

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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The Cévennes

4 – 12 June 2010

Holiday Participants

Nicholas Armfelt
John and Claire Horder
Bridget Smith
Wendy Wilson

Susie Turner
Russell and Sara Gomm
Don and Jane Walton
Rob and Pam May

Leaders

Robin and Rachel Hamilton

Our hosts at La Gare aux Ânes: Sylvain Goleo and Nicolas Lasne <http://lagareauxanes.free.fr>

Daily diary by Robin and Rachel, plant list by Rachel, other lists by Robin and Nicholas.

Photos edged blue by Russell and Sara, edged orange by Rob, edged yellow by Bridget, edged green by Robin and Rachel and edged red from the Honeyguide archive.

There were so many superb photos taken during the week that there wasn't room for them all in this report. You can see a further selection on <http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/wildlife-holidays/documents/Cevennes-wildlifephotos.pdf> (1.72MB).

Cover photo: Pheasant's eye narcissi.

Below: Combe-Redonde station at the beginning of the 20th century, showing what is now the rear view of the hotel/restaurant (photo from La Gare aux Ânes website).



As with all Honeyguide holidays, £35 of the price of this one was put towards a conservation project, in this case for the protection of vultures and other wildlife of the Grands Causses. This programme of habitat management combined with research, survey and education, is managed by La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO, the French Bird Protection League) in partnership with landowners. The conservation contribution this year of £35 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, bringing the total to £500. This was combined with contributions to LPO from Honeyguide's Dordogne holiday and another £200 from the Wildlife Outreach Network in Essex which would have topped up the contributions through the French Pyrenees had that holiday not been cancelled due to air traffic control strikes in France, a total of £1183 sent to the LPO this year. This brings Honeyguide's total contributions to LPO since the first Honeyguide holiday in France in 1991 to £14,106. The total for conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was £68,239 at November 2010.

Daily diary

Day 1: Friday 4 June, Arrival: The Millau Viaduct and la Gare aux Ânes

There was a buzz of excitement as old friends and new acquaintances met up at Stansted and we set off on a fine June morning for our hour and three-quarter flight to Rodez. Rodez is set in a gently rolling, rather 'English' landscape but the hour and a half drive, taking us over the famous Millau viaduct (below), totally transformed our surroundings. We were captivated by the views of rocky hillsides spread with colourful flowers unfolding into the distance; we caught sight of buzzards and kites; tiny hamlets of stone-built cottages seemed to grow out of the rocks. We were greeted at la Gare aux Ânes (below) not only by serins and goldfinches singing from the trees in the drive, but also by our host and excellent chef, Sylvain Goleo, who quickly showed us round his charming, if eccentric, hotel – genuinely a converted railway station – directed us to our rooms and then disappeared to finish preparing dinner. We gathered for drinks and then sat down to our first experience of Sylvain's renowned cooking: crudités, followed by salmon lasagne and tarte aux pommes, with excellent wine and a fine spread of local cheeses.



Day 2: Saturday 5 June, Exploring the Causse du Larzac to the south: around la Gare aux Ânes, la Couvertorade and la Pezade

Our first morning dawned fine, sunny and warm. We had decided against an early walk, still adjusting to the travel and the time change. However, Nicholas was out before breakfast and returned with a promising list of butterflies: large and small whites, speckled wood, small heath, brown argus and common blue. Sylvain's partner, Nicolas Lasne, who always presides over breakfast for us, gave us a wonderfully warm welcome and provided delicious coffee (or tea, of course) as well as fresh bread and croissants, cheeses and chacuterie and a great selection of jams and honey, fresh fruit and yoghurt.

We set off after breakfast, heading south across the Causse du Larzac. All along the roadside there were tantalizing glimpses of colourful flowers: the bright blue of flax and aphyllanthes, yellow and white rockroses and wild roses. After a mile or so we turned uphill along a rough track and came to a halt among box and juniper bushes on a fragrant turf of wild thyme. This was common thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*, familiar as a culinary herb but not found in the wild in Europe except here in the south. Our first Bonelli's warbler was introducing itself from a nearby pine tree; it was a bird we were to become very familiar with during the week. There was a blackcap singing too, an intermittent whitethroat and a distant woodlark. Two linnets flew by and a skylark started up from beside the track. We spread out to explore. There was an amazing spectacle of wild flowers: the tiny blue knapweed, *Carduncellus*, pale pink Pyrenean flax, patches of deeper pink Montpellier milk vetch, bright yellow hairy viper's grass and lesser horseshoe vetch. Here and there we found the great prickly rosettes of the local speciality, acanthus-leaved carline thistle or 'cardabelle' and everywhere, the delicate waving stems of the elegant grass known locally as 'cheveu d'ange', angel's hair or, literally, as feather grass *Stipa pennata*, for its extraordinary fine silver feather-like seed-heads. Sara found the clear blue, curious-looking tassel hyacinths – 'bad hair day', someone said; Nicholas called us over to military and early purple orchids. Wendy was tracking butterflies and other insects with her camera: a small blue, a painted lady, a forester moth and an ascalaphid. There were scarce swallowtails, Adonis blues and a Berger's (or possibly a pale, it didn't hang around to be identified for sure) clouded yellow. Further up the hill, there was a large patch of disturbed ground where the remains of early purple orchids were strewn about. They had been dug up and their tubers eaten by wild boar. We caught sight briefly of a distant ringtail harrier – probably a Montagu's. Russell called us over to where he had found a tiny cockroach *Ectobius* sp and a field cricket and we puzzled over a strange incrustation on a rock which turned out to be the ootheca (egg-cases) of a praying mantis.

A few miles further on we stopped to explore la Couvertoirade, one of the most perfectly preserved of the Templar villages that dot the causses along the ancient pilgrim routes. There were serins in the trees, swifts swirling and screaming everywhere and black redstarts singing from high on the rooftops. Many of the ancient wooden doorways were emblazoned with fine specimens of cardabelle (left) to ward off evil and forecast the weather (at least, retrospectively – they respond to the reduced humidity when the sun comes out by spreading their bracts wide open around the flower-head).



Bridget was beguiled by the array of plants growing in the stonework: tiny ferns, snapdragons, crane's-bills and speedwells. We separated to explore – some for refreshment, some for shopping for local produce, crafts and souvenirs, and some just to follow the maze of alleyways in search of insects, flowers and birds. We met again by the gatehouse where swifts were swooping under the archway and up to crevices in the high stone fortifications of the village. We enjoyed watching house sparrows and collared doves and listened to serins and a nightingale singing nearby. Russell and Sara arrived with news of a hoopoe by the church. We then followed the lane around the outside of the village to where a '*lavogne*', a paved dewpond, is still beautifully preserved and in daily use. Sheep are essential to the ecology and the economy of this area: their grazing ensures the survival of the characteristic species-rich grassland and their milk is used to produce the world famous Roquefort cheese. These *lavognes*, characteristic features of the hot arid landscape, have been used since medieval times for watering the sheep flocks before they are folded for the night, and again in the morning before they are led out to graze on the causse grassland for the day. We walked down to the water's edge and there a Glanville fritillary, a dozen or more small blues, a common blue and an Adonis blue were all gathered on the ground 'salting', drawing minerals from the damp mud. (Small blues with one Adonis blue, left.)



We drove south again, and followed a track that leads away from the road and winds between the rocks. We found a sheltered picnic spot – with sun and shade according to taste – and unpacked a fine picnic of fresh bread with ham and rice salad, pears and cheeses. Sitting amongst the rocks and wild flowers we had a brief view of a subalpine warbler's song flight from the top of the bushes opposite, a Bonelli's warbler sang repeatedly and we caught sight of a buzzard as it drifted overhead. The track continues on, through the rocky landscape, past strangely eroded hillocks and stony scree slopes. We strolled along it, enjoying a good view of the subalpine warbler, this time not only in song flight but also perched and scolding us fiercely. Where the soil was deeper over the dry limestone rock, moles had struggled to find food and a few stony molehills had been thrown up. It was warm and insecty: we watched a pair of small heaths in their mating flight, there were several forester moths resting on flowers, and a common swallowtail – as it turned out, our only one – floated by. Pam was turning over stones and found some more of the mantis ootheca. We scrambled among the rocks, extraordinarily eroded into an almost lunar landscape. Tiny crevices held hoary rockrose, alpine aster and bright yellow flax; sheltering amongst the rocks on pockets of deeper soil we found both species of butterfly orchid and man orchids. Somehow, it was surprising to hear the familiar songs of a robin and a dunnoek from the thicket of trees, and then we were delighted to hear a distant quail calling. We paused to enjoy a fading clump of pasque flowers by the track and heard the clear song of a woodlark from the hillside across the road.

A short drive to the far side of the A75 took us through the hamlet of la Pezade and out among gently rolling hills covered in lush grassland than we had seen so far. Here, orchids and butterflies abounded. We quickly found lady, frog, man and military orchids and went in search of others. Nicholas and Wendy followed the butterflies and found for us a Chapman's blue, more Berger's clouded yellows, several knapweed fritillaries, a few more Glanville fritillaries and a western dappled white. Across the valley, a melodious warbler was singing but it defied all our attempts to catch sight of it. Bridget and Pam set off in the direction of the quail that was calling tantalisingly from a nearby cornfield – and were eventually rewarded by a brief view.

After a little break to get ready for dinner and relax – during which Sara and Russell found some Adonis blues salting by the pool – we met with a drink on the terrace to review the day's sightings and enjoy the evening sunshine. Then, after a dinner of home-smoked salmon salad, navarin of local lamb followed by a great selection of cheeses, then *bavarois* of pears, all accompanied by a choice of local wines, we wandered outside to listen to the night sounds: nightingales of course, in wonderful song, and the distant call of a midwife toad.

Day 3: Sunday 6 June, The Causse Noir and the Vultures of the Gorges de la Jonte

It was another lovely morning and a blackcap was in full song. Opposite the hotel the path runs beside a high hedge and leads on to an area of grassy causse. There was a white wagtail feeding on the ground by the gate and four linnets flitted about in the trees above our heads. We crossed the road and strolled along the path. We heard a hoopoe calling and searched for it, and then watched two of them fly across and perch on a nearby tree. As we walked along the track a corn bunting was singing in the valley below us, and a skylark overhead.

The causse grassland opens up beside the track and we couldn't resist wandering among the grasses and fragrant thyme. A common blue butterfly and a chimney sweeper moth were waking up and we enjoyed some lovely fresh, dewy man orchids, a monkey orchid and the first of one of the local endemic orchids: Aymonin's ophrys *Ophrys aymoninii* (right), a dainty little fly orchid with yellow fringes to the lobes of the lip. The first jackdaws of the week flew over and we heard a distant cuckoo and then watched a smart male red-backed shrike perched on a wire, looking out menacingly for prey. There was a cream-spot tiger moth on the gatepost as we arrived back to be welcomed by Nicolas and the usual excellent breakfast.



After breakfast we headed northwards, passing through the little medieval town of Nant (to be explored properly later in the week). We drove down the valley of the Dourbie, the road twisting and turning with constantly changing views; in places, the steep cliffs close in to form deep gorges, in others, pretty side valleys open up, and we enjoyed glimpses of the characteristic medieval stone villages (also to be explored later in the week) perched precariously on the hillsides.

At la Roque Ste Marguerite we turned uphill and followed the road up the side of the valley onto the Causse Noir. The character of this new causse, in places densely clothed in dark pinewoods, hence the name, contrasted sharply with the open, rocky grassland of the Causse du Larzac and our first stop was amongst the pines. Here, some distance from modern habitation, is evidence of the historical importance of this land which once supported a much denser population. A beautifully constructed and maintained *toit-citerne* (right), literally 'roof cistern' stands on the hillside; once in open grassland, the reduced grazing has allowed trees to grow around it. The limestone of the causse is extremely free draining so that water for stock and irrigation is very precious and ingenious methods of conserving it are found throughout the area. This is a particularly well-preserved example: an underground sealed tank is covered by and fed from a ground-level roof-like structure beautifully tiled in the local stone. While we were admiring this, a Bonelli's warbler entertained us continually from a nearby tree, we caught brief glimpses of a firecrest and a group of three or four griffon vultures appeared above us through gaps in the trees.



In the shade of the pines the pasque flowers were still looking bright and lovely and there were patches of bird's nest orchids under the low branches. We were enchanted by a small patch of one-flowered wintergreen, sword-leaved helleborines shone white in the shade and there were fine stands of unusually vigorous common spotted orchids in the ditch beside the road. We looked at ant-lion pits in the ditch too; Russell managed to lure out a larva for the briefest moment by pretending to be a tempting morsel of prey using a grass stalk to send a few sand grains sliding down the crater, and we heard the characteristic 'chiouw chiouw' of a small flock of choughs tumbling through the air above us.

Our next stop was also an echo of a former era: the ruined church and *prieuré* of St Jean des Balmes. We walked up the track under tall pines and followed the calls of crested tits and crossbills through the woods. Underfoot, we were charmed by more wintergreens – this time nodding wintergreen and green wintergreen – more sword-leaved helleborine and more bird's nest orchids, but all the time we were hoping for a good view of a crested tit or a crossbill. Eventually, we returned to the ruins to enjoy our picnic, entertained by the unusual sight of a stream of serious mountain bikers speeding down the rough track. The birds we sought were still calling overhead, but in the end we had to be satisfied with a few brief glimpses.

We set off again and soon reached the northern edge of the Causse Noir. As the road dropped steeply down into the valley of the river Tarn we passed one of the most spectacular viewpoints in the area. We stopped and looked out over the confluence of two great rivers, each emerging from a magnificent gorge: the Tarn and the Jonte. The spur between the two, and the centre of our view, is evocatively named '*Point Sublime*'. A few griffon vultures were dots in the sky and a flock of choughs swirled overhead. A fine specimen of Italian maple dominated the foreground and on the roadsides around us there were more orchids, spotted cat's ear, vetches and bearberry.

We pressed on, through the little riverside town of le Rozier and up the valley of the Jonte. Our destination was the headquarters and information centre of the organization responsible for the reintroduction to the area of the iconic griffon vulture. We were due at 2 o'clock to be given an opportunity to use the extensive and well placed viewing platforms, to see their video presentation and to visit the museum. As we approached, we could see increasing numbers of vultures, whirling over the cliffs and soaring high into the distance. We were welcomed and ushered into the hall for the video presentation about the work of the project – a beneficiary of this Honeyguide holiday's charity donation. Up on the viewing platform we were quickly shown the great pine tree across the valley, piled with untidy sticks – a black vulture's nest; telescopes were trained on it and a huge 'chick' lumbered into view. Turning the 'scopes onto the cliff we could make out caves in the cliff marked with white streaks of vulture droppings and again, patience revealed the young birds moving about and exercising their wings. The air around the platform was alive with swifts, swallows and house martins, and the first crag martins of the week.

Time was getting on. As we left we heard a green woodpecker calling and beside the path to the car park we looked at both military and pyramidal orchids; and then Bridget found a plant of ground-pine. Half a mile further up the gorge we stopped at a roadside bar for much needed refreshment. While we waited for our complicated order of all the different kinds of coffee and tea available we watched a party of twenty or thirty choughs calling and performing aerobatics overhead.

At the head of the gorge lies the pretty market town of Meyrueis, and then the road home took us up onto the eastern edge of the causse Noir, where the alkaline limestone gives way to acid schist. Up on the top we stopped for a most spectacular field of cornflowers and a lovely view of a short-toed eagle, and then we followed the Gorges du Trévezet back to the Dourbie, Nant and home for another delicious and relaxed dinner.

Day 4: Monday 7 June, Mont Aigoual and the Schist and Granite Hills of the True Cévennes

There was a little cloud and a cool gentle breeze as we walked briskly, with the rising sun behind us, along the road to the corner and then behind the old railway building and on to the abandoned railway line. At the top of the hill a cirl bunting was singing from a wire. We scrambled through the cutting and stopped spellbound to listen to a nightingale singing – a superb virtuoso that held us for several minutes. The views across the causse were beautiful but we had walked further than we had intended and had no time to linger – breakfast called.

After breakfast we headed for the Dourbie valley again but this time set off up river, towards its source in the massif of Mont Aigoual. Around St Jean du Bruel the landscape changes dramatically; we left behind the limestone and moved into the impermeable schists and granites. Sweet chestnut woods have developed on the acid soils and cistuses were coming into flower on the sunny road verges. Where the rocks ran with surface water, mosses and saxifrages were thriving. We followed the south side of the Dourbie and then crossed the river in the village of Dourbies. Climbing steadily, we eventually came to open moorland with extensive tracts of purging broom, its golden flowers just coming out. Below us, meadows dropped down to the river, studded with pheasant's-eye daffodils. Nearer the summit we entered an area of mature woodland, with great beech and spruce trees towering over the road. Then finally we reached the summit: short grassland dotted with wild tulips and elder-flowered orchids. We parked at the top, close to the 'castle' that houses the meteorological station and museum, and the very welcome cafeteria and loos.

Skylarks were singing overhead and a male yellowhammer was proclaiming his territory from the top of one of the isolated, rather stunted pine trees – we spread out to explore. The first spectacle was a glittering mass of iridescent blue dung beetles crowded on a pile of dog poo. There was a continual procession of large white butterflies, all migrating steadfastly northward, accompanied by a few clouded yellows and orange tips. Hundreds of swifts filled the air above us, and we paused to admire a beautiful specimen of the two-banded longhorn beetle *Rhagium bifasciatum*.

The short alpine turf was brilliant with flowers and the cameras had a busy time: field pansies and wood violets, bilberry, alpine lady's mantle, mountain everlasting, alpine clover, alpine hawkweed, and globe-headed rampion. The views were wonderful, the hills rolling into the misty distance and eventually to the Mediterranean. We picnicked in the sunshine and then headed downhill again, with several stops scheduled.

We paused to examine at close quarters a wonderful display of wild tulips, and to have a close look at the elder-flowered orchids that we had spotted on the way up. Flying over the tulip meadow, a large butterfly caught our eye: a large tortoiseshell. It was quite a way off but stayed visible for a long time as it fluttered among the low branches at the edge of the wood, and we were easily able to get the binoculars onto it for a very good view. While we were watching that, we also noticed that the large white football-sized blobs in the field were some kind of giant puffball. We were tempted, but remembered that collecting specimens in the National Park was forbidden. Then, as we got closer we realized that they were wartier than the giant puffball and turned out to be very large specimens of the mosaic puffball, not good to eat.

A mile or so down the hill we stopped briefly at the National Park Visitor Centre, an excellent source of books and leaflets full of information about the area, as well as postcards, and next-door is a shop selling local produce. We stocked up on chestnut honey and chestnut flour and various mementos and gifts to take home.

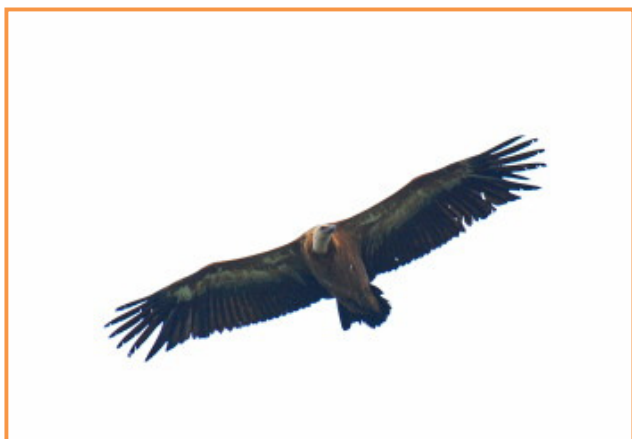
The next stop was among the fields of pheasant's-eye daffodils (photo on front cover). The flowers were at their best and the sweet scent rose as we walked among them. It was a wonderful sight and a rare photo-opportunity. There were stonechats about; Claire found a green lizard on a tree trunk; Rob found a coal tit and watched it visit its nest hole; a short-toed eagle flew by and we added three new and fine butterflies: a small tortoiseshell, a small copper and a scarce copper.

Another short drive took us to the village of Laupies. A lane from the edge of the village runs downhill and turns into a track alongside the river Dourbie. The river tumbles over boulders and through bubbling rapids, and a range of new plants grow in the damp shade beside the path: meadow cranesbill, *Geranium pratense*, spiked rampion *Phyteuma spicatum*, the Cévennes endemic subspecies of our garden lungwort *Pulmonaria longifolia* ssp *cevennensis*, the beautiful pure white-flowered woodrush *Luzula nivea*. We found a watchable Bonelli's warbler in a bush and then Pam spotted a nuthatch up in a willow tree. As we watched, its whole family appeared, searching for food up and down the tree-trunk. Finally, we had a lovely view of a short-toed eagle as it flew overhead.

There were no more stops and time was pressing, so we followed the northern side of the valley below Dourbies and rejoined our route of yesterday at the head of the Gorges du Trévezet and home. We met again on the terrace before dinner and enjoyed a drink in the evening sunshine while we reminded ourselves of the species we had seen today, and then went in to enjoy another of Sylvain's excellent dinners.

Day 5: Tuesday 8 June, The Heart of the Causse du Larzac

We woke to a fine Scotch mist and strolled along the track opposite, enjoying a selection of damp, sleepy insects and early birds undaunted by the dull morning. After breakfast, the cloud was lifting and we drove through Nant and out on the road to the west. It climbs steeply onto the Causse du Larzac and we turned back on ourselves and followed a well-made track that leads to a few farmhouses and a radio mast. We drove through pine woodland and on to where the wood ends in an area of rich grassland and scattered bushes, with spectacular views from the cliff top. We got out of the minibuses and walked over to the cliff edge where we startled a young carrion crow. The



panoramic views were amazing; below, the red roofs of Nant glowed back at us and we could trace the line of the Dourbie winding its way downstream. Cantobre, perched on its rocky spur, was clearly visible, and ahead of us the Mont Aigoual massif rose steadily. A woodlark was singing constantly overhead and after a while we picked out both orphean and subalpine warblers singing from dense cover, defying all attempts to get a clear view. Vultures were drifting slowly along the cliff top (griffon vulture, left), a raven made an appearance, rolling over in display and making a brief attempt to ride the thermals that were only weakly developed on this still rather dull day. Russell and Sara got a close view of a marsh tit and, to our great surprise, a nightjar, normally a crepuscular bird, sang briefly not far away.

Statuesque plants of sermountain, a white umbellifer, flourished in the shelter of the rocks; we couldn't avoid treading on the fragrant wild thyme and basil thyme and their mixed scent rose up around us; where the soil was deeper, pretty geraniums, catchflies and speedwells coloured the vegetation and a fine display of henbane and mallow flourished in a fertile corner. Where the turf was shorter, golden drop, fumana, spurges, yellow rattle and alpine aster (the Cévennes endemic subspecies) thrived and we found several orchids: the pyramidal orchids were just coming out, there were greater and lesser butterfly orchids, burnt-tip orchids, Aymonin's ophrys and

miscellaneous other *Ophrys* and *Orchis* species but mostly over beyond recognition. We were captivated by a charming bush of the highly fragrant alpine daphne, in full flower.

We stopped briefly at a clearing in the wood on our way back to admire the fine sword-leaved helleborine; an obliging green-underside blue on the flower of golden-drop allowed itself to be photographed, we found a freshly emerged Mother Shipton moth and Wendy found a magical juxtaposition of a heath fritillary and a large grizzled skipper both nectaring on adjacent ox-eye daisy flowers. But time was getting on and we pressed on to our next appointment.

The *Ferme Auberge Jassenove* has a fine reputation that extends far beyond the local area, despite its being situated miles from anywhere, along tiny roads, in the heart of the Causse du Larzac. But the food is not to be missed so, unusually for a Honeyguide holiday, we had arranged to forego our picnic in favour of a traditional *Aveyronnais* lunch. Catherine and Renaud Galtier welcomed us warmly with a selection of aperitifs and we sat down to a delicious sequence of home-made dishes, all from their own farm: terrine, followed by the most spectacular Roquefort soufflé, then tender and succulent lamb (the local *brebis*, the grazing sheep of the cause) with Jassenove's own renowned potato casserole. Then there was a splendid cheeseboard – with Roquefort of course, and a selection of chocolate and fruit flans to finish. It was a meal fit for a birthday – Jane's – she was over the moon!



The restaurant is in converted farm buildings and surrounded by an extensive private area of causse grassland and woodland. The Gaultiers were happy for us to explore, so after lunch we set off, disturbing a pair of woodpigeons, through their fields of sheep and cattle, bright with spurge and meadow clary, and into a magical area of rocky, open woodland. The path took us to another ancient *citerne*, this time fed by an underground watercourse and with a vaulted stone roof; we amused ourselves for a few minutes peering into it at one end and seeing the perfect reflection in the dark, glass-still water of someone else peering in from the other end. In the short grass there were flowers that were new to us; bright yellow mountain alyssum, Solomon's seal, tufts of the tiny causse endemic Gerard's thrift. Under an overhang of dolomitic limestone that had been blown apart by a lightning strike a couple of years ago, Rob called us over, and we watched fascinated for several minutes while a spurge hawk-moth repeatedly and vigorously stabbed the tip of her abdomen into the sandy ground, doubtless laying eggs.



We found ourselves back at the farm, bade farewell to the Gaultiers and set off to the next hamlet, les Baumes, the final destination of the day. Here, a great wall of limestone towers over the few houses and, centuries ago, this had been crafted into a fortified troglodyte house (left) by a combination of walling in and extending the natural recesses. We were able to go inside and explore, and imagine the conditions that would have existed when this complex dwelling was in its prime.

There was other evidence of the ancient use of the landscape. About 3 kilometres away, across a very exposed piece of causse, lies the neighbouring village of St Martin du Larzac. In the searing heat of summer and bitter winter weather, the route between these two villages would have been very exposed. The solution, found occasionally all over the area, was to make a *buissière* – a tunnel of box trees – a sort of double

hedge which meets overhead, reinforced with dry stone walls. In this way, people and livestock could move in comfort and safety between the two settlements. Much of this *buissière* still remains intact and is now well-maintained. We drove to the far end and explored it, causing a bit of concern amongst a flock of brebis that had been grazing peacefully amongst the angel's hair, and then made a brief excursion to admire the wonderful vaulted stone barn in St Martin du Larzac.

We returned to la Gare aux Ânes for a 'light' dinner, after our lunchtime excesses, but even that was crowned by an amazing gooey chocolate birthday cake, complete with candles, that Sylvain had made for Jane. We had hoped that we might go back up onto the Causse du Larzac for an evening of 'nightjarring' but the weather had turned damp and cold so we decided against it. Instead, we went out to listen to the night sounds around the hotel and were treated to the very unexpected sight of a nightjar flying past us along the drive.



Day 6: Wednesday 9 June, The Causse Méjean: Caves, Steppes and Horses

We set off before breakfast along the track opposite, on a warm, windy morning – but with ominous clouds on the horizon. Wendy found a dead shrew – sad, but at the same time our only likely chance of seeing small mammals in this situation. It didn't seem quite right for our familiar species – perhaps the snout was too long and slender – and from the distribution we could confirm that it was a Millet's or crowned shrew. The cool early morning is often good for butterflies, still not warmed up and active; this time it was a beautiful, freshly emerged black-veined white, still resting beside its pupal case. We found a wood ants' nest. Touching it, we could smell the formic acid, and we prodded it with a meadow clary flower; like litmus, the blue colour of the flower turned to pink as the ants squirted it with formic acid.

This morning we drove directly up onto the Causse Noir, following a charming side valley from la Roque Ste Marguerite. A female Montagu's harrier sped past us as we reached open ground at the top. We drove up the Jonte valley, past the vulture information centre, and climbed on to a new cause, the Causse Méjean, for our 11.30 appointment at Aven Armand. A black redstart sang from the corner of the building and serins were flying, twittering, among the tops of the trees in the car park.

Aven Armand is one of the most spectacular of European caverns. Its stalagmites alone, which number over 400, are more numerous than anywhere else so far discovered. We had an English-speaking guide who charmingly filled us in with fascinating information about its discovery in 1897, the manner of the original descent, the famous speliolegists – Armand and Martel – who were responsible for its original exploration, its size, the chemistry and physics of stalactite and stalagmite formation. We were guided deep into the sensitively lit cave, lingered at the base of the tallest known stalagmite (30 metres high), reflected disrespectfully as to whether they were trees or cauliflowers, bacon rashers or striped curtains, palm trees, plates piled high with crepe suzettes, jellyfish...

Emerging awestruck, we found that it was raining heavily, and didn't take long to decide that an early picnic under the shelter of the veranda at the visitor centre was in order. We then returned to the minibuses to drive across the great steppe-like plain of the Causse Méjean. The character of this cause is quite different from any of the others we had visited. Even in the rain, the vast expanse of gently rolling grassland, silver with angel's hair – just opening to its most spectacular – was impressive. In the hope that the rain might let up during the afternoon we drove first to the furthest point of our intended route, the hamlet of le Villaret. This is the centre for an ambitious and successful programme to restore the populations of the primitive Przewalski's horse (right) to its native Mongolia. Careful research indicated that the conditions on the Causse Méjean most closely resembled



those on the Mongolian plains, so animals that were already in captivity in zoos around the world were screened genetically and a genetically pure but diverse group was assembled and, after appropriate acclimatization, they were released into an enormous 'enclosure'. They soon began breeding and family groups established themselves. Now, when satisfactory groups are formed, the whole family is returned to the wild in Mongolia. We drove slowly along the lane that runs for several miles alongside the enclosure. We knew there were horses there but failed to see any. Almost at the point of giving up, we caught sight of one, and then another, and then a group moved into view. It was a wonderful sight, in spite of the rain, and a rare photo opportunity for everyone.

We had intended a long walk, but the rain was now fierce and relentless so we modified our programme a little. It is said that the churchyard in Hûres is a good place to see rock sparrows, and we parked the minibuses behind the church for a rock sparrow vigil. Suddenly the rain seemed lighter, so while some of us stayed to look for rock sparrows (unsuccessfully), several people strolled up the track, through a deliciously weedy arable field and onto the open cause. Bird watchers were rewarded by an ortolan bunting, a superb ringtail Montagu's harrier and a wheatear near the church; the botanists enjoyed the sight of lizard orchid spikes towering up through the damp grass. Little cornfield weeds – poppies, pansies, sand catchfly, Venus's looking glass – cowered in the field. The light was so poor that the flowers of the moth-pollinated Spanish catchfly, which normally close during the day, were still fully open and shining white.

The route down into the Jonte valley is truly spectacular, with views onto the Causse Noir as well as in both directions down to the river. Meyrueis presides very prettily over the head of the gorge, its architecture reflecting the many phases of its history. It is now a bustling tourist centre, and we pushed our way through busy streets at the end of market day. Up on the edge of the Causse Noir, where the chestnut and pinewoods gave way to open views – and clear skies – by popular request we made a brief, serendipitous stop. A woodlark was singing clearly from not far away. Three vultures circled very close overhead; two of them were griffon and one black, so we had a perfect view of their distinguishing features. We also found pristine specimens of both greater butterfly and white helleborine.

We passed the wonderful cornflower field again and the duller light made for more effective photographs. Then we pressed on, down from the Causse Noir to Trèves and along the Trévezet to Cantobre. There was time to stop here too, for photographs of the extraordinary little village from the 'back', the less frequently photographed but no less spectacular view. There was a roadside spectacle of honeysuckle profusely flowering and a scattering of a new orchid – red helleborine. There were attractive clumps of spiny restharrow and the surprising yellow and mauve flowers of crested cow-wheat spiked up through the gravel on the roadside.

Day 7: Thursday 10 June, The River Dourbie: Nant and Cantobre

The weather had improved little – still dull and windy with intermittent drizzle – when we got up before breakfast. One or two dutiful people emerged reluctantly and were clearly relieved when we agreed no early walk. After breakfast though, we set off as usual in a new direction, towards Sauclières, the nearest village to the east. Our unlikely destination was the workshop and offices of a large local quarry. Over the last two or three decades some significant and spectacular fossils have been unearthed there, the most exciting of which are the footprints (right) of several crocodilian dinosaurs of various sizes, exposed on the surface of a number of limestone slabs. They were laid down on the muddy shorelines of the Jurassic sea, out of which the causse limestone was deposited. While the most important finds are now in various museums, some of them are displayed at the quarry office, where the stonemasons are happy to talk to visitors about them. Damp from the rain, and with the low morning light, they made for some good photographs.



From Sauclières we drove through St Jean du Bruel to Nant and parked outside the chapel that houses a very imaginative little local museum and information office. Greenfinches and serins were singing in the park opposite, a black redstart was singing from a rooftop and swifts, house martins and crag martins were swooping up to the eaves of the tall town houses and around the tower of the magnificent Romanesque church; a crag martin perched for us on one of the high window sills of the church. We dispersed to explore the town, shop, enjoy a cup of coffee, visit the church or spend time in the Visitor Centre and museum.

After an hour or so we met again in the Visitor Centre and then walked down to the ancient stone bridge which spans the river Dourbie. There was a lot of bird activity here too: a family of white wagtails was bobbing about on the rocks in the middle of the river, two young clamouring constantly for food; a grey wagtail bobbed on the stones at the edge and swallows, house martins and crag martins were all feeding over the water. Wendy spotted a trout swimming beneath the bridge; we watched it holding its position in the swift current.

We had been trying to ignore the increasingly heavy rain but were getting peckish as well as damp, so we decided to go back to la Gare aux Ânes and eat our picnic in comfort. There was a warm welcome, with coffee to cheer us.

In the afternoon, undaunted by the rain, we decided to follow our original plan for a woodland walk beside the river Dourbie, though slightly curtailed. We parked beside a beautiful lizard orchid in a clearing at the edge of the wood and set off, equipped with waterproofs and armed with umbrellas, along the muddy track. The damp conditions had brought out several large black slugs *Arion ater*, and the woodland plants looked fresh and bright in the rain. There were wonderful mosses and ferns, dripping picturesquely; the knotted crane's-bill and bastard balm were flowering very prettily; the striped leaves of Italian arum and the spotted leaves of Cévennes lungwort made a charming contrast. There were brief calls and snatches of song from tits and short-toed treecreepers and we caught sight of a white wagtail flying up the river.

The rain had more or less ceased as we drove along the track away from the wood, and we stopped to admire a corncockle in flower in a cornfield. We were listening to a cirl bunting singing from the top of a cypress tree and then heard the unmistakeable *tzip.....tzip.....tzip* call of a fan-tailed warbler. We searched for it in the air above our heads since the call is normally uttered in flight, but could see nothing. Then we noticed the bird uncharacteristically calling from a telephone wire, where it stayed long enough to give us all a good telescope view. Not so much a zitting cisticola as a sitting cisticola! Then, as we were about to move on, a short-toed eagle appeared over the clifftop. After two wet days it was probably hungry and it flew steadily past us to give an excellent view.

It was time to move on to Cantobre. We had passed it admiringly several times, and the desire to explore the little village is compelling. It is perfectly preserved and strategically positioned on a rocky spur between the rivers Dourbie and Trévezel. Outwardly it has changed very little but the houses now are mostly for 'incomers' or holiday cottages, just a few around the church remaining in the hands of local families. The heavy wooden doors carry the traditional cardabelle; vases of angel's hair appear on windowsills; climbing roses scramble over the old walls. We began our circuit of the village at a gentle pace, peering at rock crevices for plants: curious drooping fruits of towercress, the pretty mauve flowers of fairy foxglove, the delicate valerian *Centranthus lecoqii*, curious creeping snapdragon *Asarina procumbens* and the charming delicate yellow toadflax *Linaria simplex*, and enjoying the sight of the crag martins swooping up to their nests on the cliff. The views in three directions along the valleys were wonderful, and from a parapet we could look down on the backs of the martins flying below us. We walked up to the church at the top of the village – another of the many Romanesque churches that are to be found in the area – and watched a hummingbird hawk-moth nectaring on the valerian outside. As we were leaving, four choughs flew out from their nest-site in the cliff and circled round us.

Day 8: Friday 11 June, West across the Causse du Larzac to Lapanouse and the Roquefort Caves: Orchids, Cheese and Templars

At last the weather appeared more promising as we went for our early walk along the track; the broken cloud was being hurried along by a steady southerly breeze. Skylarks were singing and the fine song of a woodlark rose up from the valley. We found a common blue butterfly and another freshly-emerged black-veined white clinging to grass stems.

After passing la Pezade, remembered from the first day, our journey took us towards the western edge of the Causse du Larzac, where the landscape is softer and falls away into the valley of the river Cernon. We drove through two fortified Templar villages, l'Hospitalet du Larzac and Ste Eulalie de Cernon, hoping there would be time to explore Ste Eulalie on our return journey, but for now we wanted to press on. Just after l'Hospitalet we saw our first turtle dove and a mile or so further on a western whip snake lay dead on the road.

We drove through the village of Lapanouse de Cernon, crossed a tiny stone bridge over the river and climbed steeply again back onto the causse. The route of the old railway line runs along the edge of the valley and here, though the line itself remains intact and the rails mysteriously shiny, it no longer functions as a railway and the station buildings, identical in style to la Gare aux Ânes, are now derelict.

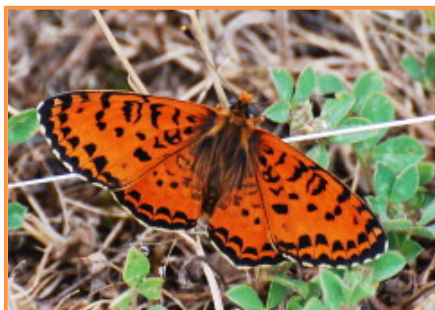
We parked beside the station building and opened the minibus doors to the sound of our only common redstart of the week singing continuously from a treetop; craning our necks we could just get our binoculars on him. Gazing

around us we had a good view of a honey buzzard as it flew overhead. On the short grass beside the railway line there was a wealth of butterflies: Glanville, spotted and heath fritillaries, green-underside and Adonis blues and small heaths; Bridget found a hummingbird hawk moth and Russell found and photographed a pearly heath.

We heard a rumbling and then voices approaching, and watched with amusement as a number of 'velorail' pedal-cars came by along the disused line, each with two pedallers and two laughing passengers, and sometimes a dog aboard as well. The mystery of the shiny rails was solved!



Before setting off up the hill, we visited the sheltered edge of the track where, under a line of scraggy blackthorn bushes, we found a few remaining flowers of the second local *Ophrys* endemic, *Ophrys aveyronensis* (left). Although it was a little late for them, some of the spikes were still in perfect condition. Further along the track, Russell found a southern white admiral which settled and gave us all a good view, and then Nicholas arrived with news of a marbled fritillary and a large grizzled skipper. (Most of the races of this butterfly usually fly in July, but here the Cévennes race appears earlier than the others.) There were meadow browns and yet more Adonis blues.



Up the hill, some of the group lingered among the wild flowers and grasses of the sunlit clearing. A chiffchaff and a cuckoo were calling and there were black-veined whites resting on grass stems and fluttering everywhere. We found a green crab spider perfectly camouflaged on the leaves of meadow rue, a scatter of field eryngo amongst the angel's hair, and a patch of cypress spurge – its inflorescence scarlet on the sunny bank. Under the shade of some honeysuckle at the edge of the clearing there were plants of Solomon's seal and green hellebore and Pam found a beautiful lizard orchid coming into full flower.

Following the track up to the spur, the others found plenty more Adonis blues. Susie found and photographed a marsh fritillary; an iridescent blue forester moth (above) posed stylishly on a vetch flower and a yellow crab spider lay perfectly camouflaged within the cup of a yellow rockrose. There was a spotted fritillary (above, left) sunning itself in a sheltered hollow down among the dead leaves. Russell caught a green tiger beetle and some tiny wood crickets for us to look at and Nicholas found us a meadow fritillary. And to match the feast of butterflies, squadrons of the ascalaphid *Libelloides coccajus*, butterfly predators, patrolled the air around us.

We returned to the clearing by the station buildings for lunch with the redstart still singing overhead. Through the trees we watched as two booted eagles flew across the valley.

We retraced our route down to the little bridge in Lapanouse and then turned left and carried on down the valley of the Cernon. A quiet lane follows the winding route of the valley for several miles through beautiful scenery. It is flanked by rocky cliffs covered with flowers interspersed with vineyards and overhanging woodland. As we drove, sharp eyes for birds picked out three turtle doves flying across in front of us, a group five choughs, and a black kite being mobbed by two carrion crows. At times, a distant view opens up along a side valley and the river passes through tiny hamlets on its way to join the river Tarn in the west.

Our destination was the busy town of Roquefort. It is hardly possible for the economics of an area to be more intricately bound up with the ecology of a landscape that we cherish; we are duty bound to eat as much Roquefort cheese as we can possibly manage! So, with this in mind, we had booked our group on a tour of the caves belonging to Papillon, one of only eight producers entitled to call their cheese after the great rock that presides over the town and gives it its name. We watched films demonstrating the historical and present-day manufacture of the cheese, from management of the *brebis*, production of the *Penicillium* culture that gives the blue veining, to the preparation and maturing of the final product. Then we were taken on a tour of the caves to see some of the processes in action. At the end of the tour we were invited to taste cheeses and then were able to buy them to take home in special insulated packs.

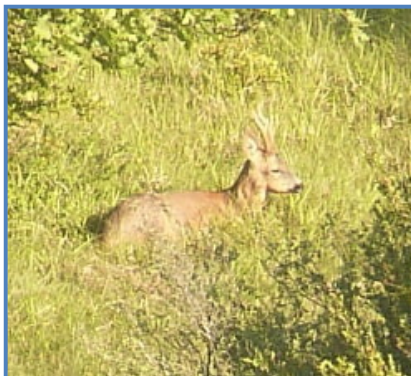
We chose a different route back from Roquefort, climbing onto the Causse du Larzac a little further south and catching another contrasting area of causse where arable farming is more prevalent. There were still many miles of 'steppe' covered in angel's hair, and the plateau shimmered with silver in the afternoon sunshine.

There was time for another short stop, this time to visit the famous and well-preserved Templar town of Ste Eulalie de Cernon. This was the 'Commanderie', the most important Templar town in the area, with what is said to be the only church in Christendom where the altar is at the west end. (In 1641, the then Commander, annoyed because the villagers' route to the church passed through his private courtyard, had the altar moved and a door opened in the east end.) Apart from the church there are also some fine houses and a beautiful village square. It was beginning to rain so we were delighted to discover that the café in the square was still open.

Day 9: Saturday 12 June, Another Causse: The Causse Blandas and the Cirque de Navacelles

On this last morning we met for the early walk in fine, clear weather, but over towards Nant a dense white mist lay like a pool in the valley. Susie, who had been out early, greeted us with news of a hobby. We decided to repeat our walk of earlier in the week, westwards along the disused railway line. The birds were in good voice; a whitethroat sang from a treetop, a greenfinch wheezed nearby and all the while the sky was full of skylark and woodlark song.

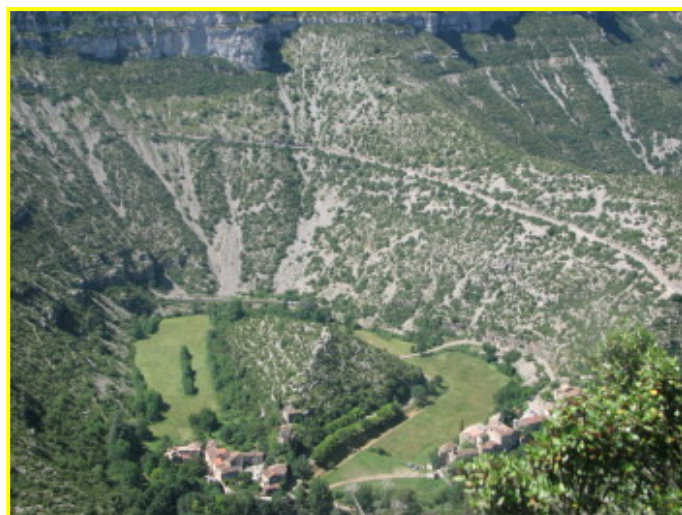
As we scanned the causse from our vantage point on an embankment, Wendy – or was it Susie? – drew our attention to a reddish-brown shape in a clearing. Through a telescope we watched a handsome roebuck (right) lying comfortably and chewing the cud in the morning sunshine, quite oblivious of our presence. As we arrived back for breakfast, the mist that had filled the Dourbie valley was drifting up the hill towards us and dispersing in the warm sunshine.



From Nant, over the old bridge, there is a charming, quiet road along the far side of the Dourbie that leads, confusingly through a hamlet called Dourbias, to St Jean du Bruel. As you approach St Jean, a hillside of schist rises above the road and the interesting change in geology very obviously shows itself in the magnificent display of lime-intolerant cistuses. We had seen a few from time to time as we passed but this was an opportunity to have a good look at what was there and to take some photographs. Two species were in full flower: the white flowered *Cistus salvifolius* and the pink *C. laurifolius*. But, without a doubt, the star was a wonderful green lizard (above – actually two), glowing brilliantly and displaying his blue throat against the russet brown of the dead leaves.

We drove eastwards along the main road, skirting the southern edge of the Cévennes. On reaching Alzon we turned south and climbed up onto the Causse de Blandas.

Rather like the more intimate parts of the Causse du Larzac, the landscape unfolded into the distance with a mosaic of open grassland, scrub and woods. We looked out for birds as we drove; briefly catching sight of a jay as it flew across the road, and we watched a short-toed eagle soaring overhead. We drove through the little town of Blandas and on to the Cirque de Navacelles. Parking the vehicles, some of us were drawn to the collection of interesting classic motorbikes that were assembling at the top of the Cirque! Across the road the view (right) was spectacular. The road hairpins down the side of a great natural amphitheatre created when a deeply incised meander in the valley of the river Vis formed an oxbow lake that has since silted up, leaving the only genuinely fertile land for many, many miles. There is a village at the bottom and it is quite a tourist attraction but today we were exploring the plateau.



Around us, feeding crag martins were flying in large numbers. There were some very pretty new plants at our feet: starry clover, pink bindweed and the strange-smelling pitch trefoil. The tumbling hillside was clothed in box, dogwood and honeysuckle and in front of us there was a fine specimen of Montpellier maple. Butterflies skipped about in the warmth: a wall brown and quite a few meadow browns. Nicholas potted off and returned excitedly, having found not one but several southern white admirals, which we all hurried off to admire and photograph.

Wendy found a cleopatra, and we added a Queen of Spain fritillary to our butterfly list. The butterfly hunt had brought us into a meadow with some beautiful lizard orchids – Claire inhaled the billy-goat smell with amazement – and a fine specimen of giant fennel, a new species for the week.

We turned away from the Cirque de Navacelles and drove on, stopping a little west of Rogues. We followed a rough track until we were well away from the road and set off to explore. Quails were calling; a fluty song from the rocks above us was almost certainly a rock thrush but it refused to show itself; Rob called us to a bird on a nearby bush and it turned out to be our only tawny pipit of the week; two choughs flew over, then dropped on closed wings and alighted to feed in a nearby field, giving us excellent telescope views. Nicholas's keen eyes added several butterflies to our tally: a small skipper, a clouded yellow, a few Berger's clouded yellows, a silver-studded blue, a chalkhill blue, a marbled white and a Spanish gatekeeper.

The botanically inclined had their noses close to the ground. It was extremely stony, with sparse vegetation: just the thing that spurges love – cypress spurge and Seguir's spurge were abundant. The diversity was amazing. The asphodels were in fruit but the blue spires of meadow clary stood out. There were lavender bushes and patches of cut-leaved self-heal, felty germander and thyme, field eryngo, urospermum and three species of flax: yellow *Linum strictum*, pale pink *L. suffruticosum*, and deep blue, *L. narbonense*. The list went on and on.

It was time for our last lunch hamper. While we enjoyed chicken legs with tomatoes, grated turnip and rice salad, an orphean warbler sang on a nearby bush, giving us a brief but clear view. Some of us managed to watch it through a telescope before it flew off and continued to sing from out of sight. And, another treat, an adult golden eagle glided by, mobbed by a raven. And another – a beautiful scarce swallowtail, freshly emerged and perfect, sailed in and settled on a clump of thyme.

After lunch there was still more to see. The tawny pipit returned to its song-post and two woodchat shrikes appeared in a bush along the track. Russell found a red and white spider *Philaeus chrysops* (which appears in the 'red and black' feature on the Honeyguide website) and Nicholas added one last butterfly to the week's list, a purple-shot copper, bringing our tally to 48 species. As we were packing up the minibuses another short-toed eagle flew by and then hung on the air, its legs dangling, occasionally moving its wings in a hover; it is certainly the iconic raptor of the region.

We stopped briefly amid acres of *cheveu d'ange* to gather a few to take home and a chough flew low overhead, calling. We turned off towards le Barral and came to an abrupt stop, astonished to see a roller, a rare visitor to the causses, perched on a wire beside the road; it stayed for several minutes to be photographed. Then we returned to Blandas intending to return by the way we had come. However, the road was now closed for a car rally! Our alternative route took us on a much longer but very spectacular journey through the Gorges de la Vis.

Sylvain and Nicolas had invited us to join them for an aperitif, and then they were planning a barbecue. We enjoyed our drinks on the terrace but it was growing chilly so, while Sylvain did the honours outside, we waited in the warm dining room as the most delicious, succulent chops and steaks appeared.

Highlights

As is customary at the end of a Honeyguide holiday we were very keen to hear from everybody which moments they would remember as highlights of the week (listed in alphabetical order):-

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Bridget | An ancient countryside. Things such as meadow clary that are rare at home but so abundant here. Actually <i>seeing</i> a quail. The abundance of nightingales, which at home we only see in nature reserves. Learning how to photograph butterflies. |
| Claire | The wildlife, especially the number and variety of orchids. Aven Armand – the 'wow' factor. |
| Don | The locality – the landscape of causse and gorges was a big surprise. The woodland walk beside the river – to visit a woodland that had not been modified for many years. The interesting people in the group. |
| Jane | The whole holiday! Birthday celebrations, particularly the meal at Jassenove. The number and variety of birds – all of them. |
| John | The marvellous mixture of history, landscape and wildlife, especially the <i>toit-citerne</i> and driving through the gorges. The orchids. |
| Nicholas | The songs of nightingales and woodlarks. The single common swallowtail that we had seen after lunch on the first day during our first experience of the rocky landscape. The two contrasting colours of the elder-flowered orchids. The box tunnel – the <i>buissière</i> . |

- Pam** The spectacular gorges, especially the Cirque de Navacelles and the Gorges de la Vis. The Templar villages and Cantobre in its extraordinary position on top of the cliff. The song of the nightingale. The roller. The lizard orchids especially, as well as the wide range of other flowers. The butterflies but especially the swallowtails.
- Rob** The hunting Montagu's harrier on the Causse Méjean. The Templar villages and Romanesque churches. The early morning bird song, especially the nightingales.
- Russell** The whole holiday! Being in the company of like-minded people in an area that they've not seen before and seeing it through their eyes. Aven Armand – wow! Watching the ant-lions. The flowers – the sheer numbers and diversity. The birds, especially the swifts and crag martins.
- Sara** The fact that the whole area was very different – there were superb things not seen before, for example Aven Armand is unlike any other cave. The orchids: the surprising quantity of them especially, but individually the red helleborine. Bridget's squeaks of delight at seeing new flowers.
- Susie** Particularly agree with Russell's remarks about the group. La Gare aux Ânes – such a nice place to stay, with the blackcap singing every morning, regardless of the weather. The first short-toed eagle, flying low down so that we had a view of its back. The wonderful subalpine warbler. Lying in the grass with quails calling to left and right.
- Wendy** The roe deer this morning – a magical moment. The diversity and abundance of wild flowers. The profusion of butterflies, especially the fritillaries. Cantobre and the other ancient villages.
- Rachel** The happy atmosphere at la Gare aux Ânes. Seeing the gradual change in the colour of the causse grassland as the *cheveu d'ange* opened up during the week. The thrill of Aven Armand, no matter how many times we visit it. The wonderful sight of the contented roe deer in the sunshine. The exciting and unexpected roller
- Robin** The pleasure of introducing nice people and in this case some old friends to a place we love. The sense of novelty is always special – for example we had not seen orphean warbler or roller here before.

Day 10: Sunday 13 June, Departure: Causse du Larzac and Sévérac le Chateau

There was a bank of mist in the valley again but it quickly dispersed to give a fine and sunny morning. We had decided against an early walk in favour of a prompt getaway and spending some more time on the causse. People wandered round the hotel grounds, photographing the donkeys and the goats in their meadow amongst the flowers and the butterflies. A man arrived triumphantly flourishing an extraordinarily deformed sow-thistle that he had found near the farm. It was not in flower but its flower stem was elongated to about half a metre and widened to about ten centimetres and it was sprouting little leaves all over so that it looked rather like a distorted prickly pear. We couldn't throw much light on the cause except that the condition is known in English as 'fasciation' and can be the result of a virus or possibly pesticides. Everyone admired and photographed it so he went away happy.

Sylvain had been shopping and had rushed back to see us before we left. So we made our farewells to him and to Nicolas and drove to the area of causse beyond la Couvertoirade near where we had lunched on the first day. There was a fragment of ortolan bunting song from the hillside as we arrived, and a contest between two woodlarks with adjacent territories among the pines. We heard little snatches of dunnoek song from time to time and, briefly, the bubbling call of a cuckoo. There were so many flowers to look at – many that had become familiar: the alpine aster, cornflowers, burnt-tip orchids, pasque flowers; and several that we had not had a good look at before: the blue everlasting daisy, catananche, a delicate bedstraw, *Galium pusillum*, a pretty mauve viper's grass, *Scorzonera purpurea*.

We were only a few miles from the autoroute junction at le Caylar where there is also a very good regional produce shop. Bridget was staying on with friends in Provence and we had arranged to meet them there. The rendezvous happened without a hitch and we sped away, back over the Millau viaduct and on towards Rodez. At lunchtime we wound our way up a steep hill to have our picnic under the walls of the splendid ruined chateau at Sévérac. Sylvain had once more done us proud – all we could manage, packaged in delicious succulent baguettes, with little cakes and fruit. We sat in the sun and watched crag martins and black kites, with a lovely controlled flypast from a short-toed eagle. Behind us, on the valerian, there were several large tortoiseshell butterflies nectaring.

We continued on our way to Rodez, deposited the minibuses and caught the flight with ease, leaving the rolling countryside around Rodez bathed in sunshine.

Species Lists

BIRDS		
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	One on the Jonte near le Truel
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	One on the Jonte near le Truel
Griffon vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Seen almost every day throughout the region
Black vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	An adult overhead and a young bird on the nest at le Truel
Short toed eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Good views almost every day throughout the region
Booted eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	Two at Lapanouse station
Honey buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	One at Lapanouse station
Black kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Several between Rodez and Sévérac le Château; one near Roquefort
Montagu's harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Single birds on Causses du Larzac, Noir and Méjean
Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Occasional individuals on Causses du Larzac and Blandas
Golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	One on the Causse de Blandas
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	A few seen every day
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	One near la Gare aux Ânes
Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Occasional individuals on the Causses du Larzac and de Blandas
Rock dove/feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Seen occasionally in towns and villages
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Occasional in wooded areas
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Frequently seen in villages
Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Seen or heard on several days
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Seen or heard almost daily
Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Heard by day on the Causse du Larzac above les Cuns
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	Several seen every day
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Occasionally seen and heard, mostly on the Causse du Larzac
Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	One on the Causse de Blandas
Black woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	One on the Causse du Larzac
Green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	One on the Causse du Larzac
Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	One on the Causse du Larzac and one in the Dourbie valley
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Several seen every day
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	Several seen every day
Crag martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	Common in gorges and occasionally in villages
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Several seen every day
House martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	Several seen every day
Tawny pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	One on the Causse de Blandas
White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>	Commonly seen by rivers and in villages
Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Occasionally seen on the Dourbie and Jonte
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Seen or heard on most days
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Seen or heard on most days
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Occasionally heard or seen in wooded areas
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Abundant and ubiquitous, though seldom seen
Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	One holding territory at Lapanouse station
Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	A few in every town and village
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	Occasionally seen in open habitats
Northern wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	One on the Causse Méjean and one on Mont Aigoual
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	One at Cantobre and one above Lapanouse
Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	One above Lapanouse
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	One or two seen almost every day
Garden warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	One on the Causse Noir
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Abundant and widespread in causses and gorges
Orphean warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	One on the Causse du Larzac above les Cuns; one on the Causse de Blandas
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Seen twice on the Causse du Larzac
Subalpine warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	One on the Causse du Larzac above les Cuns and one near la Couvertoirade
Fan-tailed warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	One in the Dourbie valley near the Val de Cantobre
Melodious warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	One heard near la Pezade

Bonelli's warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	Common and widespread
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Seen or heard almost every day
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	Occasionally heard in wooded areas; seen well on the Causse Noir
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	A few seen every day
Coal tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	Seen or heard almost daily
Blue tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Occasionally seen in causses and gorges
Crested tit	<i>Parus cristatus</i>	One or two heard and glimpsed on the Causse Noir
Marsh tit	<i>Parus palustris</i>	One on the Causse du Larzac above les Cuns
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	One beside the Dourbie near les Laupies
Short-toed treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	One heard by the river Dourbie near les Cuns
Red-backed shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	A few seen almost daily on the causses
Woodchat shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	Two on the Causse de Blandas
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Several seen every day
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	One or two seen almost every day
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Two near la Gare aux Ânes
Red-billed chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	Several flocks seen in gorges and causses
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone corone</i>	Common and widespread
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Occasional individuals in causses and gorges
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Small numbers in towns and villages
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Small numbers in towns and villages
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Common and widespread
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Small flocks seen every day
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Common and widespread
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Occasionally seen near villages
Serín	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	Seen every day at la Gare aux Ânes and elsewhere near villages
Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	One or two heard and glimpsed on the Causse Noir
Ortolan bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	A singing male on the Causse Méjean near le Villaret
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Occasional individuals in causses and gorges
Cirl bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	A few seen almost every day on the causses
Corn bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	Several seen every day on the causses

82 species

MAMMALS

Millet's shrew	Pine marten	Przewalski's horse
Mole	Wild boar	Roe deer
Rabbit		

REPTILES

Common wall lizard	Green lizard	Western whip snake
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AMPHIBIANS AND FISH

Common Toad	Midwife toad	Brown trout
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MOTHS

Forester	Pine processionary	Mother Shipton
Fox	Cream-spot tiger	Chimney sweeper
Lackey	Tiger moth <i>Watsonarctia casta</i>	Latticed heath
Speckled yellow	Clouded buff	<i>Eurrhysis pollinalis</i>
Spurge hawkmoth	<i>Adela reaumurilla</i>	Six-spot burnet
Hummingbird hawkmoth	Burnet companion	<i>Eurranthia plummistaria</i>

OTHER INSECTS

'Millwall bug' *Graphosoma italicum*
 Ascalaphid *Libelloides macaronius*
 Ascalaphid *Libelloides coccajus*
 Caddis fly
 Wood ant

Violet carpenter bee
 Dung beetle
 Rose chafer
 Field cricket
 Wood cricket

Longhorn beetle *Strangalia sp*
 Longhorn beetle *Rhagium bifasciatum*
 Ant lion
 Hornet
 Lesser stag beetle

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Tarantula *Lycosa narbonensis*
 Crab spider *Misumenia vatia*

Jumping spider *Philaeus chrysops*
 Roman snail *Helix pomatia*

Slug *Arion ater*

BUTTERFLIES

Common Swallowtail	Just one seen
Scarce Swallowtail	About 25, widespread
Black-veined White	Abundant
Large White	Widespread, many migrating across Mt Aigoual
Small White	Few, scattered
Orange-tip	About 5
Clouded Yellow	About 20
Berger's Clouded Yellow	About 10, widespread
(Pale Clouded Yellow)	Probable; hard to separate from Berger's
Cleopatra	About 8
Green Hairstreak	About 3
Little (Small) Blue	Widespread, about 25
Holly Blue	Few, scattered
Brown Argus	Just 2 seen
Green-underside Blue	Just 2 seen
Provençal Short-tailed Blue	One, photographed by Susie
Chapman's Blue	One
Silver-studded Blue	2 or more
Chalkhill Blue	2 or more
Adonis Blue	Widespread, fairly common
Common Blue	Widespread, common
Small Copper	3 or more
Sooty Copper	3 or more
Purple-shot Copper	One
Painted Lady	Widespread, about 10
Southern White Admiral	About 8
Large Tortoiseshell	3 seen
Small Tortoiseshell	About 5 seen
Glanville Fritillary	Widespread, fairly common
Knapweed Fritillary	Widespread, fairly common
Heath Fritillary	Widespread, fairly common
Meadow Fritillary	One or more, hard to separate from Heath Fritillary
Marsh Fritillary	One or more
Spotted Fritillary	About 8
Marbled Fritillary	Just 2 noted
Silver-washed Fritillary	About 2
Queen of Spain Fritillary	One
Small Heath	Widespread, common
Pearly Heath	About 8
Speckled Wood	About 5
Wall Brown	About 8
Large Wall Brown	One
Meadow Brown	Widespread, scattered
Spanish Gatekeeper	2 or 3
Marbled White	3 or more
Grizzled Skipper	3 noted
Large Grizzled Skipper	About 4
Mallow Skipper	One, photographed by Russell
Small Skipper	One

48 species

We are very grateful to Nicholas Armfelt for compiling this list of butterflies, and also to Wendy Wilson and Susie Turner for help with identification.

A List of the Plants of the Cévennes and Grands Causses

This list is by no means exhaustive. It is largely of species seen in flower at the time of the holiday and includes only the most obvious grasses and similar groups. Where a location is given it indicates a place or places where a species has been recorded on a Honeyguide holiday; it does not suggest that that is the only locality for that species in the area

In the list, the following convention is used:-

d = dominant a = abundant f = frequent o = occasional r = rare

l = local/locally ld = locally dominant la = locally abundant

* Indicates a species which is endemic to the area. # Indicates a species recorded for the first time in 2010.

PTERIDOPHYTES: Horsetails, Clubmosses and Ferns

Aspleniaceae: Spleenwort Family

<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall Rue	f: on walls especially where sheltered and damp
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort	f: on walls especially where sheltered and damp
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rustyback Fern	f: on walls, often where dry and exposed

Dennstaedtiaceae: Bracken

<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	f: in humid places on schistic, acid soils
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Polypodiaceae: Polypodies

<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Common Polypody	f: on shady rocks; a: in Cantobre
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CONIFERS

Cupressaceae: Cypresses and Junipers

<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Common Juniper	f: component of cause scrub
<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>	Phoenician Juniper	o: component of cause scrub

Pinaceae: Pines, Spruces, Firs and Larches

<i>Picea abies</i>	Spruce	ld: woodland below summit of M Aigoual
<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Austrian, Black or Corsican Pine	o: – ld: woodland on Causse Noir
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine	f: widespread on causses

Taxaceae: Yew

<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	r: usually near habitation and often planted
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FLOWERING PLANTS - DICOTYLEDONS

Aceraceae: Maples

<i>Acer monspessulanum</i>	Montpellier Maple	f: widespread in scrub and deciduous woodland on limestone
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	o: in deciduous woods; riverside woodland between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Acer opalus</i>	Italian Maple	In open woodland below viewpoint above le Rozier
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	r: in deciduous woods

Anacardiaceae: Pistacio Family

<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	Smoke-tree	lf: in limestone scrub in sheltered gorges
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Apiaceae (Umbelliferae): Umbellifers

<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	r: riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Athamanta cretensis</i>	Cretan Athamanta	r: under rocks at Vulture Information Centre, Gorges de la Jonte
# <i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	o: meadow beside river Dourbie amongst Narcissus on M Aigoual
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Field Eryngo	f: in dry cause grassland
# <i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant Fennel	r: Causse Blandas near Cirque de Navacelles
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> ssp <i>sibiricum</i>	Hogweed (greenish-flowered form)	o: in damp roadside ditches; beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Laserpitium gallicum</i>	French Sermountain	o: on rocky hillsides and scree
<i>Laserpitium siler</i>	Common Sermountain	f: among rocks and in light woodland
<i>Meum athamanthicum</i>	Spignel	o: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Trinia glauca</i>	Honewort	o: in dry stony cause grassland

Araliaceae: Ivy Family

<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	f: on rocks, trees and old walls especially in shade
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Aristolochiaceae: Birthwort Family

<i>Aristolochia clematitis</i>	Birthwort	o: waysides and woodland in Dourbie valley near Nant
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Asclepiadaceae: Milkweeds

<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Swallow-wort	f: among rocks in grassy places and roadsides
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Asteraceae (Compositae): Composites

<i>Achillea millefolia</i>	Yarrow	la: grassland
<i>Achillea odorata</i>	Cream-flowered Sneezewort	la: on hilltop opposite la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Antennaria dioica</i>	Mountain Everlasting	f: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Burdock	r: in ditches in farmland; by farm at la Gare aux Ânes
* <i>Aster alpinus cebennensis</i>	Alpine Aster	f: in rocky cause grassland, among rocks and scree
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	f: in grazed pasture at Jassenove
<i>Carduncellus mitissimus</i>	Carduncellus	f: in rocky cause grassland
# <i>Carduus nigrescens</i>	A Thistle	o: in grassland at Lapanouse
<i>Carduus nutans</i>	Musk Thistle	o: in pasture on Causse Méjean
# <i>Carduus tenuifolius</i>	A Thistle	o: Cantobre

<i>Carlina acanthifolia</i>	Cardabelle, Acanthus-leaved Carlina Thistle	f: in rocky cause grassland
<i>Carlina vulgaris</i>	Carlina Thistle	O: in grassland at la Pezade
<i>Catananche caerulea</i>	Blue Catananche	f: in rocky cause grassland
<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Cornflower	o: cornfield weed
* <i>Centaurea pectinata</i> ssp <i>supina</i>	Crested Knapweed	o: on dry sandy limestone soils and scree
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Wild Chicory	o: beside roads throughout
# <i>Cirsium eriophorum</i>	Woolly Thistle	r: in rocky grassland Causse Blandas
<i>Doronicum austriacum</i>	Austrian Leopard's-bane	Beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Helichrysum stoechas</i>	Everlasting Flower	f: on dolomitic rocks and scree
<i>Hieracium alpinum</i>	Alpine Hawkweed	o: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>	Mouse-ear Hawkweed	o: in cause grassland
<i>Inula montana</i>	Mountain Fleabane	o: in cause grassland
<i>Lactuca perennis</i>	Mountain Lettuce	o: in cause grassland
<i>Leucanthemum graminifolium</i>	Grass-leaved Ox-eye (or Dog) Daisy	r: in cause grassland
<i>Leuzia conifera</i>	Leuzia, Cone Knapweed	r: in cause grassland
<i>Phagnalon sordidum</i>	Phagnalon	la: in crevices on rock faces in Cantobre and elsewhere
# <i>Scorzonera austriaca</i>	A Viper's-grass	o: rocky grassland near la Couvertoirade
<i>Scorzonera hirsuta</i>	Hairy Viper's-grass	o: in cause grassland
<i>Scorzonera purpurea</i>	Purple Viper's-grass	o: in rocky grassland on Causse du Larzac
<i>Tragopogon crocifolius</i>	Crocus-leaved Salsify	r: in cause grassland; Lapanouse
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard	o: on roadsides and in pasture
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Coltsfoot	Roadside in Laupies
<i>Urospermum dalechampii</i>	Urospermum	o: pasture near Hûres on Causse Méjean
<i>Xeranthemum inapertum</i>	Xeranthemum	o: dry, sandy cause grassland; la on hilltop near la Gare aux Ânes
Betulaceae: Birches, Alders, Hazels and Hornbeams		
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder	f: riversides and damp woodland
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	f: in deciduous woodland on limestone
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	f: in deciduous woodland on limestone
Boraginaceae: Borage Family		
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's Bugloss	o: on dry limestone hillsides and in cause grassland
<i>Lithospermum arvense</i>	Corn Gromwell	r: waysides; track between wood and Cantobre campsite
<i>Onosma fastigiatum</i>	Golden-drop	o: in cause grassland; near radio mast Causse du Larzac; Causse Blandas
* <i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i> ssp <i>cevennensis</i>	Cevennes Lungwort	o: in riverside woodland and grassland
Brassicaceae (Cruciferae): Crucifers		
# <i>Alyssum montanum</i>	Mountain Alyssum	lf: on rocks and scree, Jassenove
<i>Arabis turrita</i>	Towercress	f: on rocky cliffs especially in villages
# <i>Biscutella laevigata</i>	Buckler Mustard	o: cause grassland on Causse Blandas
# <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's Purse	o: on pathway among rocks, Jassenove
Buxaceae: Box		
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	a-l: component of cause scrub; buissière
Campanulaceae: Bellflower Family		
<i>Campanula persicifolia</i>	Peach-leaved Bellflower	o: on roadsides and in open woodland
<i>Campanula rapunculus</i>	Rampion Bellflower	f: on roadsides and uncultivated ground
<i>Campanula trachelium</i>	Nettle-leaved Bellflower	o: in riverside woodland
# <i>Jasione laevis</i>	Perennial Sheep's-bit	o: on schist near Dourbias
<i>Legousia hybrida</i>	Small Venus's Looking Glass	Roadside outside la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Legousia speculum-veneris</i>	Venus's Looking Glass	f: weed of arable fields on light soils
<i>Phyteuma hemisphericum</i>	Globe-headed Rampion	o: in grassland near Hûres on Causse Méjean and Pezade on Causse du Larzac
<i>Phyteuma orbiculare</i>	Round-headed Rampion	r: alpine grassland Mont Aigoual
<i>Phyteuma spicatum</i>	Spiked Rampion	o: grassland beside river Dourbie at Laupies
Caprifoliaceae: Honeysuckle Family		
<i>Lonicera etrusca</i>	Etruscan Honeysuckle	a: widespread on causses
<i>Lonicera xylosteum</i>	Fly Honeysuckle	o: in riverside woodland between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring Tree	f: in riverside woodland between Nant and Cantobre; la: on cause
Caryophyllaceae: Chickweeds, Pinks and Campions		
<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	Corn-cockle	In arable field near Drigas on Causse Méjean
<i>Arenaria aggregata</i>	Cluster-flowered Sandwort	Stony cause grassland near la Couvertoirade, Causse du Larzac
<i>Arenaria montana</i>	Mountain Sandwort	Rocks beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Field Mouse-ear	Meadow in Dourbie Valley above Laupies
<i>Cerastium tomentosum</i>	Snow in Summer	la: around rocks and buildings at summit of M Aigoual
<i>Dianthus deltoides</i>	Maiden Pink	la: in meadows in Dourbie Valley Laupies and above

<i>Dianthus graniticus</i>	Granite Pink	Causse grassland near le Buffre, Causse Méjean
<i>#Dianthus subacaulis</i>	A Pink	o: Causse Blandas
<i>Petrorhagia prolifera</i>	Proliferous Pink	f: scattered on limestone grassland throughout
<i>Saponaria ocymoides</i>	Rock Soapwort	o: on rocks and scree
<i>Silene conica</i>	Sand Catchfly	o: on sandy and calcareous soils
<i>Silene italica</i>	Italian Catchfly	Meadow in Dourbie Valley above Laupies
<i>Silene nutans</i>	Nottingham Catchfly	o: on sunny banks on heavier soils
<i>Silene otites</i>	Spanish Catchfly	o: in causse grassland at Jassenove; Causse Méjean near Hûres
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder campion	Meadow beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort	Riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies

Celastraceae: Spindles

<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	o: in hedges and deciduous woodland understorey on limestone; buissière, St Martin du Larzac
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Cistaceae: Cistuses and Rockroses

<i>Cistus laurifolius</i>	Laurel-leaved Cistus	f: in woodland understorey on acid soils
<i>#Cistus salvifolius</i>	Sage-leaved Cistus	f: in woodland understorey on acid soils
<i>Fumana ericoides</i>	Heath Fumana	o: in rocky causse grassland
<i>Helianthemum appeninum</i>	White Rockrose	a: in causse grassland throughout
<i>Helianthemum canum</i>	Hoary Rockrose	f: in causse grassland throughout
<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Yellow Rockrose	a: in causse grassland throughout

Clusiaceae (Hypericaceae): St John's-worts

<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	Tutsan	Cantobre, probable garden escape
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Common St John's-wort	o: in rough grassland between wood and Cantobre campsite

Convolvulaceae: Bindweeds

<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed	o: roadsides on Causse du Larzac; field margins on Causses Méjean and Blandas
<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	Pink Bindweed	la: on rocky roadside cliffs in Cernon valley and Dourbie valley near Dourbias

Cornaceae: Dogwoods

<i>Cornus mas</i>	Cornelian Cherry	f: in scrub and woodland on limestone
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	a: in scrub and woodland on limestone

Crassulaceae: Stonecrop Family

<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting Stonecrop	a: on roofs, rocks, walls
<i>Sedum album</i>	White Stonecrop	f: on roofs, rocks, walls
<i>Sedum dasyphyllum</i>	Thick-leaved Stonecrop	f: on rocks, old walls
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort	f: on rocks and old walls

Cuscutaceae: Dodder Family

<i>Cuscuta</i> sp.	Dodder	o: on grasses at la Pezade on Causse du Larzac; on legumes near Hûres on Causse Méjean
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Dipsacaceae: Scabious Family

<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel	Along track onto causse from la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field Scabious	o: on waysides and grassy banks
<i>Knautia dipsacifolia</i>	Wood Scabious	f: on waysides and in damp grassland
<i>Phyteuma hemisphericum</i>	Globe-headed Rampion	r: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Phyteuma orbiculare</i>	Round-headed Rampion	o: in grassland near Hûres on Causse Méjean
<i>Phyteuma spicatum</i>	Spiked rampion	Riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small Scabious	o: in rocky grassland in Cantobre

Ericaceae: Heath

<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Strawberry Tree	o: in woodland on acid soils
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry	la: on rocks under pines on Causse Noir
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather	ld: on open hillsides on acid soils M Aigoual
<i>Erica arborea</i>	Tree Heath	o: in woodland on acid soils
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	Bell Heather	la: on open hillsides on acid soils M Aigoual
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	Bilberry	f: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual

Euphorbiaceae: Spurge Family

<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge	f: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre; Lapanouse
<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Mediterranean Spurge	o: Cantobre; Causse Noir near Trèves
<i>Euphorbia exigua</i>	Dwarf Spurge	o: on light, disturbed soils, Jassenove
<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge	o: on light, disturbed soils, Jassenove
<i>#Euphorbia nicaeensis</i>	Nice Spurge	o: causse grassland on Causse Blandas
<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	Cypress Spurge	o: in limestone grassland Causse du Larzac
<i>Euphorbia seguierana</i>	Seguier's Spurge	f: on calcareous, free-draining soils on causses
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's Mercury	o: in damp woodland edges, Dourbie valley; damp grassland at la Pezade; woodland at Jassenove

Fabaceae (Leguminosae): Pea Family, Legumes

<i>Anthyllis montana</i>	Mountain Kidney-vetch	a: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Common Kidney-vetch	a: widespread in causses grassland
<i>#Argyrolobium zanonii</i>	Argyrolobium	o: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Astragalus monspessulanus</i>	Montpellier Milk-vetch	f: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Chamaecytisus hirsutus</i>	Hairy Broom	f: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Colutea arborescens</i>	Bladder Senna	By pine telephone mast; near Vulture Information Centre
<i>Coronilla emerus</i>	Scorpion Vetch or False Senna	f: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre

<i>Coronilla minima</i>	Dwarf Scorpion-vetch	o: in stony cause grassland
<i>Cytisus purgans</i> (= <i>C. oromediterraneus</i>)	Pyrenean or Purging Broom	ld: on free-draining acid soils
<i>Dorycnium pentaphyllum</i>	Five-leaved Dorycnium, Five-fingered False Fenugreek	f: on rocky slopes
<i>#Genista hispanica</i>	Spanish Gorse	r: near telephone mast of Causse du Larzac
<i>Hippocrepis glauca</i>	Glaucous Horse-shoe Vetch	o: in cause grassland; Causse du Larzac below telephone mast
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling	r: riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Lathyrus sylvestris</i>	Everlasting Pea	o: in waysides
<i>#Medicago minima</i>	Bur Medick	o: cause grassland on Causse Blandas
<i>Onobrychis supina</i>	Sainfoin	f: in grassland on clayey/calcareous soils
<i>#Ononis natrix</i>	Large Yellow Restharrow	r: wayside at Lapanouse
<i>#Ononis repens</i>	Restharrow	o: waysides, stony grassland
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish Broom	f: on embankments and in woodland edges
<i>Tetragonolobus maritimus</i>	Dragon's Teeth	o: in cause grassland; Causse du Larzac below Pine mast
<i>Trifolium alpinum</i>	Alpine Clover	f: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Trifolium rubens</i>	Red Trefoil	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Starry Clover	o: stony grassland on Causse Méjean near le Buffre; rough ground above Cirque de Navacelles
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch	la: on railway line at la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Vicia onobrychoides</i>	False Sainfoin	o: in hedgerows on causses
<i>Vicia tenuifolia</i>	Fine-leaved Vetch	o: on banks and old walls on Causse Méjean
<i>#Vicia villosa</i>	Fodder Vetch	f: tracks and waysides, railway embankments
Fagaceae: Oaks, Beech and Chestnut		
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut	ld: in woodland on acid soils on schist
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	a: widespread in damp woodland
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	Sessile Oak	f: in woodland on the heavier soils
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Downy Oak	a: in deciduous woodland on calcareous soils
Gentianaceae: Gentian Family		
<i>Blackstonia petoliata</i>	Yellow-wort	Causse du Larzac near radio mast above Nant
<i>Gentiana lutea</i>	Yellow Gentian	la: in meadow below summit of M Aigoual
Geraniaceae: Crane's-bills and Stork's-bills		
<i>#Geranium columbinum</i>	Long-stalked Crane's-bill	o: hedgerow on the Causse Noir; beside stream in Nant
<i>#Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining Crane's-bill	f: shady walls in villages; la Couvertorade; <i>buissière</i> at les Baumes
<i>#Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	f: dry grassland
<i>Geranium nodosum</i>	Knotted Crane's-bill	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Geranium pratense</i>	Meadow Crane's-bill	Riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little-Robin	Damp rocks beside Dourbie at Laupies; Causse du Larzac near radio mast
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	Hedgerow Crane's-bill	o: riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies; agricultural areas around Jassenove
<i>#Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	f: hedgerows, damp grassland, rocky grassland and villages throughout
<i>#Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved Crane's-bill	o: sunny walls in villages: la Couvertorade
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Bloody Crane's-bill	o: widespread in causses grassland
Globulariaceae: Globularias		
<i>Globularia punctata</i>	Common Globularia	o: in cause grassland throughout
Grossulariaceae: Currant Family		
<i>Ribes alpinum</i>	Mountain Currant	o: in old walls near le Buffre on Causse Méjean
<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>	Gooseberry	o: in old walls near le Buffre on Causse Méjean
Lamiaceae (Labiatae): Deadnettle Family, Labiates		
<i>Ajuga chamaepytis</i>	Ground-pine	r: car park at Vulture Information Centre
<i>Ajuga genevensis</i>	Blue Bugle	o: in dry grassland and open woodland; Lapanouse
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Common Bugle	f: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	Wild Basil	On dry, rocky path in Dourbie valley near Nant
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	Spotted Dead-nettle	r: riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Common Lavender	On dry, rocky path near le Buffre, Causse Méjean
<i>Mellitis melissophyllum</i>	Bastard Balm	f: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre; la Pezade
<i>Mentha suaveolens</i>	Apple Mint	On dry, rocky path in Dourbie valley near Nant
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Wild Marjoram	On dry, rocky path in Dourbie valley near Nant
<i>Phlomis purpurea</i>	Purple Jerusalem-sage	Near le Buffre, Causse Méjean
<i>Prunella grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered Self-heal	In grassland at Lapanouse
<i>Prunella laciniata</i>	Cut-leaved Self-heal	Causse grassland Causse Blandas
<i>Salvia pratensis</i>	Meadow Clary	f: in dry moderately fertile grassland
<i>#Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild Clary	f: dry grassland on Causse Begon
<i>Sideritis hyssopifolia</i>	Sideritis, Hyssop-leaved Ironwort	o: among limestone rocks
<i>#Stachys recta</i>	Perennial Yellow Woundwort	Near Troglodyte house, les Baumes
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Teucrium aureum</i>	Golden Feltly Germander	f: in cause grassland throughout

<i>Teucrium rouyanum</i>	Rouyan's Felty Germander	o: widespread in causses grassland
<i>*Thymus nitens</i>	Cevennes Thyme	r: on schistic rocks below M Aigoual
<i>cebenensis</i>		
<i>Thymus pulegioides</i>	Larger Wild Thyme	o: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Common Thyme	a: widespread in causses grassland throughout
Linaceae: Flaxes		
<i>Linum bienne</i>	Flax	o: on rocky hillsides
<i>Linum campanulatum</i>	Yellow Flax	f: widespread among rocks and in grassland on calcareous soils
<i>#Linum catharticum</i>	Purging Flax	f: dry grassland
<i>Linum narbonense</i>	Beautiful Flax	In grassland at Lapanouse; Causse Blandas
<i>#Linum strictum</i>	Upright Yellow Flax	Causse grassland on Causse Blandas
<i>Linum suffruticosum</i>	White Flax, Pyrenean Flax	f: widespread among rocks and in grassland on calcareous soils
Malvaceae: Mallows		
<i>#Althaea hirsuta</i>	A Mallow	r: Lush causse grassland near la Couvertoirade
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow	o: on disturbed ground
Oleaceae: Olive Family		
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Common Ash	f: widespread component of deciduous woodland on causse
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Privet	f: in damp woodland understorey
<i>Phillyrea media</i>	Mock Privet	o: on rocky hillsides in the gorges
Onagraceae: Willowherb Family		
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb	o: on disturbed ground; in railway cutting at Gare aux Ânes
Orobanchaceae: Orobanches		
<i>Orobanche spp</i>	Broomrape	o: in woodland and grassland
Papaveraceae: Poppy Family		
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater celandine	o: on pathside in Cantobre and Nant
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	a: on waysides and in arable fields
Plantaginaceae: Plantains		
<i>Plantago holostium</i>	Grass-leaved Plantain	o: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	f: in fertile grasslands and waysides
<i>Plantago media</i>	Hoary Plantain	f: in calcareous grassland throughout
<i>Plantago sempervirens</i>	Shrubby Plantain	o: on rocky hillsides
Plumbaginaceae: Plumbago, Sea Lavender and Thrifts		
<i>*Armeria girardii</i>	Gerard's Thrift	la: on Causse du Larzac near la Couvertoirade and at Jassenove; generally rare
<i>Armeria plantaginea</i>	Plantain Thrift	la: on sandy roadsides near Laupies
Polygalaceae: Milkworts		
<i>Polygala calcarea</i>	Chalk Milkwort	Among rocks near la Couvertoirade
Polygonaceae: Dock Family		
<i>Persicaria bistorta</i>	Bistort	la: in damp meadows below summit of M Aigoual; in riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
Primulaceae: Primrose Family		
<i>Primula elatior</i>	Oxlip	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
Pyrolaceae: Wintergreens		
<i>Moneses uniflora</i>	One-flowered Wintergreen	On the edge of a pine wood near le Buffre, Causse Méjean
<i>Orthilia secunda</i>	Nodding Wintergreen	Under pines, St Jean des Balmes, Causse Noir
<i>Pyrola chlorantha</i>	Green Wintergreen	Under pines, St Jean des Balmes, Causse Noir
Ranunculaceae: Buttercup Family		
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Wood Anemone	o: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>#Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh Marigold	f: beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Traveller's Joy, Old Man's Beard	f: woodland and hedgerows on calcareous soils
<i>Consolida ajacis</i>	Common Larkspur	In arable field near Drigas on Causse Méjean
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Stinking Hellebore	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre; among rocks on Causse Méjean
<i>Helleborus viridis</i>	Green Hellebore	r: among rocks near Hûres on Causse Méjean; la Pezade and Lapanouse on Causse du Larzac
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Hepatica, Liverleaf	o in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Pulsatilla vulgaris</i>	Pasque flower	o: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Ranunculus aconitifolius</i>	Aconite-leaved Buttercup	Beside bridge over the Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup	f: in grazed grassland at Jassenove
<i>#Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser Celandine	f: pathside in Laupies
<i>Ranunculus gramineus</i>	Grass-leaved Buttercup	o: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Meadow Rue	Lapanouse
<i>Trollius europeus</i>	Globeflower	Riverside at Laupies
Resedaceae: Mignonettes		
<i>Reseda lutea</i>	Wild Mignonette	o: among rocks and in grassland on calcareous soils
Rhamnaceae: Buckthorns		
<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>	Mediterranean Buckthorn	f: component of causse scrub
<i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	Purging Buckthorn	f: hedgerows and woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre

Rosaceae: Rose Family

<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	Alpine Lady's-mantle	ld: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Amelanchier ovalis</i>	Snowy Mespilus	f: component of causse scrub
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>	Dropwort	o: in grassland on deeper soils near radio mast Causse du Larzac
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry	f: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	o: woodland beside river Dourbie
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	f: component of causse scrub; hedges; along railway line at la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field Rose	Beside Dourbie near Laupies
<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>	Burnet Rose	o: component of causse scrub; Lapanouse
<i>#Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Sweet Briar	o: widespread in causse grassland
<i>Rubus spp.</i>	Bramble (several species)	f: widespread on waysides, in woodland edges and in causse scrub
<i>Sorbaria sorbifolia</i>	False Spiraea	Beside river Vis in the Cirque de Navacelles
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam	o: in deciduous woodland on calcareous soils and component of causse scrub
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad burnet	o: damp grassland on alkaline soils

Rubiaceae: Bedstraws

<i>Asperula cynanchica</i>	Squinancywort	o: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort	in riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Goosegrass	f: in waysides and waste places
<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Hedge Bedstraw	f: in waysides and hedgerows
<i>#Galium pusillum</i>	A Bedstraw	o: causse grassland near la Couvertorade
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw	In grassland at Lapanouse
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder	f: causse scrub and in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre

Santalaceae: Bastard Toadflax and Sandalwood Family

<i>Thesium divaricatum</i>	Bastard Toadflax	o: widespread among rocks and in grassland on calcareous soils
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Saxifragaceae: Saxifrages

<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>	Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage	o: among rocks beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>Saxifraga granulata</i>	Meadow Saxifrage	o: in meadow below summit of M Aigoual
<i>Saxifraga paniculata</i>	Livelong Saxifrage	
<i>Saxifraga pedemontana prostrata</i>	Prost's Saxifrage	
<i>Saxifraga stellaris</i>	Starry Saxifrage	
<i>#Saxifraga tridactylites</i>	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	f: walls in la Couvertorade

Scrophulariaceae: Foxgloves, Toadflaxes and Speedwells

<i>#Antirrhinum majus</i>	Snapdragon	Roadside near la Gare aux Ânes
<i>#Asarina procumbens</i>	Creeping Snapdragon	o: on rocks and buildings Cantobre and Nant
<i>Chaenorhinum origanifolium</i>	Malling Toadflax	o: roadsides; driveway at la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Digitalis lutea</i>	Yellow Foxglove	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	f: roadsides and woodland edges acid soils
<i>Erinus alpinus</i>	Fairy Foxglove	o: shady rock crevices and walls: beside railway at Lapanouse; Cantobre
<i>Linaria chalapensis</i>	White Toadflax	o: meadows on light soils and as an arable weed
<i>Linaria repens</i>	Pale Toadflax, Striped Toadflax	o: rocky hillsides on alkaline soils
<i>Linaria supina</i>	Prostrate or Pyrenean Toadflax	r: sandy dolomitic soils at Jassenove; Causse grassland near la Couvertorade
<i>#Melampyrum cristatum</i>	Crested Cow-wheat	o: roadsides in Dourbie valley
<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>	Field Cow-wheat	r: sandy dolomitic soils at Jassenove
<i>Rhinanthus mediterraneus</i>	Mediterranean Yellow-rattle	la: in grassland on deeper soils
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Lesser Yellow-rattle	o: in grassland on deeper soils
<i>Scrophularia canina</i>	French Figwort	o: in grassland near le Buffe on Causse Méjean
<i>Verbascum lychnitis</i>	White Mullein (yellow-flowered form)	On roadside below summit of M Aigoual
<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	Aaron's Rod	o: waysides and disturbed ground
<i>#Veronica cymbalaria</i>	Cymbalaria-leaved Speedwell	La Couvertorade
<i>#Veronica persica</i>	Common Field Speedwell	La Couvertorade
<i>#Veronica prostrata</i>	Prostrate Speedwell	o: grassland on deeper soils near radio mast, Causse du Larzac

Solanaceae: Nightshade Family

<i>#Hyoscyamus niger</i>	Henbane	la: near Radio Mast, Causse du Larzac
<i>#Solanum dulcamara</i>	Woody Nightshade	Near Vulture Information Centre, Gorges de la Jonte

Thymeliaceae: Daphne Family

<i>Daphne alpina</i>	Alpine Mezereon	Among rocks near la Couvertorade
<i>Daphne laureola</i>	Spurge Laurel	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre

Tiliaceae: Limes

<i>#Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime	Lapanouse
<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>	Large-leaved Lime	
<i>#Tilia tomentosa</i>	Silver-leaved Lime	o: ornamental in towns and villages`

Ulmaceae: Elm Family

<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych Elm	Lapanouse
<i>Ulmus minor</i>	Small-leaved Elm	f: in hedgerows

Urticaceae: Nettle Family		
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle	a: waysides, hedgerows and disturbed ground
<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory-of-the-Wall	o: old walls and rocks
Valerianaceae: Valerian Family		
<i>Centranthus calcitrapae</i>	A Valerian	r: on dolomitic rocks at Jassenove; Cantobre
<i>Centranthus lecoqii</i>	Lecoque's Red Valerian	f: on cliffs and among rocks in the gorges
<i>Valeriana dioica</i>	Marsh Valerian	In riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
Violaceae: Violets and Pansies		
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog Violet	f: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Viola tricolor</i>	Wild Pansy	f: in riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
Vitaceae: Vines		
<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	Vine	o: In scrub and on walls in sheltered gorges
MONOCOTYLEDONS		
Araceae: Arum Family		
<i>#Arum italicum</i>	Italian Arum	o: damp woodland
<i>#Arum maculatum</i>	Wild Arum	o: damp woodland
Cyperaceae: Sedge Family		
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucous sedge	f: in calcareous grassland on deeper soils; la Pezade
<i>#Carex sylvatica</i>	Wood Sedge	o: woodland beside river Dourbie at Nant
Dioscoreaceae: Black Bryony		
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony	o: in hedgerows; beside track between woodland and campsite in Dourbie valley
Iridaceae: Iris Family		
<i>Gladiolus italicus</i>	Field Gladiolus	o: in cornfield near Nant
<i>#Iris lutescens</i>	Crimean Iris	la: dry, rocky grassland. Causse Blandas
Juncaceae: Rush Family		
<i>Luzula nivea</i>	Snowy Wood-rush	o: in riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies and near Nant
Liliaceae: Lily Family		
<i>Anthericum liliago</i>	St. Bernard's Lily	o: among rocks and bushes in grassland on calcareous soils
<i>Aphyllanthes monspeliensis</i>	Blue Aphyllanthes	ld: steep banks and rocky hillsides on calcareous soils
<i>Asphodelus albus</i>	White Asphodel	o: in rocky grassland on causses
<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Tassel Hyacinth	f: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Narcissus poeticus</i>	Pheasant's-eye Daffodil	f: in meadow below summit of M Aigoual
<i>Ornithogalum pyrenaicum</i>	Bath Asparagus	o: in damp ditches and waysides; along railway line near la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>	Star-of-Bethlehem	o: widespread among rocks and in grassland on calcareous soils
<i>#Polygonatum odoratum</i>	Angular Solomon's-seal	Lapanouse
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's Broom	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre; above Cirque de Navacelles
<i>Tulipa sylvestris</i> ssp <i>australis</i>	Wild Tulip	o: in roadside grassland below summit of M Aigoual
<i>Veratrum album</i>	White False-helleborine	In riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
Orchidaceae: Orchids		
<i>Aceras anthropophorum</i>	Man Orchid	la: widespread in causses grassland on deeper soils; a: at la Pezade
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Orchid	la: widespread in causses grassland, becoming more evident during the month
<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	White Helleborine	r: single specimen on Causse du Larzac in pinewood near radio mast above Nant
<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved Helleborine, Sword-leaved Helleborine	o: under pines on Causse Noir
<i>Cephalanthera rubra</i>	Red Helleborine	o: under pines on Causse du Larzac and Causse Noir
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Frog Orchid	lf: at la Pezade; o: in grassland elsewhere
<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>	Heath Spotted Orchid	r: streamside below summit of Mont Aigoual
<i>Dactylorhiza sambucina</i>	Elder-flowered Orchid	lf: in roadside grassland below summit of M Aigoual
<i>Epipactis atrorubens</i>	Dark-red Helleborine	r: single specimen at la Pezade
<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	Broad-leaved Helleborine	r: single specimen on causse near la Couvertorade; near <i>toit-citerne</i> on Causse Noir
<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Fragrant Orchid	lf: at la Pezade; in ditches on Causse Noir
<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>	Lizard Orchid	f: widespread in grassland and waysides on calcareous soils
<i>Limodorum arbortivum</i>	Violet Bird's-nest Orchid, Violet Limodore	o: on Causse du Larzac near radio mast above Nant and occasionally elsewhere
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Common Twayblade	o: scattered in grassland at la Pezade; near <i>toit-citerne</i>
<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	Bird's-nest Orchid	o: under pines near <i>toit-citerne</i> and near radio mast on Causse du Larzac
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee Orchid	r: single plant at la Pezade; single plant on roadside below Cantobre
<i>Ophrys aranifera</i>	Early Spider Orchid	r: single plant at la Pezade
<i>Ophrys aveyronensis</i>	Aveyron Orchid	r: few specimens remaining in shelter of bushes at Lapanouse station
<i>Ophrys aymoninii</i>	Aymonin's Orchid	r: mixed stand with <i>O. insectifera</i> near le Buffre, Causse Méjean; few specimens near <i>toit-citerne</i>

<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Fly Orchid	r: mixed stand with <i>O. aymoninii</i> near le Buffre, Causse Méjean; few specimens near <i>toit-citerne</i>
<i>#Ophrys passionis</i>	Passiontide Orchid	r: near telephone mast, Causse du Larzac
<i>Ophrys scolopax</i>	Woodcock Orchid	r: single individual near radio mast above Nant
<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>	Early Spider Orchid	r: single individuals near radio mast above Nant and on causse opposite la Gare aux Ânes
<i>Orchis coriophora</i>	Bug Orchid	r: single specimen near la Couvertoirade
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early Purple Orchid	o: several at la Pezade
<i>Orchis militaris</i>	Military Orchid	lf: a few specimens still recognisable on Causse du Larzac near radio mast above Nant and at Lapanouse
<i>Orchis purpurea</i>	Lady Orchid	o: a few specimens still recognisable on Causse du Larzac at la Pezade, near radio mast above Nant and at Lapanouse
<i>Orchis simia</i>	Monkey Orchid	o: a few specimens still recognisable on Causse du Larzac near radio mast above Nant and at Lapanouse
<i>Orchis ustulata</i>	Burnt Orchid, Burnt-tip Orchid	lf: at Lapanouse; o: on Causse du Larzac near radio mast above Nant
<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	Lesser Butterfly Orchid	lf: on Causse du Larzac: near la Couvertoirade, near radio mast above Nant and at Lapanouse
<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Greater Butterfly Orchid	lf: on Causse du Larzac: near la Couvertoirade, near radio mast above Nant and at Lapanouse
Poaceae (Gramineae): Grasses		
<i>Aegilops sp</i>	Aegilops	f: causse grassland, Causse Blandas
<i>Aira caryophyllea</i>	Silver Hair Grass	In meadow below summit of M Aigoual
<i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i>	Tor-grass	ld: patch-forming in causses grassland
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking Grass	f: widespread in causses grassland
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's Foot	f: on waysides and in rough grassland
<i>#Festuca heterophylla</i>	A Fescue	o: Causse Blandas
<i>Festuca marginata</i>	Timbal's Fescue	In riverside grassland beside Dourbie at Laupies
<i>#Festuca paniculata</i>	Panicle Fescue	la: Mont Aigoual
<i>#Festuca vivipara</i>	Viviparous Fescue	e: Mont Aigoual
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Wood Melick	o: in woodland beside river Dourbie between Nant and Cantobre
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple Moor Grass	
<i>Nardus stricta</i>	Matt Grass	ld: in alpine grassland on summit of M Aigoual
<i>Trisetum flavescens</i>	Golden Oat Grass	a: meadows at la Pezade; Causse Blandas
<i>Stipa pennata</i>	Feather Grass, Angel's Hair, Cheveu d'Ange	ld: widespread in causses grassland

