French Pyrenees
Salisbury & District Natural History Society
7 – 15 June 2002
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Participants
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Joan Tripp
Joan Cook
Betty Robinson
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Grace Hickman
Pamela James
Margaret Pragnell
Jean Carroll

Leaders
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Kathy Archibald

Driver
Dale Newton

Report written by Rob and Kathy Macklin. Ferns complied by Gerald Nicholls.
Illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: lammergeier
Summer in the French Pyrenees
7 – 15 June 2002

Friday June 7th – The Journey
Cloudy and grey skies at Gatwick airport and the bad news that Diana had left her passport back at her house near Salisbury. Diana immediately set off home to retrieve it and we all hoped she would join us later. Toulouse was pleasantly warm and sunny. We collected our three minibuses and were soon on our way to Gèdre after managing to find our way out of the airport and the through the town of Blagnac! As we left Toulouse we spotted both yellow-legged and black-headed gulls on roadside water bodies plus several buzzards and black kites over the adjacent farmland. We hoped to find somewhere for lunch and settled on a rather up-market motorway service station at Aire de Comminges. We had a very close sighting of a hunting black kite here and Dale found a stunning poplar hawk-moth. After photographs, we repositioned him on one of the many tulip trees, which were just coming into flower.

We resumed our drive towards Gèdre feeling quite refreshed and further birds seen included three hoopoes plus several jackdaws, magpies and crows. The scenery became more and more stunning and the drive more and more hairy! We arrived at the Breche de Roland hotel in Gèdre in late afternoon to be greeted by Odile and soon settled into our rooms. Serins were singing from the neighbouring trees and Rob was lucky enough to see a lammergeier drifting under low cloud above the hotel. The low cloud soon turned into persistent rain from late afternoon, which did not bode well for the following day. The four-course meal was excellent, the staff very attentive, and the wine freely flowing!

Saturday June 8th – Gavarnie, Heas Valley and Barrage des Gloriettes
Our worst fears were confirmed with heavy rain falling at Gèdre in the morning – even so, house martins, crag martins and swifts were hunting for the few insects available in the valley. We decided to head up to Gavarnie to investigate the National Park centre, hoping that the rain would soon stop. As we pulled in to the village the rain turned into snow and the few cars leaving were absolutely covered! We walked up to the centre but it was closed (open on weekdays but closed at weekends – bizarre). The hall opposite the centre came in for close scrutiny with some members of the group getting to grips with some of the saxifrages, and the delightful fairy foxglove. Up to 100 meadow pipits had been grounded by the foul weather, our first griffon vulture drifted through the low cloud and four red-billed choughs flew over. As it was so cold we found a bar in the village for hot chocolates and coffees – very welcome indeed.

After coffee the snow began to abate so we decided to have a look at the lower reaches of Gavarnie; at least three black redstarts and a song thrush were singing in the village and a mistle thrush was taking food into the trees for a hungry brood. As we walked along the river we were very fortunate to get close views of a female red-backed shrike that then flew across the road to join a resplendent male perched up in the top of a small pine tree. Both garden warblers and blackcaps were seen singing from the scrub along the river, several wheatears were feeding around two donkeys in one of the meadows and a singing male curlew bunting showed himself briefly before skulking in the scrub out of view.

Flowers were difficult to identify as they were bowed under a sprinkling of snow, but we could still detect masses of gorgeous Pyrenean hyacinth in the meadows and dusky cranesbill along the river, among other delights. As the low cloud began to lift, alpine choughs and two kestrels drifted past, a peregrine skinned along the high ridge and the first of many lammergeiers loomed into view above us. Perhaps the highlight here was the sight of an adult dipper feeding two juveniles on the river, giving everyone very good views.

As it had stopped raining we drove back from Gavarnie and up to the Barrage des Gloriettes; 1668 metres above sea level. We stopped below the barrage or dam and were rewarded by masses of birds eye primrose, butterworts and broad-leaved marsh orchids in the snow-melt. By this time we were getting some sunny periods but it was still very cold. Up to 10 griffon vultures circled the surrounding peaks with two ravens but the stars of the show were three adult lammergeiers, flying low along the face of the mountains, showing off their bright orange underparts to great effect. Water pipits, wheatears and black redstarts were all breeding at this height and a male yellowhammer also put in an appearance. Susan found a rock bunting and some of the group were lucky enough to see a salamander that Ted spotted in a little rivulet of snow-melt. Our last short drive was up to the dam and a short walk
across the concrete sill; the wind was very chilly up here although that did not stop a couple of marmots from calling furiously across the slopes.

We warmed up with a well-earned cup of tea in the bar before dinner. Just as we were enjoying another super meal, Diana arrived – taxi driver in tow – with quite a tale to tell! We were all very pleased – and impressed! – to see her.

**Sunday June 9th – Col du Soulor & Valle d’Arrens**

Another day that dawned with low cloud and a little rain in the air, not particularly what the doctor ordered. Before we left we heard the usual serins singing around the hotel and the first sparrowhawk of the trip flew across the valley. Our journey today took us northwest to the foothills of the French Pyrenees around the Valle d’Arrens. We made a brief stop in Luz St. Sauveur to visit the pharmacy among other things and noted grey wagtail and singing goldfinch in the town with a red kite overhead.

We then drove north to the town of Argeles-Gazost before heading west towards the Col du Soulor; we were fortunate that this high point was open as the nearby Col d’Aubisque was firmly closed. Two red kites were seen along the way before we arrived at the Col to find the coffee bar gratifyingly open with a roaring wood burner on the go! We strolled along the road in amazement at the fabulous displays of flowers all the way; masses of early-purple orchids, spring and trumpet gentians, sheets of birdseye primrose and butterworts in the wet flashes, and all sorts of lady’s mantles and speedwells.

The first butterflies of the trip – green-veined white, clouded yellow and small heath – struggled to find enough warmth to fly. At least 10 griffons were at the colony here, a raven was seen carrying a large white blob (still don’t know what that was) and another peregrine flew over. Unbelievably yet another two lammergeiers flew low over the road as we walked back to the buses. We had lunch in the buses, although a few hardy souls sat outside, before moving off to the Valle d’Arrens.

The Valle d’Arrens proved to be popular with weekend trippers but this did not spoil our enjoyment of the area. We parked the buses by the lake and proceeded to explore the area. The first of many saxifrages spilling out of the rocks turned out to be paniculate saxifrage while both small tortoiseshell and small white butterflies were on the wing. Two dark spots in the sky then came nearer and turned out to be golden eagles soaring over a nearby peak. Later in the afternoon we saw one of them much closer when a pair of breeding kestrels was mobbing them; the difference in size was quite remarkable!

Our intended walk up into the woods was curtailed by the abundance of plants everywhere. We found a very photogenic patch of Pyrenean thistle, along with spiked Pyrenean speedwell and alpine toadflax. Ted and Rob examined the fabulous columbines and discovered, to our disappointment, that they are in fact common, rather than Pyrenean columbines. Patricia found a wonderful specimen of Pyrenean snakeshead fritillary, then we crossed a bridge below a spectacular waterfall into the meadow on the other side of the reservoir. There were many fragrant orchids in here, Pyrenean lousewort, and alpine rose as well as alpenrose.

At least six crag martins were searching for insects over the lake, we had good views of coal tit and blackcap but the only woodpecker located was a green woodpecker, calling from the surrounding forest. As we returned to the buses yet another lammergeier drifting along the rock face brought a splendid end to a long day.
Monday June 10th – Port de Boucharo & The Ossoue Valley
The weather forecast proved incorrect today and our day began in bright sunshine after early low cloud. Before starting off we picked up singing serins at the hotel as well as blue tit, wren and our first male bullfinch. As conditions seemed set fair we decided to head for one of the highest points in the Pyrenees at the Port de Boucharo. Unfortunately the road was closed a few kilometres from the very top and we had to content ourselves with exploring the roadside. It was spectacular up here – bright, clear, crisp and quiet, with incredible views down across the snow-covered peaks. The snow was very deep beside the road, with 10-foot cliffs where it had been ploughed. Water pipits and wheatears were singing and displaying well and we were surprised to find two linnets at such a height. A minimum of seven griffon vultures soared around the peaks but most attention was focused on several marmots that provided very close views. Beautiful pink entire-leaved primroses were growing out of the snow, and Rita found catsfoot and chamois cress. We then moved down the road a little way to search for alpine snowbell but were unlucky in this respect. We did however get excellent views of a griffon vulture perched up on a nearby rock and while hunting for flowers picked up more butterflies such as orange tip, swallowtail and dingy skipper.

As it was still a little chilly up here we returned to Gavarnie for a welcome cup of coffee before having lunch in the sunshine in the Ossoue valley. The afternoon sunshine certainly brought out more butterflies with wood white, green hairstreak, brown argus and painted lady all on the wing. As we were eating, a golden eagle flew low over the valley carrying prey and being mobbed by a carrion crow. After lunch we drove further up the valley and parked near the Naturetrek bus. Early excitement was generated by a splendid male rock thrush, which Patricia spotted on nearby rocks, seemingly oblivious to a helicopter that was taking materials in and out of the valley. The male then disappeared but was promptly replaced by the duller female, which we finally managed to get into the telescope for all the group to see.

We then walked out into the meadows to explore the wet flashes and nearby slopes; the slopes were covered in narcissus-flowered anemone as well as many trumpet gentians. A couple of kestrels and a peregrine were seen along the mountain ridges, two ravens ‘crowned’ their presence and Gerald found another pair of red-backed shrikes. One or two of the group then saw a couple of dippers flitting along the valley stream.

On the way back out of the valley we stopped at a known lammergeier nest site; we were not able to see the young in the nest but were very fortunate to see an ochre-coloured adult drift along the ridge and drop straight into the nest. Susan then found some very brightly coloured moth-like insects that on reflection turned out to be of the insect family Ascalaphidae and were probably *Ascalaphus libelluloides*.

Back at the hotel a short-toed eagle and a buzzard over the nearby hills enlivened a welcome early evening beer – a splendid end to a marvellous day.

Tuesday June 11th – Cirque de Gavarnie
A very warm day in prospect with the sun shining and the weather set fair for our ‘official’ visit to the world famous Cirque de Gavarnie. The Naturetrek team put us onto a group of citrino finches within the town and careful searching of the area produced seven birds with another five further up the track. A pair of red-backed shrikes here was probably the same pair we saw on the previous Saturday.

What a difference a couple of days made with warm conditions and butterflies coming onto the wing as the day warmed up. The first meadows, with their profusion of Pyrenean violets, were alive with clouded Apollos. Walking up through the woods we met a British group who had spotted several Pyrenean chamois, or isards, in the distance. Even through binoculars they were still just specks against the snow but became identifiable in the telescopes as they rested below the stunning cirque.

We came out of the woods into a glorious area of open meadows, stretching right up to the sheer cirque. We made camp amongst carpets of alchemilla-leaved cinquefoil and had lunch before exploring the scrub and grassland. Some plants were in short supply as cattle had already been through the area grazing off anything edible. What a shame the mountain larkspur was not yet in flower – it would be worth coming back just to see that. Ramonda grew in rock-crevices, with matted globularia below – very beautiful. Gerald identified the first Queen of Spain fritillary and two brown butterflies were
identified as Piedmont ringlet and large wall brown. A large white type flew swiftly across the clearing and was identified as a black-veined white, widespread in the UK in the 19th century but now sadly extinct!

Birds of prey then became more apparent overhead with two buzzards soaring over the woods, at least three griffon vultures drifting along the ridge and yet another lammergeier putting in an appearance! This was turning out to be a holiday full of lammergeiers! Other birds on the wing included just one alpine swift, singing goldcrests and several breeding water pipits. We continued to search for butterflies, finding a brilliant adonis blue and several Duke of Burgundy fritillaries before finally catching a very elusive pearl-bordered fritillary. As we clambered along the slopes we came upon a huge wood ants’ nest and watched the ants moving along their very own motorway with all sorts of booty. A somewhat worn fritillary turned out to be a small pearl-bordered fritillary and several Camberwell beauties were on the wing flying together in the woodland clearings.

As the afternoon came to a close we re-assembled at the lunch spot where a golden eagle was being harassed by two ravens; as if this wasn’t enough, Dale spotted a fantastic black woodpecker which flew over the meadows giving us all really good views – amazing! As we left, there was an ominous rumble and roar, and we actually saw an avalanche high up in the cirque. Jim saw a rock bunting on the edge of the village – one of the species that eluded most of the group.

**Wednesday June 12th – Vallée de la Glare & Col de Tourmalet**

Another hot day was in prospect as we boarded the buses for the trip to the ‘wallcreeper site’ in the Vallée de la Glare. Our first stop though was at a splendid stone bridge just below the village of Gèdre where Rosemary and Gerald had spotted some magnificent Pyrenean saxifrage in flower and was this worth the stop. They were absolutely magnificent growing out of the overhanging rocks and the cameras were clicking away merrily – round-leaved resharrow was also found in flower here. Our next stop was at Luz St. Sauveur to change some euros. Manyswifts were screeching over the town and collared doves called in the square.

We arrived at the valley to find the track alongside the river in reasonably good condition, which allowed us to drive a good way towards the site. Around half of the group pottered leisurely amongst the meadows beside the stream, finding many more flowers and watching Camberwell beauties defending their territories along the stream banks. The other half of the group decided to attempt the steep climb, even though by this time it had become rather hot. The walk up was relatively uneventful although a crested tit was a good find amongst the more usual water pipits and black redstarts. We finally made it to the series of abandoned buildings, which we supposed used to house quarry workers but was now no more than an empty shell. We didn’t have to wait long as our quarry, a wallcreeper, flew in from its nest on the cliff face to hunt for food on the old buildings. We then saw the bird on a couple more occasions which was fantastic for all those who had made the walk – a ‘first’ for just about everyone. The walk back down to the buses was much easier and we caught sight of a black kite going over closely followed by yet another golden eagle.

We joined the rest of the group for lunch in the valley, washed down with ice-cold water from the stream – nectar! The next stop was for a cold drink at the bar at Leinz where two buzzards soared over the surrounding woods and serins were singing.

As we still had a little time left in the afternoon we decided to drive up to the Col du Tourmalet at 2115 metres above sea level. It was certainly a little colder up here but we soon managed to find several snowfinches feeding in the grass along the snow line; the birds were very confiding and obviously used to groups of people in the car park! Another male wheatear was also seen here plus another griffon but we were all astounded to see a group of llamas nonchalantly strolling across the car park! A strange end to an excellent day!

**Thursday June 13th – Heas Vallée & Cirque de Troumouse**

Another fine day in prospect and up to nine griffon vultures and a buzzard were in the air at Gèdre as we prepared to board the buses. Our first stop was along the roadside in the lower reaches of the Heas valley to look for plants on the neighbouring banks. Our first find was a real beauty, a large creamy-yellow clump which was identified as crested lousewort. Above this we spotted an even more
spectacular white flower, which turned out to be narrow-leaved helleborine; many fragrant orchids were also found here.

Our second stop was beside a sun-drenched flower-filled meadow, which promised much in the way of butterflies. We (well, Ailsa!) used the net and bug box to great effect and turned up Provençal fritillary, Provençal short-tailed blue, chequered skipper, Moroccan orange-tip, swallowtail and Chapman’s blue. Several raptors included yet another lammergeier, two griffon vultures and the second sparrowhawk of the trip. Some of the loveliest flowers were round-headed rampions and a gorgeous maiden pink.

We then boarded the buses for the climb right up into the Cirque de Troumouse and a welcome coffee stop. The owners were a little perplexed as we descended on them but the coffees and chocolates soon arrived. Lots of alpine choughs gave us all super views and several spots on the highest peaks turned out to be five chamois when viewed through the telescope. On the way up to the higher ground we saw another three adult lammergeiers soaring low over the road together with another griffon.

Our last stop was at the highest car park within the Cirque de Troumouse; we wandered off to explore the meadows with their carpets of white Pyrenean buttercups, pink rock jasmine and delicate purple snowbells. We also found a stunning patch of oxlips growing with heavily grazed mezereon. Birds were few and far between but we did find lots of singing water pipits, a couple of ravens and yet another lammergeier, this time a juvenile, drifting along the nearby ridge. On the way back we stopped briefly at the same coffee shop and cleaned them out of their flower postcard-books! As we left, we were thrilled to find a stunning male black-eared wheatear and then another as we descended, without even crashing the buses! We stopped to examine a funny tree, which turned out to be alpine elder, and found marvellous displays of garland flower and moss campion.

On the evening stroll to the bridge in Gédre, people were busy cutting the hayfields, which was rather tragic! What a lucky week we chose – any later and we would have missed many of the most glorious floral sights of the trip.

Friday June 14th – Agos Vidalos, Argeles Gazost & Luz St.Sauveur

The last full day of the holiday and a really hot one – up to 33 degrees! What a week of extremes! A great spotted woodpecker was in the trees behind the hotel as we set off for the relatively long drive to Agos Vidalos. This was reputed to be a good site for booted eagles and Egyptian vultures so we were hopeful of a good day. We arrived in mid-morning in intense heat; scanning the skies above the ridge we located approximately 30 griffons and two Egyptian vultures, which shone brilliantly in the sun.

Several of the group opted for the cool shelter of the local church where a mass for one parishioner was in progress. The rest of us climbed up into the wood, where we saw bloody cranesbill, yellow (ordinary) kidney vetch, hoary cinquefoil and drooping star-of-Bethlehem. It was difficult to see the ridge overhead from the interior of the wood but we were kept company by singing blackcaps and chiffchaffs. We also found several new butterflies including marbled white, heath fritillary, cleopatra and pearly heath, the last a close relative our more familiar small heath. Most of the plants here were quite different from the alpine regions and we identified swallow-wort, felt germander and Pyrenean oak.

By now the heat was oppressive and we decided to find a cool spot for lunch; after initial false turns we finally located a spot by the river just outside Argeles Gazost. Two dippers were seen briefly on the river by a couple of members of the group but we all saw both grey and white wagtails on the rocks. Several black redstarts also sang from the trees.

After lunch we took a drive around the Boo-Silhen area but this looked too intensively farmed and seemed devoid of interesting wildlife. We decided to head back to Luz St.Sauveur for cool drinks in the
shade of the most magnificent lime tree, and a little cultural history. There is a “Templar” fortified church in the town so we explored this in mid-afternoon. It turned out to be a church in the Templar tradition but not actually anything to do with the Templars! Nettle-leaved bellflowers were growing out of the church walls and Dale spotted two honey buzzards soaring on flat wings over the town.

Grace cleverly discovered that it was Brenda and Jimmy’s 55th wedding anniversary, so Odile rushed off into town for us to buy champagne to celebrate.

**Saturday June 15th – The Journey Home**

A last botanical walk for most of the group along tracks above and behind the hotel – Patricia led the mountain goats and Rosemary led the marmots! Many additions to the list were made! We left, reluctantly, in mid-morning, still birding all the way! Masses of kites were flocking around rubbish tips along the route. Over lunch, provided by Odile, Dale heard a corn bunting singing and then a large raptor overhead turned out to be a booted eagle. Almost at once another cry of “what’s this over here” went up and a male marsh harrier drifted into view. As if this wasn’t enough two hobbies swooped over the car park, hunting dragonflies – amazing!

On the last leg of the drive back to Toulouse we saw a large group of little egrets on the river Garonne as we approached the city but were then dismayed to find the motorway to the airport completely closed! We had to head into the centre of Toulouse and try to find our way out of the maze of streets and traffic. After a few hairy moments we duly arrived at Blagnac airport ready to board our flight home. Our thanks, once again, to everyone for being such great company and making the holiday such fun. We were sad that Kate couldn’t be with us this time, but very pleased to meet Jean, Patricia and Susan. Many thanks to Gerald for his fern list, not to mention identifying all the ferns in the first place. Last but not least, thank you all for our lovely furry whistling marmot – what a conversation piece!

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**SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little egret</td>
<td>Several near Toulouse on 15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey buzzard</td>
<td>2 at Luz St.Sauveur on 14th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black kite</td>
<td>Widespread and common esp. in lowland areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red kite</td>
<td>3 on way to Col de Soulou; c.15 on return journey to Toulouse on 15th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-toed eagle</td>
<td>1 at Gèdre on 10th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lammergeier</td>
<td>c.14 sightings from all alpine areas; 4 at Troumouse on 13th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian vulture</td>
<td>2 at Agos Vidalos on 14th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffon vulture</td>
<td>Widespread and common in all mountainous areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh harrier</td>
<td>Male at Aire de Comminges on 15th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparrowhawk</td>
<td>One at Gèdre on 9th &amp; Heas Valley on 13th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common buzzard</td>
<td>Widespread and relatively common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden eagle</td>
<td>2 at Vallée d’Arrens on 9th; one at Ossoue Valley on 10th, Gavarnie on 11th &amp; Vallée de la Glere on 12th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booted eagle</td>
<td>One at Aire de Comminges on 15th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common kestrel</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peregrine</td>
<td>One at Gavarnie on 8th &amp; Col de Solour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-headed gull</td>
<td>Several seen near Toulouse on 7th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow-legged gull</td>
<td>Seen near Toulouse on 7th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodpigeon</td>
<td>2 at Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collared dove</td>
<td>Widespread and common in towns and villages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawny owl</td>
<td>2 at Gèdre on 14th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine swift</td>
<td>One at Ossoue valley on 10th &amp; Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green woodpecker</td>
<td>Two at Vallée d’Arrens, one at Gavarnie &amp; Agos Vidalos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black woodpecker</td>
<td>Two at Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great spotted woodpecker</td>
<td>One at Vallée d’Arrens on 9th &amp; Gèdre on 14th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlark</td>
<td>One at Gavarnie on 8th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skylark</td>
<td>One at Col de Soulor on 9th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crag martin</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swallow</td>
<td>One at Vallée d’Arrens on 9th &amp; widespread on 14th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House martin</td>
<td>Widespread and Common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree pipit</td>
<td>One at Col de Solour on 9th &amp; Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow pipit</td>
<td>100+ at Gavarnie on 8th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water pipit</td>
<td>Widespread and common at higher levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey wagtail</td>
<td>Found on all rivers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White wagtail</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dipper</td>
<td>Peak of three at Gavarnie on 8th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wren</td>
<td>Relatively common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunnock</td>
<td>Found at alpine levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>Found in woodland areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black redstart</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern wheatear</td>
<td>Peaks of 5 at Gavarnie/Gloriettes on 8th &amp; 6 at Boucharo on 10th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-eared wheatear</td>
<td>Pair at Troumouse on 13th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock thrush</td>
<td>Pair at Ossoue Valley on 10th &amp; one at Heas Valley on 13th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackbird</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song thrush</td>
<td>Singing birds at Gavarnie on 8th &amp; 11th &amp; Vallée D’Arrens on 9th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistle thrush</td>
<td>Relatively widespread but uncommon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden warbler</td>
<td>One at Gavarnie on 8th &amp; 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackcap</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiffchaff</td>
<td>Widespread and relatively common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldcrest</td>
<td>Heard at Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firecrest</td>
<td>One at Gèdre on 14th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted flycatcher</td>
<td>One at Gèdre on 7th &amp; 14th then Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crested tit</td>
<td>One at Vallée de la Glere on 12th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal tit</td>
<td>Recorded at most forest locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue tit</td>
<td>Recorded from Gèdre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great tit</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuthatch</td>
<td>Three at Gèdre on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallcreeper</td>
<td>One at Vallée de la Glere on 12th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-backed shrike</td>
<td>Single pairs at Gavarnie on 8th &amp; 11th plus Ossoue Valley on 10th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magpie</td>
<td>Common in lowland areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine chough</td>
<td>Common in alpine areas, peak of 70 at Gavarnie on 8th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-billed chough</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrion crow</td>
<td>Widespread in small numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven</td>
<td>Reported from all locations in twos &amp; threes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowfinch</td>
<td>5 at Col du Tourmalet on 12th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House sparrow</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaffinch</td>
<td>Widespread and common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serin</td>
<td>Widespread and relatively common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citril finch</td>
<td>12 at Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfinch</td>
<td>Occasional birds at Luz St.Sauveur &amp; Agos Vidalos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linnet</td>
<td>Occasional birds at Boucharo, Col de Dolour &amp; Troumouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullfinch</td>
<td>Male at Gèdre on 10th &amp; 2 at Vallée de la Glere on 12th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowhammer</td>
<td>Several sightings at higher levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cirl bunting</td>
<td>Singing male at Gavarnie on 8th &amp; Agos Vidalos on 14th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock bunting</td>
<td>Single birds at Gloriettes on 8th &amp; Gavarnie on 11th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swallowtail</td>
<td>Clouded Apollo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-veined White</td>
<td>Large White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small White</td>
<td>Green-veined White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood White</td>
<td>Orange Tip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan Orange Tip</td>
<td>Clouded Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brimstone</td>
<td>Cleopatra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pale Clouded Yellow</td>
<td>Green Hairstreak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Blue</td>
<td>Little Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Argus</td>
<td>Adonis Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Blue</td>
<td>Chapman’s Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provençal Short-tailed Blue</td>
<td>Duke of Burgund Fritillary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camberwell Beauty</td>
<td>Peacock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Admiral</td>
<td>Painted Lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Tortoiseshell</td>
<td>Queen of Spain Fritillary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl-bordered Fritillary</td>
<td>Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heath Fritillary</td>
<td>Provençal Fritillary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marbled White</td>
<td>Piedmont Ringlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow Brown</td>
<td>Small Heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speckled Wood</td>
<td>Large Wall Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearly Heath</td>
<td>Grizzled Skipper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-underwing Skipper</td>
<td>Dingy Skipper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chequered Skipper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Flowers in the French Pyrenees**

English and scientific names are mostly based on ‘Alpine Flowers of Britain and Europe’ by Christopher Grey-Wilson and Marjorie Blamey (published by Collins), or occasionally in its companion volume ‘The Wild Flowers of Britain and northern Europe’ by Fitter, Fitter and Blamey.

**Pines and cypresses**
- European silver fir: *Abies alba*
- European larch: *Larix decidua*
- Black pine (Pyrenean subspecies): *Pinus nigra salzmannii*
- Scots pine: *Pinus sylvestris*
- Juniper: *Juniperis communis*
- Yew: *Taxus baccata*

**Willow, birch, hazel and beech families**
- Alder: *Alnus glutinosa*
- Aspen: *Populus tremula*
- Silver birch: *Betula pendula*
- Hazel: *Corylus avellana*
- Beech: *Fagus sylvatica*
- Sweet chestnut: *Castanea sativa*
- Pyrenean oak: *Quercus pyrenaica*
- Sessile oak: *Quercus petraea*

**Sandalwood family**
- Osyris: *Osyris alba*
| **Nettles** | Stinging nettle | *Urtica dioca* |
| **Mistletoe** | Mistletoe | *Viscum album* |
| **Docks** | Rubble dock or French sorrel | *Rumex scutatus* |
| Common sorrel | *Rumex acetosa* |
| Bistort | *Polygonum bistorta* |
| Alpine bistort | *Polygonum viviparum* |
| **Pink family** | Ragged robin | *Lychnis viscaria* |
| Nottingham catchfly | *Silene nutans* |
| Spanish catchfly | *Silene oitites* |
| Tufted catchfly | *Silene saxifraga* |
| Bladder campion | *Silene vulgaris* |
| White campion | *Silene latifolia* |
| Red campion | *Silene dioica* |
| Moss campion | *Silene acaulis* |
| Maiden pink | *Dianthus deltoides* |
| Fringed pink | *Dianthus monspessulanus* |
| Common chickweed | *Stellaria nemorum* |
| Greater stitchwort | *Stellaria holostea* |
| Snow in summer (widely naturalised) | *Cerastium tomentosum* |
| Field mouse-ear | *Cerastium arvense agg.* |
| **Buttercup family** | Stinking hellebore | *Helleborus foetidus* |
| Green hellebore | *Helleborus viridis* |
| Globeflower | *Trollius europaeus* |
| Marsh marigold | *Caitha palustris* |
| Hepatica | *Hepatica nobilis* |
| Creeping buttercup | *Ramunculus repens* |
| Meadow buttercup | *Ramunculus acris* |
| Gouan’s buttercup | *Ramunculus gouanian* |
| Bulbous buttercup | *Ramunculus bulbosus agg.* |
| Pyrenean buttercup | *Ramunculus pyrenaicus* |
| Mountain larkspur | *Delphinium montanum* |
| Narcissus-flowered anemone | *Anemone narcissiflora* |
| Lesser spearwort | *Ramunculus flammula* |
| Common meadow-rue | *Thalictrum flavum* |
| Clematis/traveller’s joy | *Clematis vitalba* |
| Common columbine | *Aquilegia vulgaris* |
| **Fumitory family** | Common fumitory | *Fumaria officinalis* |
| **Poppy family** | Common or corn poppy | *Papaver rhoeas* |
| Long-headed poppy | *Papaver dubium* |
| Greater celandine | *Chelidonium majus* |
| Welsh poppy | *Meconopsis cambrica* |
| **Crucifers** | Austrian rocket | *Sisymbrium austriacum* |
| Murbeckiella | *Murbeckiella pinnatifida* |
| Tansy-leaved rocket | *Hugueninia tanacetifolia* |
| Decumbent treacle-mustard | *Erysimum decumbens* |
Dame’s violet  
Cuckoo flower  
Yellow whitlow-grass  
Chamois cress  
Spoon-leaved candytuft  
Shepherd’s purse  
Prickly lettuce

Hesperis matronalis  
Cardamine pratensis  
Draba aizoides  
Hutchinsia alpina  
Iberis spathulata  
Capsella bursa-pastoris  
Lactuca serriola

Mignonette family  
Wild mignonette  
Pyrenean mignonette

Reseda lutea  
Reseda glauca

Stonecrop family  
Mountain houseleek  
Roseroof

Sempervivum montanum  
Rhodiola rosea

Saxifrages  
Round-leaved saxifrage  
Livelong or paniculate saxifrage  
Musky saxifrage  
Yellow saxifrage  
Reddish saxifrage  
Pyrenean saxifrage

Saxifraga rotundifolia  
Saxifraga paniculata  
Saxifraga moschatia  
Saxifraga arctoidea  
Saxifraga media  
Saxifraga longifolia

Rose family  
Dropwort  
Raspberry  
Bramble  
Field rose  
Burnet rose  
Blue-leaved rose  
Alpine rose  
Provençal rose  
Dog rose  
Downy rose  
Sweet briar  
Salad burnet  
Mountain avens  
Pyrenean avens  
Rock cinquefoil  
Creeping cinquefoil  
Alchemilla-leaved cinquefoil  
Tormentil  
A wild strawberry  
Alpine lady’s mantle  
Hoppe’s lady’s mantle  
Lady’s mantle  
Crab apple  
Mountain ash or Rowan  
Whitebeam  
Amelanchier  
Hawthorn  
Blackthorn  
Bird cherry

Filipendula vulgaris  
Rubus idaeus  
Rubus fruticosus agg.  
Rosa arvensis  
Rosa pimpinellifolia  
Rosa glauca  
Rosa pendulina (=R. alpina)  
Rosa gallica  
Rosa canina  
Rosa tomentosa agg.  
Rosa rubiginosa  
Sanguisorba minor  
Dryas octopetala  
Geum pyrenaicum  
Potentilla rupestris  
Potentilla reptans  
Potentilla alchimilloides  
Potentilla erecta  
Fragaria viridis  
Alchemilla alpina  
Alchemilla hoppeana agg.  
Alchemilla vulgaris agg.  
Malus sylvestris  
Sorbus aucuparia  
Sorbus aria  
Amelanchier ovalis  
Crataegus monogyna  
Prunus spinosa  
Prunus padus

Pea family  
Winged greenweed  
Tufted vetch  
Pyrenean vetch  
Bush vetch

Chamaespertium sagittale  
Vicia cracca  
Vicia pyrenaica  
Vicia sepium
Spring vetchling
Meadow vetchling
Bitter vetch
Broad-leaved everlasting pea
Round-leaved restharrow
Yellow restharrow
White melilot
Alpine clover
Mountain clover
White clover
Red clover
Hop trefoil
Sulphur clover
Alpine birdsfoot trefoil
Birdsfoot trefoil
Kidney vetch
Kidney vetch – red flowers
Horseshoe vetch

Lathyrus vernus
Lathyrus pratensis
Lathyrus montanus
Lathyrus latifolius
Ononis rotundifolia
Ononis striata
Melilotus alba
Trifolium alpinum
Trifolium montanum
Trifolium repens
Trifolium pratense
Trifolium campestre
Trifolium ochroleucon
Lotus alpinus
Lotus corniculatus agg.
Anthyllis vulneraria
Anthyllis vulneraria subsp pyrenaica
Hippocrepis comosa

Geraniums
Ashy cranesbill
Bloody cranesbill
Meadow cranesbill
Wood cranesbill
Dusky cranesbill
Pyrenean cranesbill (=hedgerow cranesbill)
Dovesfoot cranesbill
Cut-leaved cranesbill
Round-leaved cranesbill
Herb robert
Common storksbill
Rock storksbill

Geranium macrorrhizum
Geranium sanguineum
Geranium pratense
Geranium sylvaticum
Geranium phaeum
Geranium pyrenaicum
Geranium molle
Geranium dissectum
Geranium rotundifolium
Geranium robertianum
Erodium cicutarium
Erodium petraeum

Spurges
Cypress spurge
Wood spurge
Dog’s mercury

Euphorbia cyparissias
Euphorbia amygdaloides
Mercurialis perennis

Flaxes
Purging (=fairy) flax

Linum catharticum

Milkworts
Nice milkwort
Tufted milkwort

Polygala nicaeensis
Polygala comosa

Maple, lime, olive and box families
Sycamore
Field maple
Lime sp
Ash
Box
Privet
Wild jasmine
Lilac
Buddleia

Acer pseudoplatanus
Acer campestre
Tilea sp
Fraxinus excelsior
Buxus sempervirens
Ligustrum lucidum
Jasminum fruticans
Syringa vulgaris
Buddleia davidii

Mallows
Common mallow
Dwarf mallow

Malva alcea
Malva neglecta
Daphne family
Mezereum
Daphne mezereum
Spurge laurel
Daphne laureola subsp philippi
Garland flower
Daphne cneorum

Rockroses
Common rockrose
Helianthemum nummularium
White rockrose
Helianthemum apenninum
Alpine rockrose
Helianthemum oelandicum
Hoary rockrose
Helianthemum canum

Willowherb family
Evening primrose
Oenothera sp.

St John’s worts
Perforate St John’s wort
Hypericum perforatum agg.
Tutsan (planted)
Hypericum androsaemum

Violets and pansies
Pyrenean violet
Viola pyrenaica
Dog violet
Viola riviniana
Heartsease
Viola tricolor

Dogwood family
Common dogwood
Cornus sanguinea

Ivy
Ivy
Hedera helix

Umbellifers
Sanicle
Sanicula europaea
Pyrenean eryngo
Eryngium bourgattii
Sweet cicely
Myrrhis odorata
Hogweed
Heracleum spondylium
Conopodium sp? Likely to be pignut Conopodium majus or Conopodium C. pyrenaicum
Cow parsley
Anthriscus sylvestris agg.
Sickle-leaved hare’s ear
Bupleurum falcatum
Masterwort
Peucedanum ostruthian

Heather family
Cowberry
Vaccinium vitis-idaea
Bilberry
Vaccinium myrtillus
Alpenrose
Rhododendron ferrugineum
Heather
Calluna vulgaris

Primrose family
Oxlip
Primula elatior
Cowslip
Primula veris
Birdseye primrose
Primula farinosa
Entire-leaved primrose
Primula integrifolia
Marginate primrose
Primula marginata
Pink rock-jasmine
Androsace carnea
Ciliate rock-jasmine
Androsace chamaejasme
Alpine snowbell
Soldanella alpina
Scarlet pimpernel
Anagallis arvensis

Thrift family
Mountain thrift
Armeria maritima subsp alpina
**Gentians**  
Trumpet gentian  
Spring gentian

**Oleander family**  
Greater periwinkle  
*Vinca major*

**Milkweed family**  
Swallow-wort (yellow flowered)  
*Vincetoxicum hirundaria subsp intermedium*

**Borage family**  
Gromwell  
*Lithospermum officinale*  
Viper’s bugloss  
*Echium vulgare*  
Long-leaved lungwort (leaves only)  
*Myosotis alpestris*  
Alpine wood forget-me-not  
*Lappula squarrosa*  
Bur forget-me-not  
*Teucrium scorodonia*

**Labiates**  
Wood sage  
*Teucrium polium*  
Felty germander  
*Ajuga pyramidalis subsp genevensis*  
Pyramidal bugle  
*Ajuga reptans*  
Common bugle  
*Salvia pratensis*  
Meadow clary  
*Lamium album*  
White deadnettle  
*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*  
Yellow archangel  
*Stachys officinalis*  
Betony  
*Stachys recta*  
Yellow woundwort  
*Stachys alpina*  
Alpine woundwort  
*Acinos alpinus*  
Alpine calamint  
*Lycopus europaeus*  
Gypsypwort  
*Accinos arvensis*  
Basil-thyme  
*Origanum vulgare*  
Marjoram  
*Thymus serpyllum*

**Figwort family – including toadflaxes and speedwells**  
Chaenorhinum  
*Chaenorhinum origanifolium*  
Rock snapdragon  
*Antirrhinum sempervirens*  
Common snapdragon  
*Antirrhinum majus*  
Pyreanean toadflax  
*Linaria supina*  
Alpine toadflax  
*Linaria alpina*  
Ivy-leaved toadflax  
*Cymbalaria muralis*  
Fairy foxglove  
*Erinus alpinus*  
Dark mullein (branched form)  
*Verbascum chaixii*  
Common figwort  
*Scrophularia nodosa*  
Alpine (= French or dog’s figwort)  
*Scrophularia canina*  
Thyme-leaved speedwell  
*Veronica serpyllifolia*  
Spiked Pyreanean speedwell  
*Veronica ponaer*  
Germander speedwell  
*Veronica beccabunga*  
Brooklime  
*Veronica arvensis*  
Wall speedwell  
*Veronica prostrata*  
Large speedwell (subsp. prostrata)  
*Bartsia alpina*  
Alpine bartisia  
*Cephalotis tuberosa*  
Crested lousewort  
*Pedicularis pyrenaica*  
Pyreanean lousewort  
*Rhinanthus minor*  
Yellow rattle  
*Rhinanthus angustifolia*

**Gloxinia family**  
Ramonda  
*Ramonda myconi*
**Globularia family**
- Matted globularia
- Leafless-stemmed globularia

**Butterworts**
- Large-flowered butterwort
- Common butterwort

**Plantains**
- Ribwort plantain
- Greater plantain
- Hoary plantain

**Bedstraws**
- Lady’s bedstraw
- Hedge bedstraw
- Wood bedstraw
- Woodruff

**Honeysuckles**
- Black-berried honeysuckle
- Fly honeysuckle
- Elder
- Alpine elder

**Valerians**
- Common valerian
- Pyrenean valerian
- Three-leaved valerian
- Cornsalad

**Teasel family**
- Teasel

**Bellflower family**
- Round-headed rampion
- Black rampion (though not supposed to occur!)
- Nettle-leaved bellflower
- Small scabious

**Daisy family – composites**
- Golden rod
- Daisy
- Southern daisy
- Pineapple mayweed
- Alpine aster
- Evax
- Catsfoot/mountain everlasting
- Ox-eye daisy
- Yarrow
- Coltsfoot
- Alpine coltsfoot
- Cotton thistle
- Musk thistle
- Pyreanean thistle
- Pyrenean woolly thistle
- Brown-rayed knapweed
- Urospermum
- Blue/mountain lettuce
- Prickly lettuce
Goatsbeard

**Lily family**
- St Bruno’s lily
- St Bernard’s lily
- Asphodel
- Mountain onion
- Pyrenean snakeshead
- Martagon lily (leaves only)
- Spanish bluebell
- Spring squill
- Pyrenean squill
- Spiked star of Bethlehem
- Drooping star of Bethlehem
- Pyrenean hyacinth
- Lily of the valley
- Herb Paris
- Butcher’s broom

**Yam family**
- Black bryony

**Iris family**
- Gladiolus

**Orchids**
- Bee orchid
- Early purple orchid
- Early purple orchid with very dark flowers
- Burnt-tip orchid
- Elder-flowered orchid
- Broad-leaved marsh orchid
- Common spotted orchid
- Heath spotted orchid
- Frog orchid
- Fragrant orchid
- Narrow-leaved helleborine
- Lesser butterfly orchid
- Greater butterfly orchid
- Common twayblade

**Ferns**
- Bracken
- Moonwort
- Parsley fern
- Beech fern
- Maidenhair spleenwort
- Forked spleenwort
- Wall rue
- Black spleenwort
- Rustyback fern
- Lady fern
- Holly fern
- Soft shield fern
- Male fern
- Scaly male fern
- Broad buckler fern
- Limestone fern
- Common polypody

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Tragopogon pratensis

Paradisea liliastrum
- Anthericum liliago
- Asphodelus albus
- Allium montanum
- Fritillaria pyrenaica
- Lilium martagon
- Endymion hispanicus
- Scilla verna
- Scilla liliohyacinthus
- Ornithogalum pyrenaicum
- Ornithogalum nutans
- Hyacinthus amethystinus
- Convallaria majalis
- Paris quadrifolia
- Ruscus aculeatus

Tamus communis

Gladiolus illyricus

Ophrys apifera
- Orchis mascula
- Orchis mascula subsp hispanica
- Orchis ustulata
- Dactylorhiza sambucina
- Dactylorhiza majalis
- Dactylorhiza fushii
- Dactylorhiza maculata
- Coeloglossum viride
- Gymnadenia conopsea
- Cephalanthera longifolia
- Platanthera bifolia
- Platanthera chlorantha
- Listera ovata

Pteridium aquilinum
- Botrychium lunaria
- Cryptogramma crispa
- Phegopteris connectilis
- Asplenium trichomanes
- Asplenium septentrionale
- Asplenium ruta-muraria
- Asplenium adiantum-nigrum
- Asplenium ceterach
- Athrium filix-femina
- Polystichum lonchitis
- Polystichum setiferum
- Dryopteris filix-mas
- Dryopteris affinis
- Dryopteris dilatata
- Blechnum spicant
- Polypodium vulgare