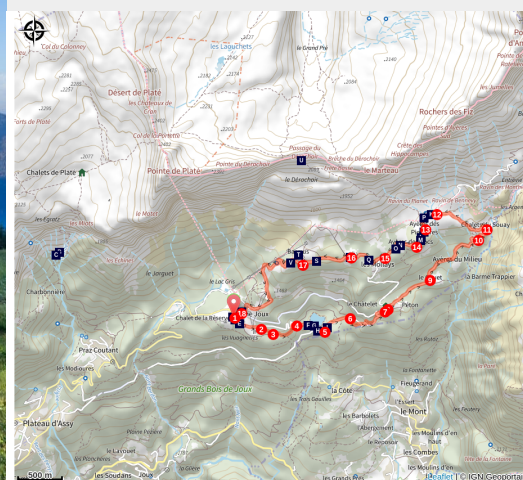


# Ayeres' grand loop

Réserve Naturelle de Passy - Passy



Lever de soleil sur le Mt Blanc depuis le Grand tour des Ayères (Julien Heuret - CEN 74)



*An easy hike through mountain forest and high meadows, with Mont Blanc looming on the horizon*

Initially, the trail immerses you in the forest, featuring the charming Lac Vert. Then the route climbs higher, revealing alpine hamlets that are a testament to the pastoral life of yesteryear. The route then takes you across a panoramic view of Mont-Blanc before plunging back into the forest on a wide track.

## Useful information

Practice : Summer hike

Duration : 3 h

Length : 8.6 km

Trek ascent : 402 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Boucle

Themes : Fauna, Pastoralism

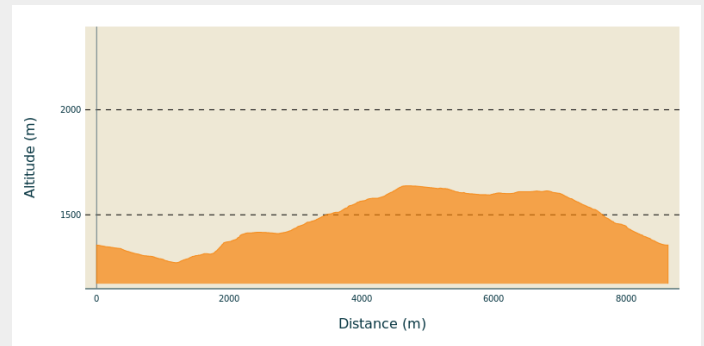
# Trek

**Departure** : Maison de la Réserve naturelle de Passy

**Arrival** : Maison de la Réserve naturelle de Passy

**Cities** : 1. Passy

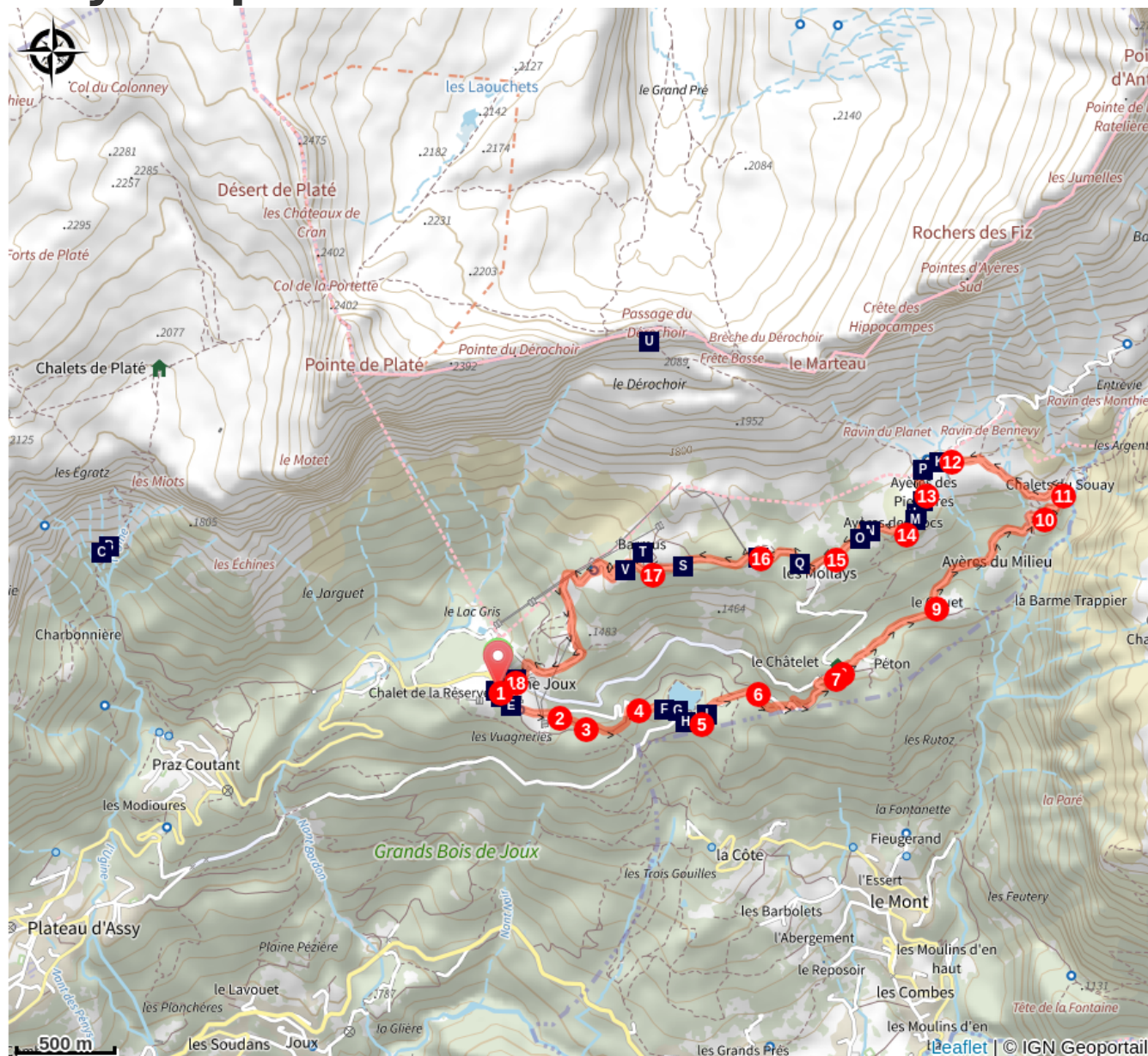
## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1272 m Max elevation 1638 m

Depart from in front of the Maison de la Réserve naturelle de Passy. Take the paved road towards Lac Vert. Take the path on the right between the tree houses. Head towards Lac Vert. Turn right onto the paved road towards Lac Vert. Marker 93. Take the trail towards the Châtelet d'Ayères refuge. Marker 159 Stay on the trail towards the Châtelet d'Ayères refuge. Take the trail to the right towards the Châtelet d'Ayères refuge. Marker 95. Pass the refuge and head towards Col et Lac d'Anterne, Lac de Pormenaz. Marker 161. Stay on the trail towards Col et Lac d'Anterne, Lac de Pormenaz. Marker 162. Stay on the trail towards the Chalets du Souay, Lac de Pormenaz. At the Chalets du Souay, stay on the trail towards the Chalets des Ayères des Pierrières. Marker 97. Head towards the chalets des Ayères des Pierrières, Plaine-Joux. Marker 121. Go through the hamlet of the Chalets des Ayères des Pierrières. Stay on the trail towards Plaine-Joux. Marker 17. Stay on the trail straight ahead towards Plaine-Joux. Marker 16. Stay on the straight track towards Plaine-Joux. Stay on the trail straight ahead towards Plaine-Joux. Marker 103. Head towards the Maison de la réserve naturelle. Marker 102.

# On your path...



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  La Maison de la Réserve (A)                 |  Golden Eagle cainism (B)                        |
|  Alpine ibex (C)                             |  The mont Blanc (D)                              |
|  History of Plaine-Joux (E)                  |  The Common Minnow and the Common Chub (F)       |
|  The common Toad (G)                         |  The Grass Snake (H)                             |
|  Dragonflies (I)                             |  The alpine cabin (J)                            |
|  The history of the Passy nature reserve (K) |  Architecture of alpine cabins (L)               |
|  The 'Ayères' (M)                            |  The Downy Birch ( <i>Betula pubescens</i> ) (N) |

# All useful information

## Animaux acceptés

Votre chien est autorisé dans cette zone d'espace naturel. Il est conseillé de le tenir en laisse. À l'approche d'un troupeau, il est obligatoire de lui mettre une laisse. Par sa présence, son odeur et ses déjections, votre chien peut perturber la biodiversité. Sa divagation dans la nature peut avoir des conséquences lourdes pour la faune sauvage et les troupeaux (transmission de germes, stress de la faune sauvage, destruction des couvées au sol). Les chiens sont interdits en cœur de parcs nationaux et dans la plupart des réserves naturelles.

## Advices

Always exercise caution and plan ahead when hiking. Asters, CEN 74 cannot be held responsible for any accident or incident that may occur on this trail.

## How to come ?

### Transports

Bus SAT Mont-Blanc L85

### Access

Get to the Passy Plaine-Joux resort via the D43 road. Car park at the entrance to the resort. Bus line L85 (SAT Mont-Blanc).



# On your path...

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## La Maison de la Réserve (A)

The exhibition and information office Maison de la Réserve naturelle de Passy is located in Plaine-Joux and welcomes you during the school holidays. The permanent exhibition about fauna, flora and landscapes will open the doors to the nature reserve. You may find answers to some of your questions here and can admire the wild species hidden in nature. If the Maison de la Réserve Naturelle is closed, don't worry, go up to the passageway. There is permanent free access to information about former (geological times) and present landscapes, the wonders of biodiversity, and the great challenges of the mountains of the future (water, glaciers, global warming...).

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74

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## Golden Eagle cainism (B)

Two chicks will hatch from their eggs just a few days apart in their rock wall nest. Only one will have a chance of surviving: the weaker one will be eliminated by the stronger one! In biology, this behaviour is called "cainism". It is a common phenomenon among daytime birds of prey, part of a species survival strategy that selects the strongest offspring from birth to increase their chances of reaching maturity. It's a huge undertaking for the parents to feed a ravenous hatchling, which can grow from 100g at birth to 5kg by the time it flies!

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74

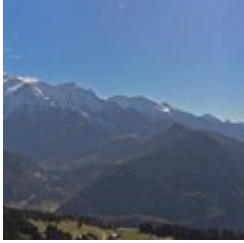
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## Alpine ibex (C)

The Alpine ibex is not particularly shy, especially compared with the chamois, with which it often shares its territory. Unlike most other mountain species, it remains at high altitudes even when winter and snow are approaching. It then heads for the ridges and snow-free areas where it can more easily find the grasses on which it feeds. This search for food takes a lot of energy. So, if you come across one, don't approach it and let it move away at its own pace so that it doesn't expend its energy unnecessarily, especially in winter.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



## The mont Blanc (D)

Under the snow and glaciers, two major rocks form the Mont-Blanc Massif: the sharp edges and highest peaks are made of very hard granite (from left to right: Chamonix Needles, including the Aiguille du Midi, Mont Blanc du Tacul, Mont Maudit, Mont Blanc summit), while the rounder, softer parts are made of gneiss (from left to right: Dôme du Goûter, Aiguille du Goûter, Aiguille de Bionnassay....). These two so-called crystalline rocks come from the Earth's molten core.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



## History of Plaine-Joux (E)

From woodland to mountain pasture, Plaine-Joux has not always been a ski resort. Its very name, which means "forest on a flat landscape", bears witness to this. As early as the 1930s, the residents of Passy were enjoying skiing on this site blessed with an exceptional panoramic view. It was around 1965 that it officially became a municipal ski resort. Today, Plaine-Joux remains a popular family resort for skiing, hiking, paragliding... or just admiring the scenery.

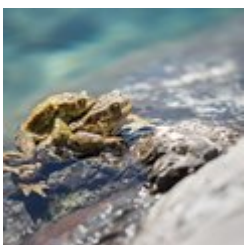
Attribution : Lucie Rousselot - CEN 74



## The Common Minnow and the Common Chub (F)

The minnow is very common in highly oxygenated waters. The reason for its presence in high-altitude lakes is that trout fishing is common there. It is used as bait by anglers, which has enabled this species to spread to mountain lakes. The chub is a fairly large fish, widespread in France. It is an omnivore, meaning it eats everything. In many European countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, it is a major culinary delicacy.

Attribution : @JLFouquer



## The common Toad (G)

Kissing a toad and turning it into Prince Charming is a myth! You should never touch this protected species, which is vulnerable to the many diseases that humans can transmit to it. Instead, look into its eyes to see its horizontal pupil and orange iris. You can also see its parotoid glands at the back of its head. These are used to excrete a venom called "bufotoxin" to ward off any predators. The toad is a completely different species from the frog, living for the most part in the forest, out of the water, and only coming back to the water during the breeding season!

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



## The Grass Snake (H)

A semi-aquatic species, it is found mainly in wetlands, but also in drier areas where it is able to prey on amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders and newts). Like all reptiles, it is a protected species! It can be recognised by its round pupils, its olive-grey skin and its double black and white or yellow neck. Its other distinctive feature: when it feels to be in danger, it spits out a foul-smelling liquid and then plays dead, revealing its two-coloured belly in the pattern of a piano keyboard!

Attribution : @NicolasPerrouchet

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## Dragonflies (I)

Odonates, more commonly known as dragonflies, belong to the insect family. They undergo two stages in their lives: a "larval" phase, which is aquatic, followed by a terrestrial phase, which marks adulthood. Dragonflies are predators: they are carnivores, feeding on different types of prey depending on their life stage. They also prey on other insects. Their habitat is strongly influenced by climatic conditions, and any change will have a major impact on their numbers. The destruction of their habitat, wetlands, is one of the main threats to dragonflies.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74

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## The alpine cabin (J)

The alpine cabine is a small building which, gattered with others, forms a small hamlet.

These constructions were originally intended for the organization of agricultural life in the mountains. These cabins were used in the summer to shelter the shepherds and their family. They were also used for milking and the production of cheese and other dairy products.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



## The history of the Passy nature reserve (K)

In the 1970s, the wealth of natural areas in Haute-Savoie was the subject of much interest. As developers grew increasingly ambitious and numerous tourist developments were planned, people began to raise concerns. The French government decided to create 9 national nature reserves. In 1974, the Aiguilles Rouges national nature reserve was created, followed by the Sixt-Fer à Cheval/Passy nature reserve in 1977. Between these two protected natural areas lay a small portion of land, which became the Passy nature reserve in 1980.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



## Architecture of alpine cabins (L)

Some of the mountain shepherd cabins are over a century old. The construction of sturdy high-altitude cabins is driven by its harsh immediate environment. Such cabins must feature stone walls and a spruce frame that can withstand deadly winter conditions!

Originally, the roof was covered with "tavaillons", a type of French traditional wooden tiles.

These buildings, used for farming in the summer months, were rudimentary and provided shelter for the shepherd and their family.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



## The 'Ayères' (M)

The word "Ahier" originally comes from the Roman dialect for sycamore maple. The terms "pierrières" and "roc" come from the many boulders that formed during the rockslides at Dérochoir, including the one in 1751 that killed 6 people and a few domestic animals. All these cottages were mountain chalets used for farming. Now they are used as vacation homes.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



## The Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) (N)

There are four species of birch in Europe, and the one growing here is the downy birch. There are many proven medicinal properties of its sap and bark, such as natural detox properties and its ability to remedy rheumatism, fatigue and allergies! In the reserve, the birches are monitored as part of the "Phénoclim" programme set up by CREA to measure the impact of climate change on the life cycle of plants.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74