains  
shown in the June 2013 report.

## WILDLIFE LISTS

### BIRDS

<b>Cormorant</b>	12 flying towards the mountains from Lourdes
<b>Grey heron</b>	Gèdre after the storm
<b>Mallard</b>	on ponds near the airport
<b>Honey buzzard</b>	from car park at Lourdes, over Gèdre and near Bué
<b>Black kite</b>	seen on route from the airport to Gèdre
<b>Red kite</b>	at Gèdre and Saugué
<b>Lammergeier</b>	seen on most days, mainly young birds with an adult in the Ossoue Valley
<b>Griffon vulture</b>	seen each day
<b>Short-toed eagle</b>	one high over the crags in the Ossoue valley, presumably on migration
<b>Marsh harrier</b>	one high over the crags in the Ossoue valley, presumably on migration
<b>Goshawk</b>	Col de Tente
<b>Sparrowhawk</b>	Ossoue valley
<b>Golden eagle</b>	Adult & young in the Gavarnie valley, also seen at Gèdre, Bué, & 2 adults & a juvenile in Ossoue Valley. At 'butterfly corner' hunting then mobbed by kestrels.
<b>Common buzzard</b>	seen on most days
<b>Kestrel</b>	one pair on the road to Saugué. Pair in Ossoue.
<b>Feral pigeon</b>	recorded on two days
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	recorded only once
<b>Collared dove</b>	on the journey from Lourdes
<b>Green woodpecker</b>	seen and heard in Gèdre
<b>Black woodpecker</b>	seen crossing the valley on the walk down from Bué and heard in the Glère valley
<b>Great spotted woodpecker</b>	heard and seen by river near hotel
<b>Tawny owl</b>	heard from the hotel
<b>Little owl</b>	heard from hotel and seen from the minibus
<b>Swallow</b>	small parties migrating at Col du Tourmalet and Col de Tentes
<b>House martin</b>	large numbers appeared at Gèdre after the storm
<b>Crag martin</b>	individuals seen daily
<b>Water pipit</b>	many at all the higher altitude stops
<b>Grey wagtail</b>	Gèdre, Gavarnie
<b>White wagtail</b>	seen daily, and regular in Gèdre
<b>Yellow wagtail</b>	small migrating flocks at Col du Tourmalet, and with cattle near Col de Tentes
<b>Dipper</b>	Gèdre (dipper bridge and the confluence of the two rivers); Glère valley
<b>Wren</b>	heard on several days
<b>Dunnock</b>	around Gèdre.
<b>Robin</b>	heard or seen on most days
<b>Black redstart</b>	daily in Gèdre and at most locations
<b>Whinchat</b>	Saugué
<b>Stonechat</b>	Ossoue valley
<b>Northern wheatear</b>	at all the high altitude stops
<b>Blackbird</b>	daily in Gèdre
<b>Song thrush</b>	one at Gèdre-Dessus
<b>Blackcap</b>	adult male and two females
<b>Northern chiffchaff</b>	singing in the meadow area in the Gavarnie valley and at Gèdre-Dessus
<b>Willow warbler</b>	several migrants, best seen in the Saugué valley
<b>Firecrest</b>	seen well in the Glère valley
<b>Spotted flycatcher</b>	one seen in Saugué valley
<b>Pied flycatcher</b>	migrants in the Glère valley and in the car park at Gavarnie
<b>Great tit</b>	recorded almost every day
<b>Blue tit</b>	Gèdre
<b>Coal tit</b>	in the pine woods at Gavarnie
<b>Crested tit</b>	in the pine woods at Gavarnie and Glère valley
<b>Nuthatch</b>	at Gèdre and by the free car parking area at Gavarnie
<b>Wallcreeper</b>	3 on the dam wall at Lac des Gloriettes
<b>Jay</b>	Gèdre, Gavarnie, Bué
<b>Raven</b>	Col de Tentes and at Ossoue, not seen often
<b>Carrion crow</b>	recorded every day.
<b>Red-billed chough</b>	at Saugué and Gavarnie
<b>Alpine chough</b>	flocks at Saugué, Col de Tentes and from the Ossoue valley
<b>Magpie</b>	individuals on odd days, more frequent than spring
<b>Starling</b>	near Lourdes
<b>Chaffinch</b>	seen daily
<b>Bullfinch</b>	Gèdre-Dessus
<b>Linnet</b>	a group flew past at Tourmalet
<b>Serín</b>	Gèdre and Glère valley
<b>Snowfinch</b>	c.10 at Tourmalet
<b>House sparrow</b>	seen most days
<b>Yellowhammer</b>	Glère valley



## MAMMALS

Alpine marmot	seen regularly
Red squirrel	several sightings
Weasel/stoat	a small mustelid that dashed across the Gloriettes road could have been a weasel or small stoat
Isard	one at Gavarnie
Roe deer	glimpsed from a minibus



Alpine marmot



Wall lizards at Gèdre

## AMPHIBIANS

Common frog	Saugué, Glère valley & Troumouse
Pyrenean brook newt	Troumouse
Midwife toad (tadpoles)	Glère valley

## REPTILES

Common wall lizard	widespread
Pyrenean rock lizard	Col de Tentes
Green lizard	Saugué
Slow-worm	
Adder	Bué

## BUTTERFLIES

Apollo	Painted lady	Red admiral	Camberwell beauty
Queen-of-Spain fritillary	Large wall brown*	Rock grayling**	Marbled white
Small heath	Large white	Small white	Clouded yellow
Brimstone	Common blue	Adonis blue	Chalkhill blue
Dusky copper	Large skipper	Small skipper	

\* The large wall browns were not the typical dark brown shown in most books, but the more orangey form *adrasta* found in much of France and the Iberian peninsula.

\*\* Rock grayling is difficult to separate in the field from woodland grayling, but a combination of size, habitat and altitude makes rock grayling the likelier species.



Large wall brown  
*Lasiommata maera* var. *adrasta*



Marbled white



Queen of Spain fritillary

## MOTHS

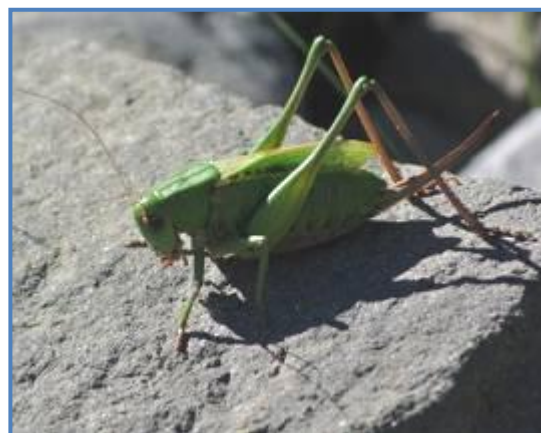
Hummingbird hawkmoth	6-spot burnet	Forester	Mullein moth (caterpillar)
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## OTHER NOTABLE INVERTEBRATES

<i>Arcyptera fusca</i>	Large banded grasshopper	Tourmalet
<i>Metrioptera roeseli</i>	Roesel's bush cricket	Saugué
<i>Decticus verrucivorus</i>	Wart-biter	Col de Tentes
<i>Oedipoda germanica</i>	Red-winged grasshopper	widespread
<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>	Golden-ringed dragonfly (Common goldenring)	Troumouse
<i>Sympetrum flaveolum</i>	Yellow-winged darter	Troumouse
<i>Anax imperator</i>	Emperor dragonfly (Blue emperor)	Troumouse
<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>	Fire-bug	
<i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>	7-spot ladybird	
<i>Diplolepis rosae</i>	Robin's pincushion, caused by a gall wasp	
<i>Formica rufa</i>	Wood ant	
<i>Gerris</i> sp. (probably)	Pond skater	
(species unknown)	Water boatman	
<i>Aculepeira armada</i>	Oak orb web spider	



Oak orb web spider *Aculepeira armada*



Wart-biter *Decticus verrucivorus*



Firebugs *Pyrrhocoris apterus*  
top right is an adult  
the rest are nymphs of various sizes.



Large banded grasshopper  
*Arcyptera fusca*



## FLOWERING PLANTS

Some widespread and familiar species are omitted. (nif) = not in flower, mostly for distinctive leaves.

### Dicotyledons

#### Aceraceae

<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple
<i>A. pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore

#### Amaranthaceae

<i>Amaranthus hybridus</i>	Green amaranth
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#### Apiaceae

<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Angelica
<i>Astrantia major</i>	Great masterwort
<i>Bupleurum falcatum</i>	Sickle-leaved hare's-ear
<i>Conopodium pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean pignut
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild carrot
<i>Eryngium bourgatii</i>	Pyrenean eryngo
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed (nif)
ssp. <i>pyrenaicum</i>	
<i>Laserpitium siler</i>	A sermountain (nif)
<i>Meum athamanticum</i>	Spignel
<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	Sweet cicely (nif)
<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	Wild parsnip

#### Asclepiadaceae

<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Swallow-wort (nif)
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#### Asteraceae

<i>Achilla millefolia</i>	Yarrow
<i>Adenostyles alliariae</i>	Adenostyles
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Perennial daisy
<i>Carduus carlinoides</i>	Pyrenean thistle
<i>C. carlinifolius</i>	Carlina-leaved thistle
	Cardabelle
<i>Carlina acanthifolia</i>	(= acanthus-leaved carline thistle)
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Black knapweed
<i>Cirsium acaule</i>	Dwarf or stemless thistle
<i>C. eriophorum</i>	Woolly thistle
<i>C. palustre</i>	Marsh thistle
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth hawksbeard
<i>Erigeron acer</i>	Blue fleabane
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp agrimony
<i>Galinsoga ciliata</i>	Shaggy soldier
<i>Hieracium lanatum</i>	Woolly hawkweed
	(nif) (Gèdre-Dessus)
<i>H. pilosella</i>	Mouse-ear hawkweed
<i>Lactuca perennis</i>	Blue (or Mountain) lettuce
<i>Mycelis muralis</i>	Wall lettuce
<i>Petasites</i> sp.	(White) butterbur (nif)
probably <i>albus</i>	
<i>Picris hieraceoides</i>	Hawkweed ox-tongue
<i>Prenanthus purpurea</i>	Purple lettuce
<i>Solidago virgaurea</i>	Golden-rod
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Colt's-foot (nif)

#### Betulaceae

<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch
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#### Boraginaceae

<i>Anchusa arvensis</i>	Bugloss
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's-bugloss
<i>Pulmonaria</i> sp.	Lungwort (nif)

### Brassicaceae

<i>Arabis turrita</i>	Towercross (seedpods)
	yellow, very silvery
<i>Fibigia clypeata</i>	hairy, big oval pods, at Gèdre-Dessus
<i>Iberis amara</i>	Wild candytuft

### Buxaceae

<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box
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### Campanulaceae

<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Harebell
<i>C. patula</i>	Spreading bellflower
<i>C. trachelium</i>	Nettle-leaved bellflower
<i>Phyteuma orbiculare</i>	Round-headed rampion

### Caprifoliaceae

<i>Lonicera pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean honeysuckle (in fruit)
<i>L. xylosteum</i>	Fly honeysuckle (nif)
<i>Sambucus ebulus</i>	Dwarf elder (in fruit)
<i>S. nigra</i>	Elder ((in fruit))
<i>S. racemosa</i>	Alpine elder (in fruit)

### Caryophyllaceae

<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved sandwort
<i>Dianthus deltoides</i>	Maiden pink
<i>D. monspessulanus</i>	Fringed pink
<i>Gypsophila repens</i>	Alpine gypsophila
<i>Paronychia polygonifolia</i>	
<i>Silene alba</i>	White campion
<i>S. dioica</i>	Red campion
<i>S. vulgaris</i>	Bladder campion
<i>Saponaria officinalis</i>	Soapwort
<i>Spergularia rubra</i>	Sand spurrey

### Chenopodiaceae

<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Fat hen
<i>C. bonus-henricus</i>	Good King Henry

### Cistaceae

<i>Helianthemum appeninum</i>	White rock-rose
<i>H. nummularium</i>	Common rock-rose

### Clusiaceae (Hypericaceae)

<i>Hypericum nummularium</i>	Western St. John's-wort
<i>H. perforatum</i>	Perforate St. John's-wort

### Convulvulaceae

<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Common dodder
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### Corylaceae

<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
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### Crassulaceae

<i>Sedum telephium</i>	Orpine
<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>	Common houseleek

### Dipsacaceae

<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small scabious
<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	Devilsbit scabious

### Droseraceae

<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved sundew
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**Ericaceae**

<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry (in fruit)
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather
<i>Rhododendron ferrugineum</i>	Alpenrose
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	Bilberry (in fruit)

**Euphorbiaceae**

<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Large Mediterranean spurge (nif)
<i>E. cyparissias</i>	Cypress spurge
<i>E. helioscopia</i>	Sun spurge

**Fabaceae**

<i>Astragalus monspessulanus</i>	Montpelier milk-vetch
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> ssp. <i>pyrenaica</i>	Kidney Vetch
<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe vetch
<i>Lotus (corniculatus) alpinus</i>	Alpine bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>L. corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Lucerne (=alfalfa)
<i>Melilotus alba</i>	White melilot
<i>Ononis natrix</i>	Large yellow rest-harrow
<i>O. repens</i>	Rest-harrow
<i>O. pusilla</i>	A yellow rest-harrow
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover
<i>T. repens</i>	White clover
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush vetch

**Fagaceae**

<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Downy/white oak

**Gentianaceae**

<i>Gentiana alpina</i>	Southern gentian
<i>Gentianella campestris</i>	Field gentian

**Geraniaceae**

<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common storksbill
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean cranesbill
<i>G. robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
<i>G. rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved cranesbill
<i>G. sylvaticum</i>	Wood cranesbill

**Gesneriaceae**

<i>Ramonda myconi</i>	Ramonda (nif)
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**Globulariaceae**

<i>Globularia nudicalis</i>	Leafless-stemmed globularia (nif)
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**Grossulariaceae**

<i>Ribes</i> sp. <i>petraeum</i> ?	(Rock?) redcurrant
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**Lamiaceae**

<i>Acinos arvensis</i>	Basil-thyme
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	Wild basil
<i>Galeopsis pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean hemp-nettle
<i>G. speciosa</i>	Large-flowered hemp-nettle
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Marjorum
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self-heal
<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild clary
<i>Satureja montana</i>	Winter savory
<i>Sideritis hyssopifolia</i>	Sideritis
<i>Stachys recta</i>	Yellow woundwort
<i>Teucrium pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean germander (nif)
<i>Thymus serpyllum</i>	Wild thyme

**Lentibulariaceae**

<i>Pinguicula grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered butterwort (nif)
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**Loranthaceae**

<i>Viscum album</i>	Mistletoe
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**Malvaceae**

<i>Malva moschata</i>	Musk mallow
<i>M. neglecta</i>	Dwarf mallow

**Oleaceae**

<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
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**Onagraceae**

<i>Epilobium angustifolium</i>	Rosebay willowherb
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**Papaveraceae**

<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater celandine
<i>Meconopsis cambrica</i>	Welsh poppy

**Parnassiaceae**

<i>Parnassia palustris</i>	Grass of Parnassus
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**Plantaginaceae**

<i>Plantago media</i>	Hoary plantain
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**Polygonaceae**

<i>Rumex scutatus</i>	French sorrel (= Rubble dock)
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**Polgalaceae**

<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Common milkwort
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**Ranunculaceae**

<i>Aconitum anthora</i>	Yellow monkshood
<i>A. napellus</i>	Monkshood
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine (nif)
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh marigold (nif)
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Traveller's-joy (nif)
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Stinking hellebore (nif)
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Hepatica (nif)
<i>Prunus mahaleb</i>	St Lucie's cherry (nif)

**Resedaceae**

<i>Reseda lutea</i>	Wild mignonette
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**Rosaceae**

<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	Alpine lady's-mantle (nif)
<i>A. vulgaris</i>	Lady's-mantle (nif)
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Rosa glauca</i>	Blue-leaved rose (in fruit)
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Blackberry/bramble
<i>R. idaeus</i>	Raspberry (in fruit)
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad-burnet (nif)
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan (in fruit)

**Rubiaceae**

<i>Asperula cynanchica</i>	Squintancywort
<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort
<i>Galium album</i>	Upright bedstraw
<i>G. pyrenaicum</i>	A cushion bedstraw
<i>G. odoratum</i>	Woodruff (nif)
<i>G. verum</i>	Lady's-bedstraw

**Saxifragaceae**

<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	Yellow mountain saxifrage
<i>S. longifolia</i>	Pyrenean saxifrage (nif)
<i>S. umbrosa</i>	Wood saxifrage (nif)

**Scrophulariaceae**

<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	Common snapdragon
<i>Chaenorhinum minus</i>	Small toadflax
<i>C. origanifolium</i>	Chaenorhinum
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved toadflax



### Scrophulariaceae (cont'd)

<i>Euphrasia alpina</i>	Alpine eyebright
<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.	Eyebright
<i>Linaria alpina</i>	Alpine toadflax
<i>L. supina</i>	Pyrenean toadflax
<i>Verbascum densiflorum</i>	A mullein
<i>V. nigrum</i>	Dark mullein
<i>V. thapsus</i>	Great mullein
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime (nif)

### Solanaceae

<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet or woody nightshade
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### Thymelaeaceae

<i>Daphne laureola</i>	Spurge-laurel (nif)
ssp. <i>philippii</i>	
<i>D. mezereum</i>	Mezereon (in fruit)
<i>Thymelaea tinctoria</i>	Twisted thymelaea

### Verbenaceae

<i>Verbena officinalis</i>	Vervain
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### Violaceae

<i>Viola cornuta</i>	Horned violet
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### Monocotyledons

### Cyperaceae

<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Cotton-grass
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### Iridaceae

<i>Iris latifolia</i>	English iris
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### Liliaceae

<i>Allium sphaerocephalon</i>	Round-headed leek (nif)
<i>Asphodelus albus</i>	Asphodel (nif)
<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	Autumn crocus
<i>Merendera pyrenaica</i>	Merendera

### Orchidaceae

<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	Broad-leaved helleborine (nif)
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### Poaceae (very incomplete)

<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking-grass
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Bermuda grass
<i>Nardus stricta</i>	Mat-grass

### CONIFERS

<i>Abies alba</i>	Silver fir
<i>Larix decidua</i>	European larch
<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Pyrenean black pine
ssp. <i>salzmannii</i>	
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Juniper

### FERNS

<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black spleenwort
<i>A. ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue
<i>A. scolopendrium</i>	Hart's tongue
<i>A. septentrionale</i>	Forked spleenwort
<i>A. trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rusty-back fern
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Common polypody
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken



Field gentian  
*Gentianella campestris*  
with eyebright in the background.



Cardabelle  
*Carlina acanthifolia*



Merendera  
*Merendera pyrenaica*