

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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**The French Pyrenees
14 – 21 June 2011**

Holiday participants

Malcolm and Jane Key
Geoff and Hazel Woodard
John Rumpus and
Rosemary MacDonald

Patrick Boon
Simon and Anne Jones
Tony and Rosie Foottit
Susie Turner

Leaders

Chris Durdin and Ivan Nethercoat

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

www.pyrenees-hotel-breche.com

Report written by Ivan Nethercoat and Chris Durdin. Menu list compiled by Rosemary MacDonald.

Photos edged red by John Rumpus, edged green by Chris Durdin
and edged blue by Ivan Nethercoat.

Cover: the Cirque de Gavarnie taken from Saugué.

Below: the group at the Troumouse café.



This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person towards lammergeier protection was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. It was combined with the contribution from the group in the Dordogne (for the 'Refuge LPO' project), the Camargue and the Cévennes, making a total this year of €2630 (£2390) 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 15 June. For more information on the LPO's lammergeier work, see <http://gypaete.lpo.fr/index.html>.

This brings the total given to LPO since 1991 to £16,496 and the total conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991 to £72,591 as at June 2011.

The French Pyrenees 14 – 21 June 2011

14 June – Stansted to Gèdre

The delights of Stansted at dawn cannot be described easily. Suffice to say that the short flight to Lourdes-Tarbes was a welcome change of space and comfort. Lourdes had that 'just rained' feel about it but by the time we had the buses loaded the sun was out in force and stayed that way most of the day. An hour later and we were well into the Pyrenees and paused by the road to enjoy impressive large, candelabra-like spikes of Pyrenean saxifrages hanging from rocks (right). Chris learnt a new word – monocarpic – courtesy of Anne, a term that means these saxifrages flower once, from basal rosettes hanging onto rock crevices, then die. Ten minutes later we were at the hotel where we had time to settle in and gather ourselves for the week ahead.



Chilled and fed – with fish for lunch – the rest of the day was taken at a leisurely pace around the village. Crag martins fed eager young on building ledges (below); black redstarts called from rooftop vantage points and dippers 'dipped' into the cool blue water of the Gavarnie river. On distant crags, griffon vultures soaked up the wind and even a lammergeier showed briefly at some distance. Wall lizards basked in the hot sun, scurrying away when cameras appeared. Meadows with dusky cranesbill, Pyrenean spiked rampion and many other flowers were noted; the air was filled with the sound of field crickets, a couple of which we could see well as they surfaced onto the road.



The walk just happened to end by a bar in the village which just happens to have a terrace over the river, the banks of which provide a home for ramonda. A blackcap struck up song to serenade our refreshment while in the dead branches a spotted flycatcher spent some time 'flycatching'. So, now feeling we most definitely were not in the UK, we headed back to the hotel for a welcome meal and even more welcome bed.

15 June – Saugué

The morning started with a lively talk – with impromptu arrangements for a sheet screen and a precariously balanced projector – from the LPO's Gwenaëlle Plet about the work being done to protect the lammergeier in the Pyrenees and to receive the Honeyguide cheque for €2630.

The road to Saugué is one of our nearest venues but also one of the most productive. A stop to explore the roadside bank and meadow proved a great site for birds, butterflies and flowers, the last including dark red helleborine about to flower. A pair of buzzards displayed low overhead while a piedmont ringlet was being displayed to the masses. Ascalaphids danced in the air above pyramidal and fly orchids and, from the only gap in the trees where we could see the ridge, an adult lammergeier appeared several times, low enough to see its plumage.

Onwards and upwards through hairpin bends to small hamlets and shortly to our lunch stop where the road crosses the river. Here we had a wide view of the sky and mountain ridges as well as a profusion of orchids (mostly broad-leaved marsh and fragrant), large butterworts and Tofield's asphodel on the damp roadside bank. Short-toed eagles hovered over the fields, one dropping to the ground as we watched, and climbing high again with a snake or lizard in its talons. Through the telescope it could be seen either eating it or continuing to kill it. Small and mazarine blue butterflies took minerals from the gravel, their undersides blending almost perfectly with the grey of the stones.

A short drive further on and the road stops at one of the best views in the Pyrenees. As the chough flies, this is near the edge of the rather busier valley that runs to Gavarnie but at Saugué there are few people to share the meadows and outcrops awash with wild flowers. In front where we potted lies the magnificent Cirque du Gavarnie and while this is a popular tourist destination, from here it felt like we were the only people to see it. Quail called from fields of yellow rattle, wheatears chased insects to feed young and tree pipits 'parachuted' in display before landing on tree branches where the song continued. Burnt-tip, pyramidal and butterfly orchids cut through the grass. On a stony patch, alpine asters displayed their vivid blue flowers and we found our first Pyrenean hyacinths.



Alpine asters; and mazarine and small blues gathering mineral salts.

At the perfectly situated café just down the road, which at first appeared to be open, the man was happy to chat but today's priority was grass-cutting and not serving, it seemed! As we drove home, Chris caught from his minibus window the song of a Bonelli's warbler, and with the aid of a recording we were able to see it flitting around the ash trees.

16 June – Col de Tentes

A great view of the firecrest at the hotel started today's birdwatching in fine style, and one we could share with a few members of the Naturetrek group staying at the hotel.

What a change. Thick dense cloud smothered the valley. Time for a rethink of today's plan and to see if we could drive higher than the cloud at the Col de Tentes. The cloud cover continued around each bend as we climbed higher and higher until eventually we emerged into clear skies. Still more bends and climbs until we stopped alongside a small stream for a botanical potter – for bird's eye primrose, among others – and an ornithological scan of the valley.

As luck would have it, we parked opposite a craggy hill in the valley floor and perched on top was a griffon vulture. It looked good through the telescope, and a little concerned at being spotted. While we watched more birds appeared and disappeared behind the same hill, giving fantastic views against the valley side. It was great to see all the plumage details on what had been little more than a species in silhouette. As the vultures came down a party of alpine choughs also appeared and started feeding on the turf opposite the vehicles, keeping in contact with their delightful calls. Water pipits teased us with their fleeting appearances and a quick check of the ground near the bus caused a quail to take flight.

Moving on we checked the area the vultures had landed in. We saw 20-30 birds enter the area and none leave so we took a quick walk out to see if there was a carcass being stripped. Nothing. The birds had gone and there was no obvious reason why they landed, nor indeed where they had gone! But it was far from fruitless: the short stroll had taken us to a piece of high mountain limestone pavement which contained a fine ammonite, cracks for flowers to grow in and several bloody-nosed beetles wandering around. At the top of the Col the clouds were high enough to keep the top clear but clouds rushed and swirled in the valley below. Across the hillside a lammergeier appeared and soon changed direction to fly over us and out along the ridge where a few minutes earlier we had watched choughs seeing off a golden eagle. Trumpet gentians and

Pyrenean buttercups graced the hillsides and a scattering of wall and Pyrenean rock lizards attempted to get as much heat from the sun as possible.

Then back down into the cloud, but by now it had lifted enough to see clearly when we got to Gavarnie, where we stopped for a coffee before heading to Gèdre-dessus, the hamlet above and behind our hotel. The vegetation here is more like a French *causse* than Pyrenean flowers and we found a very different selection of plants, including woodcock orchid, wild candytuft, cone knapweed, blue lettuce, sickle hare's-ear, woolly hawkweed and the showy umbellifer, orlaya. Alongside the road was a family party of long-tailed tits in a hedge, beside which a pine marten ran and disappeared as we descended.

17 June – Col de Tourmalet

Not great weather at the start to the day but as we headed off to the col, via Luz St Sauveur and Barèges, the skies cleared. The steep climb to the top gives spectacular views and a great appreciation for the cyclists who take this route, often (but not today) as part of the Tour de France, the highest pass in the Pyrenees. At the top the car park was full of camper vans and the wind was strong. Neither factors prevented the snowfinches here from showing well, often very close. We watched them going in and out of a slightly broken air vent on one of the buildings with beaks full of food, that food supplemented later by some of Ivan's cake. We took a short walk to the closed café away from the road, finding alpine toadflax, cushion bedstraw and Pyrenean thistles. But as it was getting busier with vehicles, supporters and spectators for a race later, we headed away.



Back down the hill, above Barèges, we turned into the wooded lower part of the Glère valley that houses the café Chez Louisiette, where they were relieved that we just wanted coffee and were not an impromptu lunch party. These gentle, tree-lined slopes are a delight and soon gave us great views of black woodpecker, tempted out by Ivan's recording. John slipped away from the group and had the closest black woodpecker encounter (left). Commoner woodland birds included mistle thrushes and coal tits. After having our picnic we made an unsuccessful search for citril finches before spreading out across a wide area of grass between the trees, brightened by colourful clumps of alpenrose. Leeches wriggled in a small pond, attempting to cling to tadpoles, while over the ridges short-toed eagles hovered and buzzard and golden eagle drifted by. Damp patches held round-leaved sundews. There was time to have tea back at the café again and to study an Oberthur's grizzled skipper.

18 June – Ossoue valley

Thick cloud and a strong wind did not deter a trip to Ossoue valley, a quiet valley just a short drive on from Gavarnie but very different in character. As we left the main road we climbed into the valley through the cloud and stopped by the road a short distance in. The cloud was thick above us but thinned out below and we could just see the river below and the wooded hillside across the valley. A short exploration of the area followed. Birds were a little hesitant to show although Geoff added woodpigeon to the list! Spectacular broomrapes erupted from the ground: later study showed them to be slender broomrape, *Orobanche gracilis*, parasitic on various legumes. Others of the more striking plants here were bushes of Pyrenean honeysuckle, blue-leaved rose and a rock with more and close ramonda, along with the usual supporting cast of fragrant orchids, swallow-wort and kidney vetch. Marmots whistled and popped in and out of view.

This area has been good for rock bunting in the past though not today, but Geoff's sharp eyes did catch a spectacular male rock thrush. With the air now warming and the cliffs above us now in view, more birds became visible. Griffons patrolled the sheer cliff face with choughs and a lone kestrel. More flowers and an obliging ascalaphid took the eyes away from the skies until a golden eagle drifted past, whereupon the chough and kestrel joined forces in a show of defiance and aggression toward the drifter. The low clouds had prompted doubts about staying here, but with

the skies now clearing the rest of the valley stayed on the agenda. Eventually the road and river align on the same contour and the valley opens into a wide floodplain, where there were stands of broad-leaved marsh orchids, Pyrenean lousewort and patches of yellow mountain saxifrage, while on drier banks asphodels sheltered a few black vanilla orchids which many clambered up to see. Staying to scan the skies proved a good plan for the birders as three lammergeiers drifted low across the valley side, soon followed by twelve griffons, a short-toed eagle and red kite. In between these large wings looking for uplift a pair of kestrels tried to carry on with their hovering. Back on the valley floor, water pipits and wheatears went about their business as we stopped for lunch.

Ivan recalled a spot on the return journey where there were more black vanilla orchids and somehow recognised exactly where to stop. Sure enough, there they were, in their dozens.



Marmot; black vanilla orchid; and male rock thrush.

The cloud started to descend again as we moved on to the Barrage des Gloriettes, a small reservoir on the other side of Gèdre. The lake was all but invisible today as the cloud soon enveloped us in a cold mist. A few of the hardy botanists shrugged this off and explored the superb rocky areas below, finding among others, yellow ox-eye, Pyrenean avens, globeflowers, martagon lily, alpine bartsia and leafless-stemmed globularia. It was a good chance for walkers in the group to stretch their legs: some who strode back down the road were picked up later on our return, except for Geoff and Hazel who walked the nine kilometres downhill trek back to Gèdre, arriving not long after the lingering botanists.

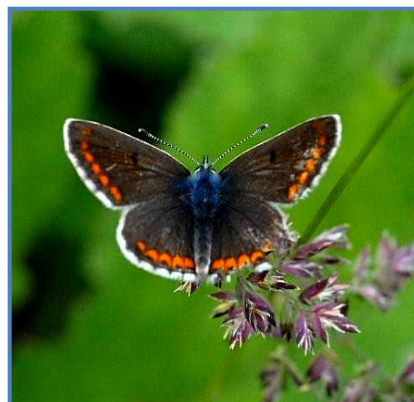
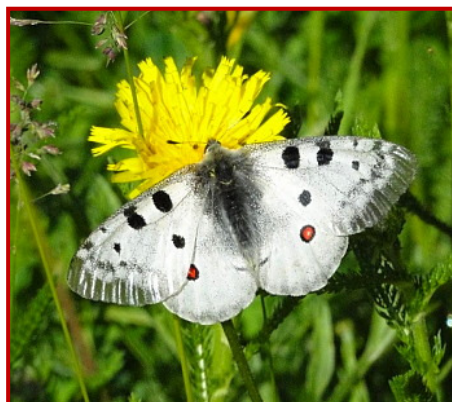
19 June – Cirque de Gavarnie

Glorious sunshine and clear skies this morning, tempered only slightly by a cool breeze. Gavarnie shared the weather and while we set off in clothing for cooler climes, the layers were soon dispensed with as the morning air warmed up.

While flowers were in profusion along the track to the cirque, butterflies were late risers in the cool air. Up on the craggy hillside the birds were very active. As the sun bathed the cliffs, griffon vultures took wing, sharing the air with chough and alpine swift. A young lammergeier cruised around for a short while and buzzard and short-toed eagle put in brief appearances. A short way on and a pair of red-backed shrikes demonstrated how to catch large insects. Onward across the river and up a short hill to great views of the cirque, meadow and streams that were our destination. Queen-of-Spain fritillary and round-headed rampion kept up the interest along the way and crested tits put in an early appearance.

By the time we reached the meadow the sun was at its height and the butterflies more active. By the path they had found a liquid source of minerals and a cloud of blues of five species was a great sight to see. The meadow was a delight as always with purple patches of marsh orchids, white stands of butterfly orchids, swallowtails, black-veined whites, silver-studded, little and Escher's blues, all with the magnificent cirque as a backdrop. A little farther on, crested tits responded well to our presence in the black pines before the group split, with one party slowly heading back while the other pushed on up the hill to the 'hotel' at the head of the valley. This is a fabled site for wallcreeper but despite our best efforts they eluded us. Rosie and Geoff strode ever onward to the foot of the waterfall at the base of the cirque.

Back then to the village, assembling at a café en route where Chris finally caught a clouded Apollo, narrowly avoiding ending up in the river, much to the amusement of the onlookers.



Oberthur's grizzled skipper; Apollo; and female silver-studded blue.

20 June – Cirque de Troumouse

Just down the road from the hotel is a tourist information building. Very helpfully they post a weather forecast outside, covering next day and looking ahead to the next two or three, and on several evenings this was noted by various members of the group. It formed the basis of numerous conversations during the week, and was the staple of discussions over breakfast. What is interesting is that on nearly every occasion it proved far from accurate yet, being British, we continue to believe. Our last day, and today the weather was predicted to be unsettled with cloud and rain expected. Off we set in glorious sunshine, our destination the magnificent Cirque de Troumouse, a very different cirque to yesterday, set high in the mountains.

The route took us through the Héas Valley and as soon as we left the shadow of the steep valley sides and entered a section in sunlight we stopped to explore the rich roadside verges, where brook thistle grew down the slope in the damp areas. Within a few minutes Chris launched up a steep grass bank and came back victorious with our first Apollo butterfly of the trip. As with many things, once one was caught it became apparent there were several flying – but slowly as the day warmed up – along this part of the valley. This individual was released onto a flower while we looked at others, and a bright purple-edged copper too.

Meanwhile, back at the bus, Geoff was pursuing a 'blackcap' that had been singing close by. His efforts were well rewarded by a very obliging garden warbler that sat out for all to see in the telescope, confirming suspicions that we'd heard this species yesterday at Gavarnie. While not the most beautiful of birds, it was still a treat to see one up close in full song.

Onwards, up to the toll gate for the road to the cirque. Once into the park the road starts to climb steeply through open meadow. Our now familiar companions of wheatear, water pipit and marmot saw us on our way until the road levelled off at the head of a small valley where some enterprising soul has decided to set up a café in perhaps the most spectacular setting in Europe.

This is a great place to sit and scan the skies and hills and find some shade from the fierce sun. At the head of the valley were large patches of snow and from the distance we could see animals walking on them – sheep, probably getting respite from the flies and heat. Nearby, though, was an altogether different beast running through the telescope view: isard, the name for Pyrenean species of chamois. They tend to be noticed when seen walking across high areas of snow but here was a family group of nine animals giving us excellent telescope views.

The coffee here is also very good and with the views and atmosphere this has to be one of our favourite stops. Alpine choughs paraded across the meadows, griffon vultures drifted overhead. On distant boulders was a rock thrush and on nearby outcrops black redstarts and wheatears, with ravens dropping in to search the turf for insects.

Refuelled we carried on, this time up steeper hills and sharper bends until we reached the car park at 2100m and a full view of the cirque, a fabulous curved wall of rock, 10 km long and 1000m high! In front of the cirque is a delightful area of meadow with streams and pools. These are home to the Pyrenean brook newt, finding which before lunchtime was a target taken on by the group. A short drop down to the brook entertained us all; either dabbling for newts, strolling to the hillocks overlooking the main valley or just soaking up the magical atmosphere. Small tortoiseshell butterflies were perhaps the commonest up here; the occasional fast-flying pale clouded yellow (undetermined species) flew past very fast while small heaths and Oberthur's grizzled skipper settled alongside the paths. There are two varieties of the newt and today we found both, the 'normal' rather plain type and the more spectacular striped version, sporting a bright yellow dorsal line.

After lunch we set off across the meadow to a few outcrops near the face of the cirque where in previous years we have found alpine accentor. On this trip were not so lucky but the scenery from the outcrops is spectacular – it's a great place to not see very much in!

An offer from Anne to buy us all an ice-cream back at the café was very well received. Our journey back to the hotel had one final small detour back to the Barrage des Gloriettes, an opportunity to see it in warmth and sunshine. Our final log was followed by comedy suggestions for late entries to the Nature in France Ball, and after the last evening meal at the hotel a chance for Chris, Simon and other group members to exercise their vocal chords musically, boosted by the loan of Odile's son's guitar.

21 June – Gèdre and home

Our excellent hosts got up early and prepared breakfast for us at 6am – fresh coffee, warm bread and croissants – a great send off before our departure just after 6:30. It was a smooth journey back to the airport, with natural history diversions including a juvenile green woodpecker on the road that the minibuses had to avoid and the most spectacular stag beetle on the fuel station forecourt in Lourdes. Back at the airport we counted the wheelchairs of pilgrims returning to Shannon from Lourdes and wondered if there were fewer than had arrived ...

Holiday highlights

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

Hazel & Geoff	Both gave us poems with their highlights – and named Apollo butterfly for Hazel and black woodpecker for Geoff.
Pat	Firecrest and scenery.
John	Rock thrush, Apollo, scenery and lunches.
Rosemary	Yellow wood violet and all the flowers in general.
Jane	Scenery and the sheer abundance of flowers in the meadows.
Malcolm	Self-sustaining forest with a griffon vulture, set in magnificent scenery.
Rosie	Alpine asters.
Tony	Pyrenean saxifrage; Chris hearing Bonelli's warbler from the minibus window.
Anne	Richness and diversity of plants and the help of the group's botanists to understand them; the short-toed eagle with a snake.
Simon	Lammergeier and firecrest, two extremes!
Susie	Lovely group and nice leaders; being fetched to see the black vanilla orchid; crested tit.
Ivan	Apollo; Saugué; firecrest.
Chris	Apollo; cluster of crag martins on a building ledge in Gèdre; the different botanical mix at Gédres-dessus.

Food!

The food has always been good at the Hotel La Brèche de Roland but this year, with a new chef, it was superb.

- 14th Lunch: avocado and mushroom mousse and mushroom paté served in individual pots; trout. Evening meal: aubergine mousse; scallops; lamb and rice timbale; cherry cheesecake.
- 15th Prawns in filo pastry in a piquant vegetable and tomato sauce; salad with cheeses, proscuto and walnuts and salad; pork with white sauce and cauliflower purée; crêpes with cherries and orange zest biscuit.
- 16th Bisque de crevettes; vegetable consommé; lamb chops, haricot beans and sauté potatoes; cheese and walnuts; fondant chocolate pudding.
- 17th Gaspacho; melon and port; cod and timbale of courgette and mushroom; apple tart.
- 18th Scrambled egg and chives; goats cheese with crispy bacon and salad leaves; roast leg of duck with apple and a carrot and swede purée; fresh black cherries.
- 19th Mushroom mousse; garlic soup; beef in a Madeira sauce and galette potatoes; crème caramel.
- 20th Avocado mousse; trout marinated in fennel with mixed leaf salad; chicken with couscous and red pepper sauce; baked apple on a sponge ring with redcurrant sauce.



Chris handing Honeyguide's cheque for €2630 to Gwenaëlle Plet from the LPO towards the work being done to protect lammergeiers in the Pyrenees.



Systematic Lists

BIRDS

Grey heron	On route to the airport.
Black kite	Many seen on route from the airport but also frequently over Gèdre and surrounding area.
Red kite	On route as we got into the higher ground and then every day including Gèdre, Ossoue and over the car park at the Cirque de Troumouse.
Lammergeier	Seen on all but one day. The highest count was three over the sheep pen area of the Ossoue valley.
Griffon vulture	All days except one in the Pyrenees.
Short-toed eagle	Two hunting and displaying at Saugué, one in Ossoue valley, one around the first cliff face on the right as we walked to the Cirque de Gavarnie.
Sparrowhawk	Recorded on two days.
Golden eagle	Seen most days, singles only.
Common buzzard	Seen on most days.
Kestrel	Seen on most days.
Quail	Heard at Saugué and Col de Tentes. One flushed part way up the Col de Tentes.
Woodpigeon	Seen on two days.
Collared dove	On route to airports. Glère valley, Gèdre.
Cuckoo	Heard in Héas Valley.
Swift	Seen on four days.
Alpine swift	Gavarnie only.
Green woodpecker	Heard on three days. A juvenile sat at the edge of the main road on route to the airport.
Black woodpecker	Two showed very well on the open areas at the base of the Glère valley.
Great spotted woodpecker	Heard and seen in Gèdre by the hotel.
Skylark	Heard at Saugué only.
Swallow	On route to airports and one reported from Gèdre.
House martin	Seen on four days. Nesting on overhanging crags on the descent from Col de Tentes. Hundreds over Gèdre-dessus in low cloud.
Crag martin	Seen daily; nesting in Gèdre.
Tree pipit	Singing at Gavarnie, Saugué and the Héas valley.
Meadow pipit	Ossoue valley.
Water pipit	At all the high altitude stops.
Grey wagtail	Seen daily, and regular in Gèdre.
White wagtail	Seen daily, and regular in Gèdre.
Dipper	Several times at 'dipper bridge' in Gèdre; fly-pasts on several other rivers.
Wren	Heard on four days.
Dunnoek	Around Gèdre, Héas valley.
Robin	Heard or seen on all except one day, mostly in Gèdre.
Black redstart	Daily in Gèdre and at most locations.
Whinchat	Singing at Saugué by the cafe.
Northern wheatear	At all the high altitude stops.
Rock thrush	A pair at 'halfway house', Troumouse; a pair at the start of Ossoue valley.
Blackbird	Daily in Gèdre.
Ring ouzel	One at Saugué.
Song thrush	Heard in the Héas valley.
Mistle thrush	In the Glère valley near Chez Louissette.
Blackcap	Heard daily, seen opposite the hotel.
Garden warbler	Heard and seen in Héas valley.
Bonelli's warbler	Seen and heard by the road below Saugué.
Northern chiffchaff	Singing in the meadow area in the Gavarnie valley.
Firecrest	Regular views round the back of the hotel.
Spotted flycatcher	By the river at Gèdre.
Long-tailed tit	Family at Gèdre-Dessus.
Great tit	Recorded almost every day.

Blue tit	Only in the Glère valley.
Coal tit	In the pine woods at Gavarnie.
Crested tit	In the pine woods at Gavarnie.
Nuthatch	At Gèdre and by the free car parking area at Gavarnie.
Red-backed shrike	A pair at Gavarnie.
Jay	Seen on three days.
Raven	Over Gèdre and at halfway café, Troumouse.
Carrion crow	Recorded every day.
Red-billed chough	At Ossoue and Gavarnie.
Alpine chough	Flocks at café at Gavarnie, Tourmalet, Troumouse, Col de Tentès.
Magpie	Just on the airport journeys.
Chaffinch	Seen daily.
Bullfinch	Glère valley.
Linnet	Recorded on five days.
Serin	Seen daily.
Citril finch	Two in meadow at Gavarnie.
Snowfinch	Several at Col du Tourmalet.
House sparrow	Seen daily.
Yellowhammer	Saugué, Ossoue Valley and Troumouse.
Girl bunting	Saugué and Gèdre-dessus.
Corn bunting	Heard at Saugué .

Total - 69 species.

AMPHIBIANS

Common frog
Pyrenean brook newt (right)



REPTILES

Common wall lizard

Pyrenean rock lizard

MAMMALS

Alpine marmot

Red squirrel

Mole (hills)

Pine marten

Isard

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail

Apollo

Clouded Apollo

Red admiral

Painted lady

Small tortoiseshell

False heath fritillary

Queen-of-Spain fritillary

Dark green fritillary

Nickerl's fritillary

Large wall brown

Piedmont ringlet

Ringlet

Common brassy ringlet

Rock grayling

Small heath

Pearly heath

Marbled white

Large white

Green-veined white

Wood white

Orange tip

Black-veined white

Brimstone

Clouded yellow

Duke of Burgundy

Silver-studded blue

Mazarine blue

Escher's blue

Small blue

Sooty copper

Purple-edged copper

Brown argus

Dingy skipper

Grizzled skipper

Oberthur's grizzled skipper

MOTHS

Metaxmeste phrygialis

Little emerald

Small grass emerald

Chimney sweeper

Latticed heath

Reddish light arches

6-spot burnet

Small argent & sable

Hummingbird hawk-moth

Black-veined moth

Burnet companion

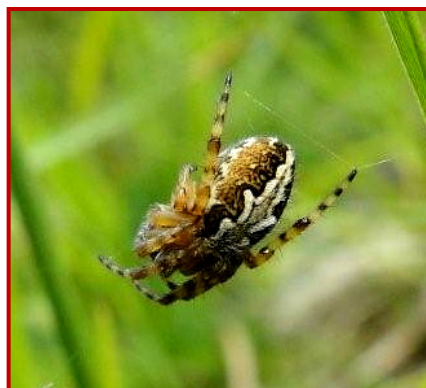
Silver Y

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

<i>Hirudo medicinalis</i>	medicinal leech	<i>Oxythyrea funesta</i>	a flower chafer
<i>Arion ater</i>	a large black slug	<i>Phyllopertha horticola</i>	garden chafer
<i>Decticus verrucivorus</i>	wart-biter	<i>Timarcha tenebricosa</i>	bloody-nosed beetle
<i>Gryllus campestris</i>	field cricket	<i>Geotrupes stercorarius</i>	dor beetle
<i>Libelloides coccajus</i>	an ascalaphid	<i>Formica rufa</i>	wood ant
<i>Cetonia aeruginosa</i>	a rose chafer	<i>Tipula maxima</i>	a crane-fly
<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>	fire-bug	<i>Gerris</i> sp (probably)	pond skater
<i>Lucanus cervus</i>	stag beetle	<i>Aculepeira ceropegia</i>	oak leaf spider
<i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>	7-spot ladybird		
<i>Melolontha melolontha</i>	cockchafer		



Most stag beetles live only for a few weeks and their sole purpose is to procreate. The male has strong wings and at dusk flies in search of a female. The mandibles (bigger on the male than the female) are used in display and to fight off competing males. Eggs are laid in decaying wood, preferably oak, and the larvae take 3-5 years to pupate.



Aculepeira ceropegia is an orb web spider, also known as the oak leaf spider because of the pattern on its back. It lives in bushes and low vegetation and has a catching orb web (this one's was on a vanilla orchid in the Ossoue valley) and a hiding web.

FLOWERING PLANTS

Where 'Saule' is noted by a plant, it was not in the conventional floras but was identified using the hotel's *La Grande Flore Illustrée des Pyrénées*, by Marcel Saule (Éditions Milan, 2002), illustrated with black and white line drawings. Some widespread and familiar species are omitted.
nif = not in flower.

Dicotyledons - Aceraceae

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

Amaranthaceae

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

<i>Bupleurum falcatum</i>	Sickle-leaved Hare's-ear
<i>Chaerophyllum temulentum</i>	Rough chervil
<i>Conopodium pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean pignut
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild carrot
<i>Eryngium bourgatii</i>	Pyrenean eryngo
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> ssp. <i>pyrenaicum</i>	Hogweed
<i>Laserpitium siler</i>	A sermountain
<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	Sweet cicely
<i>Orlaya grandiflora</i>	Orlaya

Asclepiadaceae	
<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Swallow-wort
Asteraceae	
<i>Achilla millefolia</i>	Yarrow
<i>Adenostyles alliariae</i>	
<i>Antennaria dioica</i>	Cat's-foot
<i>Aster alpinus</i>	Alpine aster
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Bupthalmum salicifolium</i>	Yellow ox-eye
<i>Carduus carlinoides</i>	Pyrenean thistle
<i>C. (carlinifolius) medius</i>	A thistle (Saule)
<i>C. nutans</i>	Musk thistle
<i>Carlina acanthifolia</i>	Cardabelle (= acanthus-leaved carline thistle)
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Black knapweed
<i>C. scabiosa</i>	Greater knapweed
<i>Cirsium rivulare</i>	Brook thistle
<i>C. palustre</i>	Marsh thistle
<i>Hieracium lanatum</i>	Woolly hawkweed
<i>H. pilosella</i>	Mouse-eared hawkweed
<i>Homogyne alpina</i>	Alpine (=Purple) colt's-foot
<i>Lactuca perennis</i>	Blue lettuce
<i>L. serriola</i>	Prickly lettuce
<i>Leucanthemum corymbosum</i> (Saule)	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	
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch
Boraginaceae	
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's-bugloss
<i>Myosotis alpina</i>	Alpine Forget-me-not
<i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i>	Long-leaved lungwort
Brassicaceae	
<i>Alyssum cuneifolium</i>	Yellow, very silvery hairy, big oval pods, at Gèdre-Dessus
<i>Arabis turrita</i>	Towercress
<i>Cardamine amara</i>	Large bittercress (purple-flowered form)
<i>Hutchinsia alpina</i>	Chamois cress
<i>Iberis amara</i>	Wild candytuft
Buxaceae	
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box
Campanulaceae	
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Harebell
<i>C. trachelium</i>	Nettle-leaved bellflower
<i>Jasione montana</i>	Sheep's-bit
<i>Phyteuma hemisphaericum</i>	Globe-headed rampion
<i>P. orbiculare</i>	Round-headed rampion
<i>P. pyrenaicum</i>	A spiked rampion, slate-blue flowers
Caprifoliaceae	
<i>Lonicera pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean honeysuckle
<i>Sambucus ebulus</i>	Dwarf elder
<i>S. nigra</i>	Elder
<i>S. racemosa</i>	Alpine elder

Caryophyllaceae	
<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved sandwort
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Field mouse-ear
<i>Dianthus deltoides</i>	Maiden pink
<i>D. monspessulanus</i>	Fringed pink
<i>Gypsophila repens</i>	Alpine gypsophila
<i>Lychnis alpina</i>	Alpine catchfly
<i>Paronychia polygonifolia</i> (Saule)	
<i>Scleranthus annuus</i>	Annual knawel
<i>S. perennis</i>	Perennial knawel
<i>Silene acaulis</i>	Moss campion
<i>S. alba</i>	White campion
<i>S. dioica</i>	Red campion
<i>S. nutans</i>	Nottingham catchfly
<i>S. rupestris</i>	Rock campion
<i>S. saxifraga</i>	Tufted catchfly
<i>S. vulgaris</i>	Bladder campion
<i>Spergularia rubra</i>	Sand spurrey
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater stitchwort
Chenopodiaceae	
<i>Chenopodium bonus-henricus</i>	Good King Henry
Cistaceae	
<i>Helianthemum apenninum</i>	White rock-rose
<i>H. canum</i>	Hoary rock-rose
<i>H. nummularium</i>	Common rock-rose
<i>H. nummularium</i> ssp. <i>pyrenaicum</i>	Pink flowers
Clusiaceae (Hypericaceae)	
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St. John's-wort
Corylaceae	
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
Crassulaceae (very incomplete)	
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting stonecrop
Cuscutaceae	
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Dodder
Dipsacaceae	
<i>Knautia dipsacifolia</i>	Wood scabious
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small scabious
Droseraceae	
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved sundew
Ericaceae	
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather
<i>Rhododendron ferrugineum</i>	Alpenrose
Euphorbiaceae	
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood spurge
<i>E. characias</i>	Large Mediterranean spurge
<i>E. cyparissias</i>	Cypress spurge
Fabaceae	
<i>Astragalus monspessulanus</i>	Montpelier milk-vetch
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Kidney Vetch
<i>Hedysarum boutignyanum</i>	White sainfoin
<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe vetch
<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>	Broad-leaved everlasting pea
<i>Lotus (corniculatus) alpinus</i>	Alpine bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>L. corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Lucerne (=alfalfa)
<i>Ononis natrix</i>	Large yellow rest-harrow
<i>O. rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved rest-harrow
<i>O. spinosa</i>	Spiny rest-harrow

<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop trefoil
<i>T. incarnatum</i>	Crimson clover
<i>T. montanum</i>	Mountain clover
<i>T. ochroleucon</i>	Sulphur clover
<i>T. pratense</i>	Red clover
<i>T. repens</i>	White clover
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted vetch
<i>V. sativa</i>	Common vetch
<i>V. sepium</i>	Bush vetch
Fagaceae	
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet chestnut
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Downy/white oak
Gentianaceae	
<i>Gentiana acaulis</i>	Trumpet gentian
<i>G. verna</i>	Spring gentian
<i>Gentianella campestris</i>	Field gentian
Geraniaceae	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common storksbill
<i>Geranium cinereum</i>	Ashy crane's-bill
<i>G. phaeum</i>	Dusky cranesbill
<i>G. pusillum</i>	Small-flowered cranesbill
<i>G. pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean cranesbill
<i>G. robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
<i>G. rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved cranesbill
<i>G. sanguineum</i>	Bloody cranesbill
<i>G. sylvaticum</i>	Wood cranesbill
Gesneriaceae	
<i>Ramonda myconi</i>	Ramonda
Globulariaceae	
<i>Globularia nudicaulis</i>	Leafless-stemmed globularia
<i>G. repens</i>	Creeping globularia
Lamiaceae	
<i>Acinos alpinus</i>	Alpine calamint
<i>A. arvensis</i>	Basil-thyme
<i>Ajuga pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal bugle
<i>A. repens</i>	Bugle
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	Wild basil
<i>Galeopsis pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean hemp-nettle
<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>	Yellow archangel
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	Spotted dead-nettle
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self-heal
<i>Scutellaria alpina</i>	Alpine skullcap
<i>Sideritis hyssopifolia</i>	
<i>Stachys recta</i>	Yellow woundwort
<i>Teucrium pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean germander
<i>Thymus serpyllum</i>	Wild thyme
Lentibulariaceae	
<i>Pinguicula grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered butterwort
Linaceae	
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Purging (= fairy) flax
Loranthaceae	
<i>Viscum album</i>	Mistletoe
Malvaceae	
<i>Malva moschata</i>	Musk mallow
<i>M. neglecta</i>	Dwarf mallow
Oleaceae	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash

Oxalidaceae			
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	Wood-sorrel		<i>nif</i>
Orobanchaceae			
<i>Orobanche gracilis</i>	Slender broomrape		
Papaveraceae			
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater celandine		
<i>Meconopsis cambrica</i>	Welsh poppy		
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common poppy		
Plantaginaceae			
<i>Plantago alpina</i>			
<i>P. maritima</i> ssp. <i>serpentina</i>	Fleshy plantain		
<i>P. media</i>	Hoary plantain		
Polygalaceae			
<i>Polygala alpestris</i>	Mountain milkwort		
<i>P. nicaeensis</i>	Nice milkwort		
Polygonaceae			
<i>Polygonum viviparum</i>	Alpine bistort		
<i>Rumex scutatus</i>	French sorrel (= Rubble dock)		
Primulaceae			
<i>Androsace carnea</i>	Pink rock-jasmine		
<i>A. chamaejasme</i>	Ciliate rock-jasmine		
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Yellow pimpernel		
<i>Primula auricula</i>	Bear's-ear		
<i>P. farinosa</i>	Bird's-eye primrose		
<i>P. veris</i>	Cowslip		
Ranunculaceae			
<i>Aconitum napellus</i>	Monk's-hood		
<i>Anemone narcissiflora</i>	Narcissus-flowered anemone		
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine		
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh marigold		
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Traveller's-joy		
<i>Delphinium montanum</i>	Mountain larkspur		
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Stinking hellebore		
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Hepatica		<i>nif</i>
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup		
<i>R. bulbosus</i>	Bulbous buttercup		
<i>R. pyrenaicus</i>	Pyrenean buttercup		
<i>R. repens</i>	Creeping buttercup		
<i>Thalictrum aquilegifolium</i>	Great meadow-rue		
<i>Trollius europeaeus</i>	Globe-flower		
Resedaceae			
<i>Reseda lutea</i>	Wild mignonette		
<i>R. glauca</i>	Pyrenean mignonette		
Rhamnaceae			
<i>Rhamnus alpinus</i>	Alpine buckthorn		
<i>R. catharticus</i>	Purging buckthorn		
<i>R. pumilus</i>	Dwarf buckthorn		
Rosaceae			
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony		
<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	Alpine lady's-mantle		
<i>A. vulgaris</i>	Lady's-mantle		
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn		
<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	Mountain avens		
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet		
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild strawberry		
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood avens		
<i>G. pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean avens		
<i>Potentilla argentea</i>	Hoary cinquefoil		
<i>P. erecta</i>	Tormentil		

<i>P. montana</i>	(white)
<i>Rosa glauca</i>	Blue-leaved rose
<i>R. pendulina</i>	Alpine rose
<i>R. pimpinellifolia</i>	Burnet rose
<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>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>Salix elaeagnos</i> (= <i>S. incana</i> = <i>S. rosmarinifolia</i>)	
Saxifragaceae	
<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	Yellow mountain saxifrage
<i>S. granulata</i>	Meadow saxifrage
<i>S. exarata</i>	Musky 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>Bartsia alpina</i>	Alpine bartsia
<i>Chaenorhinum minus</i>	Lesser snapdragon
<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>Melampyrum pratense</i>	Common cow-wheat
<i>Pedicularis foliosa</i>	Leafy lousewort
<i>P. pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean lousewort
<i>P. verticillata</i>	Verticillate lousewort
<i>Scrophularia canina</i>	Alpine (= French) figwort
<i>S. nodosa</i>	Common figwort
<i>Rhinanthus angustifolius</i>	Greater yellow-rattle
<i>R. minor</i>	Yellow-rattle
<i>Verbascum densiflorum</i>	
<i>V. lychnitis</i>	White mullein
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime (& other speedwells not tackled)
<i>V. chaeaedrys</i>	Germander speedwell
<i>V. serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved speedwell
Thymelaeaceae	
<i>Daphne cneorum</i>	Garland flower
<i>D. mezereum</i>	Mezereon
Tiliaceae	
<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>	Large-leaved lime
Ulmaceae	
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych elm
Valerianaceae	
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red valerian
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Valerian
Verbenaceae	
<i>Verbena officinalis</i>	Vervain

Violaceae		
<i>Viola biflora</i>	Yellow wood violet	
<i>V. cornuta</i>	Horned violet	
<i>V. lutea</i>	Mountain pansy	
<i>V. tricolor</i>	Heartsease	
Monocotyledons - Cyperaceae		
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Cotton-grass	
Dioscoreaceae		
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black bryony	
Liliaceae		
<i>Allium sphaerocephalon</i>	Round-headed leek	
<i>Anthericum liliago</i>	St Bernard's lily	
<i>Asphodelus albus</i>	Asphodel	
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanicus</i>	Spanish bluebell	<i>nif</i>
<i>Hyacinthus amethystinus</i>	Pyrenean hyacinth	
<i>Lilium martagon</i>	Martagon lily	
<i>Ornithogalum pyrenaicum</i>	Spiked star-of-Bethlehem	
<i>Tofieldia calyculata</i>	Tofield's asphodel	
Orchidaceae		
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal orchid	
<i>Epipactis atrorubens</i>	Dark red helleborine	<i>in bud</i>
<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved helleborine	<i>nif</i>
<i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i> ssp. <i>alpestris</i>	Broad-leaved marsh-orchid	
<i>D. sambucina</i>	Elder-flowered orchid	<i>nif</i>
<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Fragrant orchid	
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Common twayblade	
<i>Nigritella nigra</i>	Black vanilla orchid	
<i>Ophrys 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>Briza media</i>	Quaking-grass	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cocksfoot	
CONIFERS		
<i>Pinus nigra</i> ssp. <i>salzmannii</i>	Pyrenean black pine	
<i>Juniperus communis</i> (+ ssp. <i>alpina</i>)	Juniper	
FERNS		
<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black spleenwort	
<i>A. ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue	
<i>A. septentrionale</i>	Forked spleenwort	
<i>A. trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort	
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rusty-back fern	
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male fern	
<i>Phegopteris connectilis</i>	Beech fern	
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Common polypody	
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	

