

# *Honeyguide*

## **WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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**French Pyrenees**  
**17 – 25/6 June 2009**

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**Holiday participants**

John and Sarah Barney, Chris Ebdon, David and Diana Melzack, Mike and Margaret Poulton  
From the Salisbury & District Natural History Society (17-25 June):  
Barbara Carter, Brenda Davis, Stan Lovett, Ailsa McKee, Rosemary and Gerald Nicholls, Ray Witt

**Leaders**

Chris Durdin and Ivan Nethercoat

Our hosts in the French Pyrenees: Odile and Philippe Pujo, Hotel La Brèche de Roland  
assisted this year at table by Nicholas, Sophie and Marika.

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



Book note, for interest: the hotel has a copy of the authoritative *La Grande Flore Illustrée des Pyrénées*, by Marcel Saule (Éditions Milan, 2002) which is illustrated with black and white line drawings.

Report written by Ivan Nethercoat with contributions from Chris Durdin.

Photos edged green by Chris Durdin and edged blue by Ivan Nethercoat.

Cover: alpenrose in the Glère valley.

Above: La Brèche de Roland from the hotel.

This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The conservation contribution this year of £35 per person towards lammergeier protection was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. It was combined with the contribution from the group in the Dordogne (for the 'Refuge LPO' project) and two groups in the Cévennes making a total this year of €2550 (£2405) given to La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO, the French Bird Protection League). We were pleased to meet the LPO's Gwenaëlle Plet in Gèdre on 19 June. See <http://gypaete.lpo.fr/index.html> for more information on the LPO lammergeier work.

This brings the total given to LPO to £12,923 since 1991 and the total conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991 was at £60,166 by June 2009.

## **French Pyrenees**

### **17 – 25/6 June 2009**

#### **Wednesday 17 June – arrival at Gèdre**

A dawn start for five of the group meant arriving at the small airport called Pau Pyrenees – well located for us but really firmly in the lowlands – at a time when most of us are starting to get brains engaged. Ivan and Chris had already been in the area for three days, visiting or re-visiting our regular haunts and elsewhere, and recovering from their early start last Sunday. Our two minibuses were soon loaded and we were on the road by 10 o'clock for Lourdes to pick up our two intrepid rail travellers.

The day had warmed considerably by the time we arrived at Lourdes, a detour of just a few hundred metres to find John and Sarah at the Hotel Beausejour where they had stayed overnight, conveniently opposite the railway station. We stopped for a coffee outside the hotel where, from this somewhat restricted viewpoint, we became aware of griffon vultures overhead. As we looked around the corner there were five birds circling over the town, soon joined by a black kite and then, surprisingly, an adult Egyptian vulture. The birds appeared to find a thermal and drift onwards and upwards, leaving us free to get on the road, but as we gathered at the minibus we were greeted by a red kite swooping down to pick up some morsel from a car park below us just a few metres away. Chris left us at this point to drive to Toulouse to collect the contingent from the Salisbury & District Natural History Society.

On then to Gèdre, the route taking us up into the foothills and then the lower slopes of the Pyrenees. A few kilometres before Gèdre we stopped briefly in a well-placed lay-by to admire the drooping white spikes of Pyrenean saxifrages bursting forth from the rock face in a wonderfully showy display.

At Gèdre we were greeted with lunch and then relaxed on the terrace for while, admiring the Brèche de Roland. The Brèche sits at 2807m and is an awesome slash in the frontier cliffs – a window to Spain and the Ordesa National Park. It's easy to see from the hotel in good weather – and quickly disappears from view when conditions deteriorate.

After a rest and recovery from the journey we ventured out to explore the streams and meadows within the village. Two rivers (Héas and Gavarnie), wild verges, hay meadows yellow with rattle and, of course, the hills and mountains, provide a great wildlife area right on the doorstep. (View downstream from bridge nearest the hotel, right.) Our walk took us past serins singing and displaying from the treetops, crag martins resting on buildings a few feet away, fairy foxgloves; viper's bugloss and dusky cranesbill. At the edge of the village we met the



Gavarnie river, the quieter of the two, and from the bridge we looked down over a rocky riverbed, perfect for wagtails and dippers. Sure enough, after a few moments a dipper appeared and then a young white wagtail. On the wall of the small hydroelectric power station a pair of black redstarts went about their business while grey wagtails flew past.

Leaving the bridge, our route took us up the hill toward the higher fields. Chimney sweeper moths flew through the grasses and a little farther on, busy on a small patch of slurry, butterflies were taking minerals. In the hot sunshine they moved quickly but here the lure of the slurry kept them in view; most spectacular was a magnificent, freshly emerged swallowtail that looked amazing as it filled the view through the telescope. We passed walls embedded with stonecrops and glimpsed the occasional dash from wall lizards moving quickly out of sight. With patience they could be photographed, but it was a challenge. The path led us down the hill back to the village centre. More fairy foxgloves grew on the sheltered walls and Pyrenean valerian had taken root on the sheltered, moist walls of the gulley through which the river roared. Our stroll led us back to the hotel on what had been a very warm, gentle introduction to the environment we were to explore for the rest of the week.

Meanwhile, at Toulouse, the flight from Bristol for the 'Salisbury seven' arrived a little early. They were soon swiftly onto the *péage* south towards the Pyrenees, with a break in the journey at a motorway service station, arriving at 8 pm in good time to join the rest for dinner where the early risers had just finished starters.

#### **Thursday 18 June – Saugué**

Refreshed after a good night's sleep and breakfast, including freshly baked bread and great coffee, it was time to depart. On the map the route that takes you to the Pont de Saugué is a short drive along a quiet road but in our typically slow and steady Honeyguide style, it took up the day. Just south of Gèdre we turned off the main road over a narrow bridge, then looped left through some open woodland and rich, uncut meadows. A short step along here was a place big enough to park two vans, which proved extremely productive for flowers and butterflies with mazarine, small and Escher's blues flying over a meadow of yellow rattle and pyramidal orchids.



We moved on a few kilometres to where the valley widens and again parked the vehicles, this time alongside the river that tumbles down the valley. As we left the bus we noticed masses of butterflies around our feet, taking minerals from the ground, especially crowds of small blues and heath fritillaries (the latter, left). Along the ridge a pair of short-toed eagles hung in the air. While we gathered the group to watch them a lammergeier appeared low down the valley giving superb views as it came lower and passed overhead. Was it giving us a close look, reciprocated by 16 pairs of binoculars?

Alongside small gullies, broad-leaved marsh orchids provided purple splashes interspersed with paler pink fragrant orchids; alongside the river or the road verge, meadow-rue, Pyrenean rampions and globe flowers provided a show. In the distance a marmot called and showed briefly before disappearing into its burrow. Many more butterflies showed well, including several skippers and the very dark false heath fritillary.

After a generous picnic lunch we set off to the end of the road, driving past fields yellow with yellow rattle as far as we could see. At the Pont de Saugué the road becomes a track but the view is breathtaking: meadows full of flowers with the magnificent backdrop of the Cirque de Gavarnie (right).



The rest of the day was spent exploring the fields and tracks, though one or two, perhaps recharging batteries after yesterday's travelling, soaked up the sun. Burnt-tip, greater butterfly, and sword-leaved helleborine were some of the orchid highlights. A short-toed eagle gave a few of the birders a great view as it flew below us along the top of the ridge and wheatears were busy collecting food nearby. A tree pipit performed its song near the buses and a golden eagle quartered the hillside but only giving a view for Ivan while he was discreetly looking for a bush!

After a warm afternoon it was a welcome sight to see the nearby café open up so we piled in for refreshments. Ailsa's choice of a *panaché* – shandy – was often copied during the week to come. Chris's ears tuned in to an unusual song and we were delighted to see a splendid whinchat in full song, a rare sound in the UK.

### **Friday 19 June – Gavarnie and Col de Tentes**

A cool cloudy morning did not deter a few from exploring the back of the hotel before breakfast. Firecrest, bullfinch and serin put on a display before we retreated inside for sustenance before our meeting with the local LPO representative.

By 9 o'clock the cloud was very low and rain was well set in so it was a well-timed meeting with Gwenaëlle Plet from La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, the BirdLife partner in France. Gwenaëlle told us about LPO's work with local communities to help ensure the survival of lammergeiers, Egyptian vultures, red kites and griffon vultures, their four priority bird species. So, the lammergeier (right) – or bearded vulture – we saw yesterday was one of some 130 pairs nesting in the Pyrenees. The bulk of these are in Spain (89 pairs in 2006) but there were 27 pairs in France in a 2006 survey, up from 17 pairs in 1994. Gwenaëlle had a great model of what of what in France they call the *gypaète barbu* plus props and descriptions to show



why it is also known as the *casseur d'os* (bone-breaker). She stressed their slow reproductive rate: they produce at best one chick a year but as they don't start to breed until they are eight years or so and probably not successfully until 12 or 13, so there are some dozens of immature birds to add to this number of pairs. While birds are still found injured, poisoned or shot, overall the picture is looking good and Honeyguide made its own unique contribution in the form of a cheque to LPO for €2550 – a combined donation from holidays to the Cévennes and Dordogne as well as this one.

The rain came down harder as we loaded up the vehicles and headed off to Gavarnie. Here our wet weather gear was used to the full, many adopting the English way of coping with rain with a hood and an umbrella, an effective approach to the inclement weather. So, keeping hoods dry we set off to explore the path alongside the river and while birds were a little quiet, apart from the ubiquitous blackcap, the flowers were well up to standard.

The rain eased and blue sky appeared as we headed back for lunch, which was eaten in glorious sunshine. A quick trip to the town and 45 minutes later clouds had descended again so we decided to try to get above it by driving to the Col de Tentes. The cloud was persistent and with marmots running for cover in the grey there seemed no let up or any prospect of a clear view. However as we approached the summit suddenly we were in very warm sunshine with the high peaks bathed in glorious light against a clear blue sky. Alpine choughs were calling below us in the cloud. But as we set off to explore the grassy slopes our window of clear sky rapidly closed as we were again enveloped in cloud.

Trumpet gentians, Pyrenean buttercups, Pyrenean thistle, cushion bedstraw and alpine toadflax still gave a very good show but birds were a little tricky. However, while leaning on the sign that aims to interpret the geology of the area we became aware of quick movement across the scree below. A bit of patient watching revealed the scurrying of snow voles (right) and Pyrenean rock lizards.



Back into the buses, a little damper than when we left, it was time to descend through the cloud, entering clear air just above Gavarnie. We headed back home where tonight's meal was one of the hotel's specialities: *parriade*, fresh beefsteaks cooked at the table on very hot stones.

### **Saturday 20 June – Barèges, Col du Tourmalet, Vallée de la Glère**

The wet weather persisted overnight and into the morning and even deterred most of the pre-breakfast crew. However Philippe assured us the tops would be clear by late morning so off we set for the village of Barèges and on to the Col du Tourmalet.

Barèges is a fairly unexceptional town but a useful stop on route and a good spot to catch up with crag martins. The weather was still poor as we arrived and a short stop in the car park alongside the river allowed us to view black kite, grey wagtail and swift. A short walk along the stream for Sarah's giant slugs also produced a pink Nottingham catchfly, yellow woundwort and large patches of spotted deadnettle.

Onwards and upwards and as the road climbed out of Barèges the cloud became patchy and pockets of sunlight and warmth marked our way as we negotiated cyclists sharing our narrow route to the top. The ascent was a spectacular drive; the hills were pink with the flowers of alpenrose and here and there wheatears and water pipits crossed our path and the patchy cloud at the start added to the atmosphere.

At the highest point (2115m) there is a large sculpture of a cyclist, a rather modern looking café and, today, any number of stewards and supporters for cyclists going over this mountain pass tucked below the Pic du Midi.

As we parked the minibuses a snowfinch flew over, which was a good sign but missed by many. We decided to walk to the more rustic-looking café that we could see across a small depression. Chris set off and soon found another snowfinch for all to see – good stuff but in the meantime the café had disappeared in cloud! We carried on regardless and eventually reached a point just outside the building where snowfinches and black redstarts were nesting in the machinery of a ski lift. The snowfinches show little fear of people and are rather like tame chaffinches in a forestry car park. Despite the increasing cloud we had just enough time for a few pictures in the mist before visibility became too bad and a hot chocolate was in order.

With visibility not improving, we headed back down to clearer views. On the way, minibus two stopped for a water pipit on a small wall by the road. The bird promptly flew away but not before Chris E spotted something a little larger and left the bus for a better view to find that it was a ring ouzel - a new bird for Honeyguide's French Pyrenees list. A little farther on and a cry went up for a bird of prey sitting on a large rock below the road – a griffon vulture (right), perhaps waiting for warmer weather to appear to produce a thermal or two to ride on. He, or she, sat there for some time until disturbed by another car stopping nearby. Water



pipits were out in good numbers here and we scoped a few birds sitting on alpenrose. Then another bird of prey drifted above us but below the cloud – a lammergeier, soon followed by another griffon vulture.

At the bottom of the climb is a turn, above Barèges, to Chez Louisette, our final destination for the day. Chez Louisette is the name of a café in a woodland clearing but it's the setting here that counts. After another excellent picnic accompanied by coal tits, serins and chaffinches we set off to explore the area – short grassland with mature firs and beech, habitat also favoured by citril finches. Sure enough, two birds soon appeared feeding on the ground behind a cattle corral. They proved tricky to see well in the telescope at first but after we manoeuvred everyone into a better position most people had good views.

A stroll up the slopes brought us to two small ponds with very clear water, allowing us to watch the activities of frogs, tadpoles, enormous leeches and dragonfly larvae. Gerald talked us through the ID features of the many species of ferns growing here, including abundant lady ferns, oak fern and beech fern.

Short-toed eagles and more griffon vultures drifted overhead and soon it was time to return to the vehicles. As the advance party arrived there the unmistakable sound of a black woodpecker drumming came out of the trees. Out with the iPod and speakers and within a few minutes two of these fabulous birds came close to see what the competition was. They eventually left the trees and fed on the ground nearby and allowed everyone to see these rather special birds through the telescope. Then it was time to celebrate with a coffee or *panaché* at Chez Louisette.

We took a small detour in Luz St Sauveur on the return journey to drive over Napoleon Bridge: in the Rough Guide it says that “According to local legend, Napoléon III authorized the building of Pont Napoléon in 1860, to commemorate his illicit conception at nearby Gavarnie.” Then back to Gedre for our now regular routine of an hour or so to potter or prepare, wildlife checklists (inside or outside) and an excellent evening meal.

### **Sunday 21 June – Ossoue Valley and Col de Tentes**

Finally a clear and bright morning – but cooled by a sharp wind. The firecrests were stars of the show before breakfast today as they responded well to a brief burst of digitised song from the iPod, coming to within a few feet of us while they attempted to deter the new intruder.



After another good breakfast it was time to set off towards Ossoue, a quiet valley west of Gavarnie so a short drive from the hotel. The weather was fantastic, beautiful clear skies and a lovely cool wind. As the road climbed we stopped for a quick exploration of the fields and roadside at the subalpine level. Marmots were calling and basking in the sun; a griffon flew lazily onto a ridge to catch the early rays and a rock bunting sang in the distance. Flowers too were on good show and even ramonda was growing by the road at eye level. A male rock bunting (left) sang from a bush allowing excellent views in the telescope for everyone.

Feeling the valley was ours we drove on to the end where we found lots of cars but very few people – they were seen later walking on faraway ice patches and ridges. At this end of the valley it feels like a different place as the woodland and high cliffs give way to wide open valleys with distant mountain peaks. The Ossoue river wound a silver thread through the landscape, lined in places with carpets of purple from hundreds of broad-leaved marsh orchids. Up on the hillside, Ray found a sprinkling of black vanilla orchids on a streamside free of the abundant asphodels. Above us an adult and an immature lammergeier cruised the hilltops.

After a good potter it was time to move on. Back into Gavarnie for a brief loo stop – that also allowed good views of Piedmont ringlet and clouded Apollo – and then back up the road to Col de Tentes, this time with clear blue skies.

Another fine picnic lunch was taken on the lower slopes of the road at a parking area that offered not only a great view but also a chance to find a few butterflies - black-veined white, red-underwing skipper and pearl-bordered fritillary to name but a few – and flowers. David and Rosemary returned from a short walk along the footpath back towards Gavarnie having found martagon lily, not quite in flower but impressive

enough to warrant a quick look by the keen botanists, and admired a bright copper butterfly.

Moving on up above the tree line, the hillsides became pasture for recently arrived cattle and sheep and among them a few alpine choughs. About halfway up a small stream crosses the road and offered another stopping place from which to explore the high damp grasslands, with both entire-leaved and birdseye primroses growing in wet flushes. Perhaps more remarkable still was dwarf buckthorn, its low branches hugging a rock. Sarah set off for some rocks and came back having found a new site for snowfinch – not as convenient as a car park but even more rewarding when you don't know the birds are there.

Looking back down the valley a group of red-billed choughs could be seen feeding on the short turf left by grazing sheep and no doubt marmots, several of whom had watched our ascent from the roadside and could now be seen across the pasture.

This being a Sunday the top of the road was much busier than previously but people soon dispersed, leaving alpine choughs (right) to wander the car park and grace the magnificent scenery with their tumbling and diving flight as they moved noisily from one patch of turf to another, that turf studded with the white of Pyrenean buttercups and the deep blue of trumpet gentians. With no cloud today, the snow vole stayed hidden from view.



### **Monday 22 June – return to Gavarnie**

A calm, bright but cool morning, a perfect day to return to Gavarnie and experience the walk in all its glory. Picnics in backpacks, for a change, off we set in bright sun and pleasant, cool air – perfect weather for this walk. Two griffon vultures were among the first birds seen as they perched on the ridge, warming themselves in the early sun. Alpine choughs could be seen flying along the ridge and were visible all day, occasionally in large flocks of a hundred or so.

We were not far down the path and a lammergeier appeared in front of the ridge, occasionally breaking the skyline and eventually landing on a small ledge where it started to preen - a long way off but viewable by everyone in the telescope. To our surprise, a little scan of the area revealed a second bird a few feet away, presumably a pair.

Here the grass banks were simply alive with garden chafers, thousands of them on a recently cut area but also visible among the remaining plants and often on ourselves. Black-veined moth, Piedmont ringlets, paper wasps, maiden pink; there was much to stop and identify or admire. Moving on past our previous finishing point in the rain, the path rose gently with rocky sides. Sharp-eyed Ray also found a tiny moonwort on rock ledges, a trick he repeated at lunchtime in finding a lone spike of black vanilla orchid among the many marsh orchids.



Most of us took lunch just off the well-beaten track to the distant waterfall tumbling down the Cirque. Here a gentle hillside gave way to a wide, flat, wet meadow alongside the Gavarnie river. The hillside was home to butterfly and fragrant orchids (together, left), many burnt-tips too while the wet meadow had large groups of marsh orchids. More martagon lilies were found, tantalizingly close to opening and all around butterflies were making the most of the warm sun. This was all done with the amazing backdrop of the Cirque that just gets bigger and more impressive – but never close. The cirque is 800m wide (at the deepest point) and about 3000m wide at the top and as if that were not enough it is also the site of Grande Cascade de Gavarnie – at 422m the tallest waterfall in France. Margaret and Stan had already made it to the start of the scree, Chris E and Sarah following suit later. Today they could stop at the café for a welcome but expensive drink before making the journey back – it had been closed when Ivan and Chris had walked up before the group arrived.

Back at the meadows, we took time for an hour's potter around this magic place, during which Gerald and Ailsa tried an area of willows for Camberwell beauties, but without luck. Then it was back to the main path and a short walk to a group of pine trees – home to crested tits. They were new birds for a few and today seen very well as they hung from the dark tree branches close to us. A great end to a fantastic walk, topped off nicely by a welcome rest in a café alongside the path back to the busses.

## **Tuesday 23 June – Héas valley and Cirque de Troumousse**

Another bright, calm and cool morning at the hotel. Today we headed for the high tops again but this time toward the magnificent Cirque de Troumousse, a short drive from the hotel along the Héas valley.

The Héas river valley has wonderful roadside plants and when we found a place large enough for the two vehicles we went out to explore the verges. A small emerald moth clinging to a stem proved to be an interesting exercise in giving people directions, despite the creature being no more than three metres away it needed the telescope to make sure everyone could see it. A purple-edged copper was more obliging and clung obligingly to the 'bug box' while its picture was taken. Across on the hills a couple of griffon vultures were circling on early thermals or updrafts from the cliff and were soon joined by a young lammergeier, before drifting off.

Back in the vehicles we drove alongside more flower-packed roadsides and eventually up to the start of the road to the Cirque. Unusually it's a *péage* – the €4 goes towards maintaining the narrow mountain road. Straight away the climb took us into stunning mountain scenery, hillsides lined with alpenrose and skies with alpine choughs and griffon vultures.

Two-thirds of the way up to the cirque is a wonderfully placed café: the Auberge du Maillet, nestling at 1837m in front of wonderful cliffs. No surprise then that we stopped here to watch the wildlife with coffee in hand. Griffons were gathering and cruising alongside the cliff face above us, soon joined by a young lammergeier, probably the same bird seen earlier, and for a short time an adult Egyptian vulture gleaming in the early sun. Meanwhile, Chris spotted a superb male rock thrush just cross the road allowing great telescope views for everyone; the browner female appeared shortly afterwards.

From the café we could see up the valley to the foot of the cliffs with snowfields and scree. On the snowfield we could see a small group of isard – the Pyrenean version of chamois – and eventually one ran off the snow and down into the valley to join a group of another 20 or so animals grazing on stony

pasture (below). Meanwhile the lammergeier appeared again, slowly circling the cliff face in front of us.



Back onto the road we climbed steeply for a few minutes before the road levelled out and led onto a car park in front of the superb, and massive, Cirque de Troumousse. This Cirque has a totally different feel to Gavarnie, much more open and approached from a much higher position but also free of commercialism.

We had lunch on the edge of the car park, looking onto the pastures and hills covered with cloudless blue sky. Then it was time for a stroll across this magic landscape of low grassland, wet in places, gently hilly in others interspersed with streams and pools – home to a myriad of pond life including the Pyrenean brook newt.

The group split into potterers and accentor hunters, split largely by willingness or ability to make a walk to more distant hills in the hope of seeing a bird by no means guaranteed to be there. Ivan's four hunters set off in the heat of the sun for the rocky areas nearer the Cirque. Water pipits, wheatear and even a yellowhammer were seen or heard as we crossed the pasture. More pools with frogs, tadpoles and damselflies were passed and occasional flashes of yellow from clouded yellow butterflies and then we were at what looked like a suitable location - still a long way from the scree but this 'felt' right. And so it proved to be, with a delightful alpine accentor (above) eventually heard and seen very well, 'scoped' and even photographed. But still, the real star was the landscape in which the bird was seen, adding to the magic of the moment.



Chris and the strollers were equally absorbed. It's amazing how many insects there are this high. As well as those clouded yellows, there was a steady trickle of painted ladies, several hummingbird hawkmoths and some fritillaries that were too fast-flying to be caught or ID'd, but we suspect were Queen-of-Spain fritillaries. Unusually we instead caught a dragonfly in the butterfly net, a female broad-bodied chaser. What at first sight looked like small blue butterflies, so common farther down the hill, were in fact many hundreds of the large micro-moth *Metaxmeste phrygialis*. Another group of isard was seen, slowly meandering across a distant slope. A careful study of trumpet gentians led to the conclusion that they were alpine gentians (right) *Gentiana alpina*, though the differences are subtle and you can't help but wonder if they are really a different species. There were wafts of scent from the bright pink patches of garland flower, actually a daphne, and its bigger relative *Daphne mezereum* against the shelter of many of the bigger rocks.



The groups joined together again, stopping at the *auberge* for another drink and to admire the view. Then back to base, tired, with bits of sunburn but feeling we'd been somewhere special.

### **Wednesday 24 June – Bué valley and Gèdre-Dessus**

This morning we took the narrow road across the bridge again but instead of turning left to Saugué took the road to Bué. The route climbs high into the woodland we can see from the hotel and then follows the river Cestrède to a hillside pasture where it ends, giving way to a steep footpath up onto the hills. Our plan was to explore the pasture in the cool air of the morning then walk down the road to where one of the minibuses would be waiting, ready to retrieve the top bus and any slower walkers.

The meadow was alive with insects including clouded apollo and garden chafers; in patches across the grass the area was full of crickets trying hard to escape the size 10s. Ray went exploring the upper levels of the field and again came up trumps, finding numerous spikes of the diminutive frog orchid.

On then down the track, a delightful walk alongside woodland and a tumbling stream with many flowers and numerous butterflies. Among the interesting plants in the shade were wood saxifrage, rather like a garden 'London pride', the white petals and red spots and stems giving a pinkish impression to the plant, and yellow pea, a rather dull name for an upright vetchling in which the flowers become brown as they start to turn into pods.

Orange-tip, clouded apollo, mazarine blue, small skipper, green-veined white and a flypast from a probable 'real' apollo made for a great walk, topped off nicely when we reached Sarah watching the hillside through a large gap in the trees. She described a young golden eagle being mobbed and forced to land. Naturally we waited to see what would happen next! To start with, two adult lammergeiers soon drifted in front of the hillside accompanied by a griffon vulture. The young eagle then appeared and again was soon set upon by two kestrels, driving it away over the rise. A pause and then two adult golden eagles came overhead and circled the same hillside this time accompanied by a peregrine! All in great light

while we stood in delightful cool shade, perfect!

The eagles could still be seen back at the hotel in Gèdre where we had our lunch, with several of us eating at the back of the hotel overlooking the newly mown meadow. Some large fritillaries were on the wing, prompting Chris to run the length of the meadow, net in hand, returning with a newly emerged dark green fritillary.

In the afternoon we set off for Gèdre-Dessus, the area of hillside above the hotel. Previous early evening recce visits with Sarah and Barbara had revealed the lack of parking space up there, so the more energetic members of the party were persuaded to take a steep but wide rocky footpath, proving the sign's estimate of 15 minutes was spot on. The rest of us took the bus, meeting at the top.

The hillside here is much drier and offers a different range of plants, more characteristic of lowlands southern France. These included woodcock orchid, *Dipcadi* (sometimes called 'brown bells' but here pale green), wild candytuft, large Mediterranean spurge and patches of the umbellifer *Orlaya* with its elegant white outer petals, plus large specimens of burnt-tip and pyramidal orchids. Perhaps the nicest find was a small patch of cone knapweeds. It was an old friend of Chris's from holidays in The Lot in the 1990s: it's low-growing with a rather insignificant knapweed-type flower at the top of what looks rather like a pine cone (above and right).



The views from here are rather special too as this area of hill is directly above the hotel and offers great views down the valley toward Gavarnie as well as the start of the Héas valley. No more eagles showed but ravens called overhead and a honey buzzard put in a brief appearance.

A walk back down the road into Gèdre was a great end to a hot afternoon. Several of us had a drink in the slightly sad café with the pizza sign by the bridge. The beer was on an early evening special price but the real draw was the garden at the rear that overlooks the river and large shady rocks studded with ramondas. This also marked the end of the holiday for the Salisbury contingent, who were to fly from Toulouse the following morning.

#### **Thursday 25 June – Ossoue valley**

After packing and farewells, there was still an hour or so for the 'Salisbury seven' to potter in Gèdre, where up the road we paused under the lime trees to admire the mistletoe, in which a treecreeper was climbing. It didn't sing but at this relatively low altitude it's likely to have been a short-toed treecreeper. We walked to 'Dipper Bridge' – a Honeyguide nickname but an apt one as many who'd been out before breakfast knew. But would they perform today? It was probably less than a minute when a flash of brown flew upriver, disappearing into the large, shady rocks. More flashes of brown, a grey wagtail perched on a piece of metal on the river; even a golden eagle by the mountain ahead of us, mobbed by a falcon, then when we next looked up, a red kite in the same place. But still no dipper that offered anything like a good view. But patience was rewarded, not long before we had to go, when a black-bellied dipper (as they are all are) settled near the weir from the small hydroelectric power station. At last we could all see it through the telescope, a suitable curtain call for the departing group who, despite a delay at Toulouse airport, still arrived back in Salisbury by 9 pm.

Those travelling from Pau and Lourdes had the day to explore the area – but where to go? Fortunately the weather played a hand and limited our scope by bringing down cloud in the morning. By 9 o'clock it had lifted sufficiently to go to the lower slopes and off we set for the Ossoue valley again, this time taking the path along the valley to the lake.



The valley was as delightful as before with dramatic clouds on the peaks, engaging marmots on the slopes and masses of orchids along the wet areas. A slow drive allowed pictures to be taken of marmot (left) and an obliging red-backed shrike – all on the right hand side of the bus which therefore meant some interesting shifting of passengers and cameras!

The track from the parking area to the lake climbed slowly, lifting us above the river and alongside a variety of now familiar plants plus a couple of new species. Fragrant orchids poked out of

the edges of the path wall; euphorbias slowly increased in numbers as we climbed and in the gullies the giant butterwort seemed to flourish despite the insect life appearing minimal. The sound of a thrush singing stopped us to locate what could only be a rock thrush and sure enough, after a few minutes, everyone had good telescope views. As we watched, another male flew over carrying food. Black redstarts and dunnocks caught our eye in the rocky areas and on the hillsides close by a pair of red-billed choughs called and landed. Sarah went exploring the rocks and found a sheltered area with ferns and trees that also gave food and shelter to a spotted flycatcher gathering food for a young bird.

A small patch of yellow rock narcissi caught our eye, and while we stopped another rock thrush flew past taking our eyes high up the cliff where Sarah spotted a bright patch of blue on a ledge. Through the telescope it was clearly an iris, a new plant for the trip, but well out of reach for closer inspection.

Onward and upward and soon the barrage was in view. Typical of many high altitude lakes, birds were almost non-existent with only a few water pipits putting up with the many anglers and walkers coming and going. It was however, a great point to get to. From here the path become serious, soon heading straight up the mountain and onto the ice fields. So, after a short rest it was time for the very pleasant leisurely descent to the bus. We were accompanied by choughs and marmots most of the way and occasional heavy drops of rain that felt like we were on the edge of some serious storms. Thunder echoed down the valley but we remained dry and had lunch in the bus before setting off back down the track.

On our previous visit Sarah had set off on foot and we collected her on route. She had found a patch of purple orchids so we stopped to check out the site on the edge of some pines near the road edge. Here, in among the stems of iris and asphodels, were about twenty perfect stems of black vanilla orchids and fragrant orchids, while out of sight in the trees a cuckoo called.

As we approached the end of the valley the road got progressively wetter and by the time we arrived at Gavarnie we were in full rain. Back at Gèdre it was time for hot chocolate and packing for an early start tomorrow; then our final checklist before our last meal in this friendly hotel in a perfect location with, of course, perfect guests.

**Friday 26 June – Pau and home**

Breakfast at 5.20 and Odile was kindly up early to provide tea and coffee to fuel our early start. It was raining quite heavily as we loaded up and left around 6.15. Like for yesterday's airport travellers, collared dove, swallow and magpie were added to the bird list, and there was a good sprinkling of kites in the lowlands. That apart, it was an uneventful journey, dropping Sarah and John in Lourdes then to Pau Pyrenees airport in comfortable time for return Ryanair flights.

Where you when you heard that Michael Jackson had died? You may never be asked. I (Chris) was sitting on the bus that goes from the terminal at Stansted to the long stay car park, when I saw the news on the cover of a copy of The Times being read by a man in a toupee.

**Holiday highlights**

Group members kindly gave their holiday highlights which, as ever, give an insight into the varied things that will remain as powerful memories.

Barbara: Troumousse and 'halfway house' café stop; garland flower.

Brenda: the griffon vulture on a rock as we returned from Col du Tourmalet; the singing whinchat.

Rosemary: flower-filled meadows and butterflies; the friendly group.

Gerald: marmots and alpenrose.

Ailsa: Troumousse café with lammergeier and griffons.

Ray: black woodpecker.

Stan: isards and Gavarnie Cirque.

Diana: birds of prey at Bué – golden eagles and lammergeier; seeing Ivan's hummingbird hawkmoth photo.

David: brown bells lily, wood saxifrage, alpine choughs, yellow pimpernel, pair of black woodpeckers, the copper seen by him and Rosemary. David later kindly added the grandeur of the scenery and the quality of the guiding.

John: the cirques.

Sarah: bullfinch at lunchtime; alpine accentor and chough.

Chris E: Troumousse and rock thrush.

Margaret: rock thrush; red kite on the car park at Lourdes.

Mike: rock thrush and alpine accentor on one day.

Chris D: snow vole and Pyrenean rock thrush in the cloud; Pyrenean brook newt.

Ivan: gentians and black woodpecker.

## Systematic Lists

### BIRDS

<b>Grey heron</b>	Twice seen flying at dusk at Gèdre.
<b>Honey buzzard</b>	One over Gèdre-Dessus.
<b>Black kite</b>	Most seen in the lowlands around Lourdes but also at Gèdre.
<b>Red kite</b>	Most seen in the lowlands, including dropping into the car park by the Hotel Beausejour in Lourdes, but also at Gèdre.
<b>Lammergeier</b>	Seen on five days, with three on three days.
<b>Egyptian vulture</b>	Over Lourdes and at the 'halfway house' at Troumousse.
<b>Griffon vulture</b>	Over Lourdes and all days except one in the Pyrenees.
<b>Short-toed eagle</b>	Three at Saugué and almost daily in the early evening over the hill behind the hotel.
<b>Golden eagle</b>	Three from the Bué road, and from 'dipper bridge' in Gèdre on the final day.
<b>Common buzzard</b>	Seen on five days, including in Gèdre.
<b>Kestrel</b>	Seen on four days.
<b>Peregrine</b>	Up with the golden eagles over the Bué valley.
<b>Quail</b>	Heard at Saugué and Gèdre.
<b>Feral pigeon</b>	No real rock doves.
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	Just seen in Ossoue valley.
<b>Collared dove</b>	On route to airports.
<b>Swift</b>	Seen on four days.
<b>Green woodpecker</b>	Heard on three days.
<b>Black woodpecker</b>	Two showed very well on the open areas at the base of the Glère valley.
<b>Skylark</b>	Heard at Col de Tentres only.
<b>Swallow</b>	On route to airports only.
<b>House martin</b>	Seen on three days, including alongside crag martins in Barèges.
<b>Crag martin</b>	Seen daily; nesting in Gèdre and Barèges.
<b>Tree pipit</b>	Singing at Gavarnie, Saugué and the Héas valley.
<b>Water pipit</b>	At all the high altitude stops.
<b>Grey wagtail</b>	Seen daily, and regular in Gèdre.
<b>White wagtail</b>	Seen daily, and regular in Gèdre.
<b>Dipper</b>	Several times at 'dipper bridge' in Gèdre; fly-past views on several other rivers.
<b>Wren</b>	Heard on four days.
<b>Dunnock</b>	Recorded on two days, including in song on alpenrose above Barèges.
<b>Alpine accentor</b>	On scree far from the car park at Troumousse.
<b>Robin</b>	Heard or seen on all except one day.
<b>Black redstart</b>	Daily in Gèdre.
<b>Whinchat</b>	Singing at Saugué; on the second Ossoue valley visit.
<b>Northern wheatear</b>	At all the high altitude stops.
<b>Rock thrush</b>	A pair at the the 'halfway house' at Troumousse; three males on the second Ossoue valley visit.
<b>Blackbird</b>	Daily in Gèdre.
<b>Ring ouzel</b>	One on the decent from Col du Tourmalet.
<b>Song thrush</b>	Heard on three days.
<b>Mistle thrush</b>	In the Glère valley near Chez Louisette.
<b>Blackcap</b>	Heard daily, seen opposite the hotel.
<b>Garden warbler</b>	Heard or seen on three days.

<b>Northern chiffchaff</b>	Perhaps singing was nearly over – just on two days.
<b>Firecrest</b>	Regular views round the back of the hotel.
<b>Great tit</b>	Recorded almost every day.
<b>Blue tit</b>	Only in the Glère valley.
<b>Coal tit</b>	In the pine woods at Gavarnie.
<b>Crested tit</b>	In the pine woods at Gavarnie.
<b>Nuthatch</b>	Recorded on three days.
<b>Short-toed treecreeper</b>	Only in Gèdre and not until the final day – probably it had stopped singing.
<b>Red-backed shrike</b>	A male at Gavarnie.
<b>Raven</b>	Scattered records on four days.
<b>Carriion crow</b>	Recorded every day.
<b>Red-billed chough</b>	At Ossoue and lots (including mixed with alpine choughs) at Troumousse ‘halfway house’.
<b>Alpine chough</b>	Flocks at Gavarnie, Troumousse, Col de Tentes.
<b>Magpie</b>	Apart from one on the Barèges day, just on the airport journeys.
<b>Jay</b>	Seen almost daily.
<b>Chaffinch</b>	Seen daily.
<b>Bullfinch</b>	Recorded on three days.
<b>Linnet</b>	Recorded on five days.
<b>Serin</b>	Seen daily.
<b>Citril finch</b>	Two in the Glère valley.
<b>Snowfinch</b>	Several at Col du Tourmalet and two at Col de Tentes (below).
<b>House sparrow</b>	Seen daily.
<b>Yellowhammer</b>	At higher altitudes.
<b>Corn bunting</b>	Singing at Saugué.
<b>Rock bunting</b>	Seen on three days, with excellent views in the Ossoue valley.



In addition, cattle egret, hobby, stonechat, nightingale, long-tailed tit, starling and goldfinch were recorded during journeys to or from airports.

## **AMPHIBIANS**

Common frog

Pyrenean brook newt (below)



## **REPTILES**

Common wall lizard

Southern smooth snake

Pyrenean rock lizard (below)



## **MAMMALS**

Alpine marmot

Snow vole

Wood mouse

Mole

Isard

... plus bats that by size were likely to have been pipistrelle and serotine

## **BUTTERFLIES**

Swallowtail

Clouded Apollo

Red admiral

Painted lady

Small tortoiseshell

Peacock

Comma

Pearl-bordered fritillary

Heath fritillary (bottom right)

False heath fritillary

Provençal fritillary

Dark green fritillary

Meadow brown

Large wall brown (top right)

Bright-eyed ringlet

Piedmont ringlet

Rock grayling

Small heath

Pearly heath

Speckled wood

Large white

Green-veined white

Dappled white

Wood white

Orange tip

Black-veined white

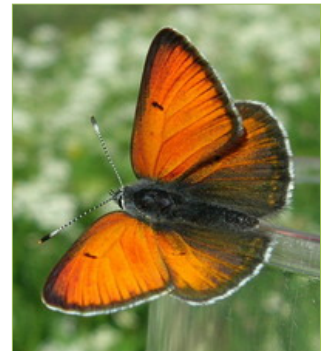
Brimstone

Clouded yellow



Common blue  
 Adonis blue  
 Silver-studded blue (top)  
 Mazarine blue  
 Escher's blue  
 Small blue  
 Holly blue  
 Purple-edged copper (middle)  
 Green hairstreak  
 Ilex hairstreak

Large skipper  
 Dingy skipper  
 Grizzled skipper  
 Small skipper  
 Red-underwing skipper  
 Chequered skipper



## MOTHS

*Metaxmeste phrygialis*  
 Herald  
 Lackey - caterpillar  
*Rhodostrophia calabra*  
 Small emerald  
 Chimney sweeper  
 Latticed heath  
 Common heath  
 Hummingbird hawk-moth (right)  
 Scarlet tiger  
 Black-veined moth  
 Silver Y



## OTHER INVERTEBRATES

<i>Hirudo medicinalis</i>	Medicinal leech
<i>Cepaea sp</i>	Banded snail
<i>Helix aspersa</i>	Garden snail
<i>Arion ater</i>	A large black slug
<i>Limax maximus</i>	Leopard slug
<i>Misumenia vatia</i>	A crab spider
<i>Decticus verrucivorus</i>	Wart-biter
<i>Gryllus campestris</i>	Field cricket
<i>Libellula depressa</i>	Broad-bodied chaser
<i>Ishnura elegans</i>	Common blue damselfly

<i>Libelloides longicornis</i>	An ascalaphid
<i>Graphosoma italicum</i>	'Millwall' bug
<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>	Fire-bug
<i>Lucanus cervus</i>	Stag beetle
<i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>	7-spot ladybird
<i>Phyllopertha horticola</i>	Garden chafer
<i>Scarabaeus sp</i>	Adung beetle
<i>Geotrupes stercorarius</i>	Dor beetle
<i>Aphodius rufipe</i>	A small dung beetle
<i>Polistes sp.</i>	Apaper wasp

## FLOWERING PLANTS

Some widespread and familiar species are omitted. *nif* = not in flower

### Dicotyledons

#### Aceraceae

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

#### Apiaceae

<i>Bupleurum falcatum</i>	Sickle-leaved Hare's-ear
<i>Chaerophyllum aureum</i>	Golden chervil
<i>Conopodium Pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean pignut
<i>Eryngium bourgatii</i>	Pyrenean eryngo <i>nif</i>
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	
<i>ssp. pyrenaicum</i>	Hogweed
<i>Laserpitium siler</i>	A sermountain
<i>Ligusticum lucidum</i> (= <i>L. pyreneum</i> )	Pyrenean lovage
<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	Sweet cicely
<i>Orlaya grandiflora</i>	Orlaya
<i>Peucedanum ostruthium</i>	Masterwort
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Sanicle

#### Asclepiadaceae

<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Swallow-wort
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#### Asteraceae

<i>Achilla millefolia</i>	Yarrow
<i>Antennaria dioica</i>	Cat's-foot
<i>Aster alpinus</i>	Alpine aster
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Carduus carlinoides</i>	Pyrenean thistle
<i>C. nutans</i>	Musk thistle
<i>Carlina acaulis</i>	Stemless carline thistle
<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Cornflower
<i>C. jacea</i>	Brown knapweed
<i>C. jacea</i>	Brown knapweed
<i>C. montana</i>	Perennial cornflower
<i>C. nigra</i>	Black knapweed
<i>Cirsium eroiphorum</i>	Woolly thistle
<i>C. rivulare</i>	Brook thistle
<i>C. palustre</i>	Marsh thistle
<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>	Mouse-eared hawkweed
<i>Homogyne alpina</i>	Alpine (=Purple) colt's-foot
<i>Lactuca perennis</i>	Blue lettuce
<i>Leucanthemum corymbosum</i>	like a many-headed ox-eye daisy
<i>L. vulgare</i>	Ox-eye daisy
<i>Leuzea conifera</i>	Cone knapweed
<i>Mycelis muralis</i>	Wall lettuce
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Colt's-foot

**Betulaceae***Alnus glutinosa**Betula pendula***Boraginaceae***Echium vulgare**Myosotis alpina**M. sylvatica**Pulmonaria longifolia***Brassicaceae***Alyssum cuneifolium**Arabis turrata**Cardamine impatiens**C. raphanifolia**C. resedifolia**Draba aizoides**Iberis amara***Buxaceae***Buxus sempervirens***Campanulaceae***Campanula patula**C. rotundifolia**Legousia castellana**Phyteuma orbiculare**P. pyrenaicum***Caprifoliaceae***Lonicera pyrenaicum**Sambucus ebulus**S. nigra**S. racemosa***Caryophyllaceae***Cerastium arvense**Dianthus deltoides**Paronychia sp**Silene acaulis**S. dioica**S. nutans**S. rupestris**S. saxifraga**S. vulgaris**Stellaria holostea***Chenopodiaceae***Chenopodium bonus-henricus***Cistaceae***Fumana ericoides**Helianthemum apenninum**H. canum**H. nummularium*

Alder

Silver birch

Viper's-bugloss

Alpine Forget-me-not

Wood forget-me-not

Long-leaved lungwort

Yellow, very silvery hairy, big oval pods, at Gèdre-Dessus

Towercress *nif*

Narrow-leaved bittercress

Radish-leaved bittercress

Mignonette-leaved bittercress

Yellow whitlow-grass

Wild candytuft

Box

Spreading bellflower

Harebell

A Venus's-looking-glass

Round-headed rampion

A spiked rampion with slaty blue flowers

Pyrenean honeysuckle

Dwarf elder

Elder

Alpine elder

Field mouse-ear

Maiden pink

Moss campion

Red campion

Nottingham catchfly

Rock campion

Tufted catchfly

Bladder campion

Greater stitchwort *nif*

Good King Henry

White rock-rose

Hoary rock-rose

Common rock-rose

**Clusiaceae (Hypericaceae)**

*Hypericum perforatum* Perforate St. John's-wort

**Corylaceae**

*Corylus avellana* Hazel

**Crassulaceae**

*Sedum acre* Biting stonecrop  
*S. album* White stonecrop  
*S. anglicum* English stonecrop  
*Sempervivum montanum* Mountain houseleek  
*S. tectorum* Common houseleek  
*Umbilicus rupestris* Navelwort

**Cuscutaceae**

*Cuscuta sp* Dodder

**Dipsacaceae**

*Knautia dipsacifolia* Wood scabious  
*Scabiosa columbaria* Small scabious

**Ericaceae**

*Calluna vulgaris* Heather  
*Rhododendron ferrugineum* Alpenrose  
*Vaccinium myrtillus* Bilberry *nif*

**Euphorbiaceae**

*Euphorbia amygdaloides* Wood spurge  
*E. characias* Large Mediterranean spurge  
*E. cyparissias* Cypress spurge  
*E. hyberna* Irish spurge

**Fabaceae**

*Astragalus monspessulanus* Montpellier milk-vetch  
*Anthyllis vulneraria* Kidney Vetch  
*Hippocrepis comosa* Horseshoe vetch  
*Lathyrus laevigatus* Yellow pea  
*L. latifolius* Broad-leaved everlasting pea  
*L. pratensis* Meadow vetchling  
*Lotus alpinus* Alpine bird's-foot-trefoil  
*L. corniculatus* Bird's-foot-trefoil  
*Medicago polymorpha* Toothed medick  
*M. sativa* Lucerne (=alfalfa)  
*Ononis natrix* Large yellow rest-harrow  
*O. rotundifolia* Round-leaved rest-harrow  
*Robinia pseudacacia* False acacia  
*Trifolium campestre* Hop trefoil  
*T. incarnatum* Crimson clover  
*T. montanum* Mountain clover  
*T. pratense* Red clover  
*T. repens* White clover  
*Vicia cracca* Tufted vetch  
*V. pyrenaica* Pyrenean vetch  
*V. sepium* Bush vetch

**Fagaceae**

*Castanea sativa* Sweet chestnut  
*Fagus sylvatica* Beech

*Quercus pyrenaica*

Pyrenean oak

**Gentianaceae**

*Gentiana acaulis*

*G. alpina*

*G. verna*

Trumpet gentian

Alpine gentian

Spring gentian

**Geraniaceae**

*Erodium cicutarium*

*Geranium molle*

*G. phaeum*

*G. pusillum*

*G. pyrenaicum*

*G. robertianum*

*G. rotundifolium*

*G. sanguineum*

*G. sylvaticum*

Common storksbill

Dovesfoot cranesbill

Dusky cranesbill

Small-flowered cranesbill

Pyrenean cranesbill

Herb Robert

Round-leaved cranesbill

Bloody cranesbill

Wood cranesbill

**Gesneriaceae**

*Ramonda myconi*

**Globulariaceae**

*Globularia nudicaulis*

*G. repens*

Leafless-stemmed globularia

Creeping globularia

**Lamiaceae**

*Acinos arvensis*

*Ajuga pyramidalis*

*A. repens*

*Galeopsis angustifolia*

*Lamiastrum galaeobdolon*

*Lamium maculatum*

*Prunella grandiflora*

*Stachys recta*

*Teucrium chamaedrys*

*T. pyrenaicum*

*Thymus serpyllum*

Basil-thyme

Pyramidal bugle

Bugle

Red hemp-nettle

Yellow archangel

Spotted dead-nettle

Large self-heal

Yellow woundwort

Wall germander

Pyrenean germander

Wild thyme

**Lentibulariaceae**

*Pinguicula grandiflora*

*P. vulgaris*

Large-flowered butterwort

Common butterwort

**Linaceae**

*Linum catharticum*

Purging (= fairy) flax

**Loranthaceae**

*Viscum album*

Mistletoe

**Malvaceae**

*Malva moschata*

*M. neglecta*

Musk mallow

Dwarf mallow

**Oleaceae**

*Fraxinus excelsior*

Ash

**Oxalidaceae**

*Oxalis acetosella*

Wood sorrel

*nif*

**Papaveraceae**

*Chelidonium majus*  
*Meconopsis cambrica*  
*Papaver dubium*  
*P. rhoeas*

Greater celandine  
 Welsh poppy  
 Long-headed poppy  
 Common poppy

**Plantaginaceae**

*Plantago alpina*  
*P. media*

Hoary plantain

**Polygalaceae**

*Polygala nicaeensis*

Nice milkwort

**Polygonaceae**

*Polygonum bistorta*  
*P. viviparum*  
*Rumex scutatus*

Bistort  
 Alpine bistort  
 French sorrel (= Rubble dock)

**Primulaceae**

*Androsace carnea*  
*A. chamaejasme*  
*Lysimachia nemorum*  
*Primula farinosa*  
*P. integrifolia*

Pink rock-jasmine  
 Ciliate rock-jasmine  
 Yellow pimpernel  
 Bird's-eye primrose  
 Entire-leaved primrose

**Ranunculaceae**

*Aconitum napellus*  
*Aquilegia vulgaris*  
*Caltha palustris*  
*Clematis vitalba*  
*Helleborus foetidus*  
*H. viridis*  
*Hepatica nobilis*  
*Ranunculus acris*  
*R. bulbosus*  
*R. montana*  
*R. pyrenaicus*  
*R. repens*  
*Thalictrum aquilegifolium*  
*Trollius europeaeus*

Monk's-hood *nif*  
 Columbine  
 Marsh marigold  
 Traveller's-joy  
 Stinking hellebore  
 Green hellebore  
 Hepatica *nif*  
 Meadow buttercup  
 Bulbous buttercup  
 Mountain buttercup  
 Pyrenean buttercup  
 Creeping buttercup  
 Great meadow-rue  
 Globe-flower

**Resedaceae**

*Reseda lutea*

Wild mignonette

**Rhamnaceae**

*Rhamnus pumilus*

Dwarf buckthorn

**Rosaceae**

*Alchemilla alpina*  
*A. vulgaris*  
*Amelanchier ovalis*  
*Aruncus dioicus*  
*Crataegus monogyna*  
*Fragaria vesca*  
*Geum urbanum*  
*G. pyrenaicum*  
*Potentilla erecta*

Alpine lady's-mantle  
 Lady's-mantle  
 Snowy mespilus *nif*  
 Goat's-beard Spiraea  
 Hawthorn  
 Wild strawberry  
 Wood avens  
 Pyrenean avens  
 Tormentil

<i>P. montana</i>	(white)
<i>P. rupestris</i>	Rock cinquefoil
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field rose
<i>R. canina</i>	Dog rose
<i>R. glauca</i>	Blue-leaved rose
<i>R. pendulina</i>	Alpine rose
<i>R. tomentosa</i>	Downy rose <i>nif</i>
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Blackberry/bramble
<i>R. idaeus</i>	Raspberry
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad-burnet
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam
<i>S. aucuparia</i>	Rowan

### **Rubiaceae**

<i>Asperula cynanchica</i>	Squinancywort
<i>A. hirta</i>	
<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Goosegrass
<i>G. mollugo</i>	Hedge bedstraw
<i>G. pyrenaicum</i>	A cushion bedstraw
<i>G. odoratum</i>	Woodruff
<i>G. verum</i>	Lady's-bedstraw

### **Salicaceae**

<i>Populus tremula</i>	Aspen
<i>Salix pyrenaica</i>	
<i>S. purpurea</i>	

### **Saxifragaceae**

<i>Saxifraga granulata</i>	Meadow saxifrage
<i>S. longifolia</i>	Pyrenean saxifrage
<i>S. paniculata</i>	Livelong saxifrage
<i>S. pubescens</i>	Hairy saxifrage
<i>S. umbrosa</i>	Wood saxifrage

### **Scrophulariaceae**

<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	Snapdragon
<i>Chaenorhinum minus</i>	Lesser snapdragon
<i>C. organifolium</i>	
<i>Digitalis lutea</i>	Small yellow foxglove
<i>Erinus alpinus</i>	Fairy foxglove
<i>Euphrasia alpina</i>	Eyebright
<i>Linaria alpina</i>	Alpine toadflax
<i>L. supina</i>	Pyrenean toadflax
<i>Pedicularis pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean lousewort
<i>Scrophularia canina</i>	Alpine (= French) figwort
<i>S. nodosa</i>	Common figwort
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle
<i>Verbascum nigrum</i>	Dark mullein
<i>V. thapsus</i>	Great mullein
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime
<i>V. chaeaedrys</i>	Germader speedwell
<i>V. pona</i>	Pyrenean spiked speedwell

### **Thymelaeaceae**

<i>Daphne cneorum</i>	Garland flower
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<i>D. laureola</i> ssp. <i>philippii</i>	Spurge-laurel
<i>D. mezereum</i>	Mezereon
<b>Tiliaceae</b>	
<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>	Large-leaved lime
<i>T. cordata</i>	Small-leaved lime
<b>Valerianaceae</b>	
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red valerian
<i>Valeriana montana</i>	
<i>V. officinalis</i>	Valerian
<i>V. pyrenaica</i>	
<b>Violaceae</b>	
<i>Viola biflora</i>	Yellow wood violet
<i>V. cornuta</i>	Horned violet
<i>V. palustris</i>	Bog violet
<i>V. riviniana</i>	Common dog-violet
<i>V. tricolor</i> + ssp <i>subalpina</i>	Heartsease
<b>Monocotyledons</b>	
<b>Cyperaceae</b>	
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Cotton-grass
<b>Dioscoreaceae</b>	
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black bryony
<b>Iridaceae</b>	
<i>Iris latifolia</i>	English iris
<b>Juncaceae</b>	
<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Great woodrush
<b>Liliaceae</b>	
<i>Allium sphaerocephalon</i>	Round-headed leek
<i>Anthericum liliago</i>	St Bernard's lily
<i>Asphodelus albus</i>	Asphodel
<i>Dipcadi serotinum</i>	Dipcadi
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanicus</i>	Spanish bluebell <i>nif</i>
<i>Hyacinthus amethystinus</i>	Pyrenean hyacinth
<i>Lilium martagon</i>	Martagon lily
<i>Narcissus rupicola</i>	Rock narcissus
<i>Ornithogalum pyrenaicum</i>	Spiked star-of-Bethlehem
<i>Paris quadrifolia</i>	Herb Paris <i>nif</i>
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's-broom
<i>Tofieldia calyculata</i>	Tofield's asphodel
<b>Orchidaceae</b>	
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal orchid
<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved helleborine
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Frog orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Common spotted-orchid
<i>D. majalis</i> ssp. <i>alpestris</i>	Broad-leaved marsh-orchid
<i>D. sambucina</i>	Elder-flowered orchid
<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	Broad-leaved helleborine
<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Fragrant orchid
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Common twayblade
<i>Nigritella nigra</i>	Black vanilla orchid

<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee orchid
<i>O. insectifera</i>	Fly orchid
<i>O. scolopax</i>	Woodcock orchid
<i>Orchis ustulata</i>	Burnt-tip orchid
<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Greater butterfly-orchid

**Poaceae (very incomplete)**

<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	Wood false brome
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking-grass
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cocksfoot
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Wood melick

**CONIFERS**

<i>Abies alba</i>	Silver fir
<i>Larix decidua</i>	European larch
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots pine
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Juniper

**FERNS**

<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black spleenwort
<i>A. ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue
<i>A. scolopendrium</i>	Hartstongue Fern
<i>A. septentrionale</i>	Forking spleenwort
<i>A. trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady fern
<i>Botrychium lunaria</i>	Moonwort
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rusty-back fern
<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	Brittle bladder fern
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad buckler-fern
<i>D. filix-mas</i>	Male fern
<i>D. oreades</i>	Mountain male-fern
<i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i>	Oak fern
<i>Phegopteris connectilis</i>	Beech fern
<i>Polypodium.interjectum</i>	Western polypody
<i>P. vulgare</i>	Common polypody
<i>Polystichum lonchitis</i>	Holly fern
<i>P. setiferum</i>	Soft shield-fern
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken