



Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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French Pyrenees 8 – 15 June 2015

Holiday participants

Jan and John Croft
Christine and Oliver Dix
Daphne Seaton and Celia Bartram
Carol and Mike Mitchell
Joan and Peter Truckle

Leaders

Chris Durdin and Ivan Nethercoat

Our hosts in the French Pyrenees: Odile and Philippe Pujo, Hotel La Brèche de Roland
www.pyrenees-hotel-breche.com

Report by Ivan Nethercoat with additions by Chris Durdin.

Bird list by Ivan, others by Chris.

Photos by Ivan Nethercoat (IN), Chris Durdin (CD), Christine and Oliver Dix (C&OD)
and John and Jan Croft (JC), all taken during the holiday.

Cover: the pretty bits are Pyrenean thistle at Tourmalet, orchids and Tofield's asphodel at Gavarnie,
and moss campion at Troumouse (CD).

The group in the rain at Gèdre-Dessus (JC) shows how it sometimes was!



Above: the Brèche de Roland, from the Hotel La Brèche de Roland (CD).
The cloud is a reminder of the mixed weather this year.

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 and some additional funds in the charity's account, and we were able to give €1000 (about £769) to the LPO's Gwenaëlle Plet in Gèdre.

Including a donation earlier this year to the LPO in the Camargue, this gives us a running total for donations to LPO of £22,733 since 1991. As at June 2015, the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was £101,743.

Daily diary

June 8 – travel to Gèdre

A later flight than previous years brought us down into Lourdes airport in hot mid-afternoon heat, a welcome change from a cool UK but ominous clouds lurked over the mountains we were about to drive towards. After collecting the vehicles we set off on the hour's drive to the hotel. The dark clouds soon produced heavy rain, which turned to marble-sized hail – *la grêle* in French, we learnt – and strong wind. It was the loudest and wettest journey to the hotel that the drivers had experienced. We had a short stop not far from the hotel and fortunately by the time we arrived there the rain and hail was over. As well as stretching legs and getting a feel for the area that was to be home for the next week, this unassuming lay-by allows some of the best views of the spectacular Pyrenean saxifrage, with its impressive spikes of white flowers just a few feet above the road. Black-veined moths fluttered among yellow rattle, a six-spot burnet moth drifted by and those in 'bus 1' showed the others a 'passenger' they had rescued in the form of a hummingbird hawkmoth.

We moved on to the hotel with time to rest and unpack before the first of many excellent meals.

June 9 – around Gèdre and Lac des Gloriettes

We set off this morning on foot. The beauty of our base is that we can start this by walking out of the door and around the village.

As we gathered outside the hotel, Chris spotted an Oberthur's skipper on a downpipe. As we watched it sunning itself in the heat of a sunny Pyrenean morning, Oliver looked to the sky and to our surprise found a young lammergeier drifting overhead. This all-dark bird was then joined by a paler adult. Not a bad start and we hadn't even got off the hotel drive yet. A few yards away one of the meadows runs alongside the road, giving a great introduction to some of the common flora – yellow rattle, bladder campion and small scabious.



Looking down on the Hotel La Brèche de Roland,
Le Grotte (pink) and the Héas River (JC)



Griffon vulture diving (JC)

There are two rivers that come together in Gèdre. The Héas is crossed by a bridge just a few yards from the hotel and was home to a dipper this morning, while in the trees above serins trilled their welcome. Walking on to the second bridge over the Gavarnie – the *Gave de Gavarnie ou Pau* on maps – an adult lammergeier drifted overhead again, followed by a buzzard, but a flurry of aerial activity on the skyline also caught our eye as a kestrel mobbed a golden eagle which eventually perched on the ridge and allowed a distant but clear telescope view. This second bridge is known by Honeyguide as 'dipper bridge' and, sure enough, after a few moments waiting one bird flew beneath the bridge and landed downstream.

Chimney sweeper moths drifted across the meadows as we climbed gently up to the higher levels of the village and all around was the chirping of field crickets and a general 'buzz' of insects, abundant in the mixture of grasses and meadow plants. And again, lammergeiers appeared, two adults this time, much lower than before. Wall lizards basked in the strong sun by the roadside as black redstarts perched at eye level on chimney tops alongside white wagtail.

As we started the path down back to the hotel, a firecrest put on a brief show and then it was a welcome stop in the garden of the bar Le Grotte for drinks. We admired the ramonda growing on the rocks above the rushing river and the menu's eccentric translation into English (for example, 'low quotations of natural ox', 'wings of a cristallized duck' and 'throat and its sauce crématé in the curry'). Back at the hotel we collected packed lunches and then took a short drive to the Lac des Gloriettes.

The hot sun and clear skies gave way to darker clouds and rumbles of thunder as we set off on the circuit of the lake, a man-made reservoir to supply the water for the hydro scheme in Gèdre. It's held back by an impressive dam across the valley that also provides easy level access to the other side of the valley and a very pleasant walk, 1.3 km according to the sign but we suspect about three times that distance in reality.

A male wheatear appeared briefly on a wall by a building, disappeared and was then replaced by a beautiful male rock thrush carrying food. Green tiger beetles ran in front of us on the path and in the grass a pearl-bordered fritillary posed for cameras. Up in the skies a raven flew up into the cliffs and proceeded to harass a lammergeier. A golden eagle then appeared and flew below as the lammergeier dropped its meal which the eagle then caught in mid air, turning onto its back in a typical food pass fashion, although far from typical between species. Whether this was just a very quick thinking eagle or whether it had learned to intercept lammergeiers bone-dropping we don't know.



Ramonda (IN)



Pearl-bordered fritillary (CD)



Spring gentians (CD)

Farther round and young southern smooth snakes gave brief views to a few of the leading group members while a Camberwell beauty was more obliging for everyone. We took in the perfumed pink flowers of garland flower and unscented alpenroses. Onwards and the narrow path on the edge of the lake led us alongside fragrant and marsh orchids, saxifrages and stands of tall asphodels before opening into more alpine pasture alongside the river. Greater butterwort and birdseye primroses gave shelter to young frogs in the damper patches, alpine choughs broke the skyline and mazarine and small blue butterflies took nutrients from the soil by the river.

Across the bridge and onto the return section, the thunder grew louder. Large stands of globe flowers looked impressive by the river and spring and trumpet gentians formed blue patches against the rocks and grass. In the background was the constant whistling of marmots, seen by a few but tricky to spot here. As the cloud came down it looked like we would get very wet but we were lucky and, a few drops apart, there was still no rain. We got to the vans without a drenching; others out at Gavarnie were not so lucky!

June 10 – Gèdre-Dessus

We awoke to heavy rain that continued for much of the day. Ivan and Mike left early to take the Renault minibus to a garage in Sassis, near Luz St Sauveur: as we suspected, a top-up so the brake fluid reservoir was overfull stopped a warning that was coming on when the minibus was on steep slopes, soon sorted and without charge.

The threesome from Naturetrek staying at the hotel – Alan and Heidimarie with leader David Tattersfield – were also wondering what to do on a wet day, so we invited them to join us on a walk to Gèdre-Dessus (upper Gèdre). Wet weather gear was donned and off we went for the short stroll up the hill from the square. The flora here is different to other areas, with a more Mediterranean feel, and the high views back down the valley put the village in context. Nettle-leaved bellflower on walls was followed by a range of flowers on the limestone slopes: the sermountain *Laserpitium siler*; the big, silvery-grey seedpods of *Fibigia*; Mediterranean spurge; sheets of three rock-roses (or four if you count a red-flowered subspecies); plus round-leaved restharrow, yellow woundwort, wild candytuft and Pyrenean hemp-nettle, to name just a selection. A walk up a narrow path and through a gate revealed the strangest plant of all: cone knapweed, which looks like a pine cone growing close to the ground.

We descended the steps and had coffee back at the hotel. We then decided to try Gavarnie for lunch as it was still wet. After packed lunches eaten in the minibuses we had an even wetter botanising stroll before retreating for a hot drink in a café. Some did a little shopping before we called it a day and returned to Gèdre, where we watched a DVD film about wallcreepers. Better weather forecast for tomorrow!

June 11 – Col du Tourmalet

And better weather it was – so we were up and out for our usual prompt departure at nine o'clock to head for the Col du Tourmalet, well known by some as one of the highest passes on the Tour de France. Our route



Snowfinch (IN)

took us back down the valley to Luz St Sauveur and then via Barèges to start the long climb to 2115 m. Part way up the road there is a ski station, which was the farthest point we could reach two years ago, when there was a lot of snow in May. Chris in the lead minibus drew in here, having seen white flashes of snowfinches. We stopped to investigate and, sure enough, here was a splendid snowfinch feeding on the open ground a few feet away. After watching the bird for some time it was clear that it was nesting in one of the ski-lift pylons. Untroubled by us, it kept flying up and across the meadow and back to the pylon, showing the extensive white on the wings – a quite stunning sight, especially against the light. White wagtail and black redstart were also feeding on the ground and a high griffon patrolled the skies, while a kestrel hunted over the edge of an ice sheet far away.

Having passed many determined cyclists we reached the car park at the summit and walked to a small café overlooking the valley on the other side. The café was closed today but the walk was still productive with alpine and red-billed chough, kestrel, water pipit, wheatear, black redstart and two more pairs of snowfinches nesting in ski metalwork. The mountain pastures had sheets of white Pyrenean buttercups and occasional clumps of pink rock-jasmine. A startled marmot gave us a long view of his fast disappearing rear end as he scuttled down and across the grassy meadow below us.

We took a short walk past the statue of the cyclist to look down the route we had taken to the top, and then we set off down again. The Glère Valley is only a short distance away yet it feels a very different place, with grazing horses and cattle on open grassland in between pine and beech woodland that provide a rich area for wildlife. Firstly though, we had a 'recharge' in the café Chez Louisiette before eating picnic lunches, and were entertained by our hostess chasing away a herd of cows, including throwing her broom at a bull. After lunch, some went their own way and others potted in the rougher and sometimes wet areas of pasture that lead, rather like a golf fairway, into the valley. Oliver and Christine set off on a different route and were rewarded with views of citril finch, and Joan reported finding woodruff in the woods. The main group enjoyed two huge wood ant nests and watching impressive medicinal leeches alongside tadpoles in a small pond. In the wetter areas of grassland there were the tiny but distinctive leaves of round-leaved sundews – they took some finding – plus Tofield's asphodel, bog violet and scores of orchids.



Round-leaved sundew (IN)

Distant rumblings of thunder gradually grew louder as a storm got closer and our visit was shortened somewhat as we took refuge in the café. Back at the hotel, the storm continued and Odile told us there was a 24 hour weather warning across 24 *départements*, with people being advised not to go out! Despite this, Gwenaëlle Plet from LPO came to give us an after-dinner talk about the work of LPO and the conservation of the lammergeier and other birds in this part of France and beyond. Her enthusiasm overcame any gaps in her English, with Christine chipping in with useful translations. Finally, Gwenaëlle received the conservation contribution from group members, this year topped up with other money from the Honeyguide Trust bringing the total donation to €1000 (see page 2).

June 12 – Saugué and Ossoue Valley

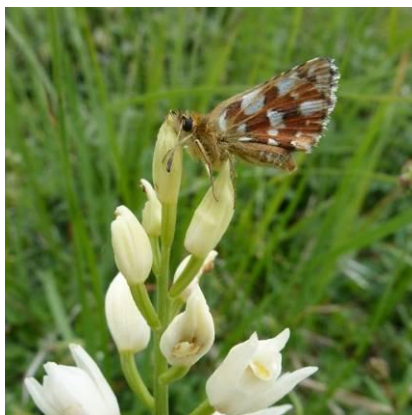
We awoke to a bright morning and abandoned wet weather plans for charades or one of Chris's talks. Instead we set off to one of the nearest sites – the plateau at Saugué where the journey is always productive and dramatic. A stop by the road only a few minutes after leaving Gèdre gives great views back over the village and also a wonderful meadow and roadside verge. Being cooler this morning the butterflies were mostly absent at this point but fly, pyramidal and greater butterfly orchids made the stop worthwhile.

Farther on up the hill and we paused for a similar mix of dramatic landscape and wild flowers including elder-flowered orchid, this time mixed with a very obliging and aesthetically posed marmot and a tree pipit.

Where the road ends a path continues along the contour and gives a superb view of the Cirque de Gavarnie. We walked toward the cirque alongside meadows with sheets of horned violet, with alpine asters and burnt-tip orchids on drier patches. A red-underwing skipper posed beautifully on a narrow-leaved helleborine ... how apt it would have been if had been on one of the many butterfly orchids.



Six-spot burnet moths on a round-headed rampion (CD)



Red-underwing skipper underside and upperside, on narrow-leaved helleborine (CD)



There were singing whinchat and corn bunting and the sun had brought out numerous clouded Apollos and Piedmont ringlets. Clouded yellow, painted lady and small tortoiseshell added to the mix and there was the sound of a calling quail, apparently very close but elusive.

Lunch was taken at 'butterfly corner', a short drive back down the road, where the minibuses caught up with those who'd taken the opportunity to walk. Here were several green hairstreaks, purple-edged copper and burnet companion moths but perhaps the stars were three small elephant hawkmoths, freshly emerged and posing very obligingly for the cameras.

After lunch, the weather once again closed in but we persevered and continued onwards to the Ossoue valley. First stop was a convenient pull in beneath impressive cliffs at the head of the valley. A rock bunting was singing and perched on top of a pine. Above us four griffon vultures perched on the cliff and soon took to the air, followed by an adult lammergeier which circled the cliffs and perched for a while. A man from the National Park stopped for a chat: he was in the valley to monitor vultures and, looking through a 'scope, noted a lammergeier taking a drink.



Purple-edged copper (C&OD) and small elephant hawkmoth (JC) (the blue is Chris's shirt)



Top: Black vanilla orchid (CD)
Left: Burnt-tip orchid (JC)

We took a drive further down the spectacular Ossoue valley as yet again the weather closed in. *Narcissus pseudonarcissus bicolor* daffodils caught Celia's eye and alongside these, found when she clambered up to take a photograph, were tiny rush-leaved narcissi. A search revealed a few black vanilla orchids poking out of the grass in damper areas, while alongside the river broad-leaved marsh orchids numbered in the hundreds.

The rain got harder and we drove on to the end of the valley but eventually retreated to the hotel for tea. A good day, just a little damp at times!

June 13 – Cirque de Troumouse

Again a calm and dry morning, though cool, and John found a crested tit behind the hotel before breakfast.



Isard (IN)

One of the special sites for both its scenery and wildlife is the Cirque de Troumouse, located in the Pyrenees World Heritage Site and a short drive from the hotel. Our route followed the Héas river valley, past the turn for the Lac des Gloriettes and on and up into high pasture. On route we stopped by the Auberge du Maillet, though not for coffee ... the café wasn't yet open and anyway the aim was to be out while the weather was good. Here the view was not only spectacular but enhanced by isard, the Pyrenean chamois. At first they were hard to see but Oliver's sharp eyes spotted one way up on the mountainside, through the 'scope we noticed more alongside and then found one much lower down which allowed great views by all of us. There was also our first *Daphne mezereon* – our third Daphne species of the week to enjoy with ... Daphne!

Back in the vehicles we completed the short but steep drive to the edge of the cirque. Here the wind was cool but the clouds high as we set off across the meadows. The cirque here is huge with 3000m peaks forming the border with Spain. Crossing the meadows are several streams and there are numerous pools and damp areas of grass. On the drier areas gentians burst in blue patches and where the snow had last melted, Pyrenean buttercups formed white patches against the brown of sun-starved grass. We searched the first small streams and found Pyrenean brook newts, lurking under rocks and overhangs in calmer patches of water. These cold meadow streams are the only place this animal is found, part of the unique nature of the area.

Numerous paths cross the meadows to the scree of the cirque and we took a quiet and calm route to the right, weaving among large boulders and patches of rock with monkshood leaves preparing for spectacular autumn flowering. A tiny black vanilla orchid poked through the grass and Celia spotted "a rat" disappearing down a hole among a patch of rocks. This 'rat' was a snow vole, a common mammal of the area but wary and rarely seen.

Our point for turning back was an outcrop of rocks before the path dropped down to the scree. Here we waited and watched the tops of the rocks for alpine accentor but they appeared to elude us and the bulk of the group turned back. The stragglers however were lucky as suddenly two birds started singing and eventually one flew to 'our' outcrop and started feeding in among the grass. They gave great views in the 'scope but only for a few of us.

Back at the buses the temperature had cooled and the cloud was darker so we dropped down for picnics by the now open café, the Auberge du Maillet. It wasn't long before we went inside and hot chocolates were a popular choice as the rain came down again. It remained wet for the rest of the day. We drove up the road towards the Col de Tentes but poor weather, hail especially, meant it made sense not to go to the top. We descended, picked up the three brave walkers from the group, and had an earlier than normal return to the hotel. Back at base, Odile told us that an '*alerte orange*' – amber alert weather warning – had been issued and we should expect more bad weather tomorrow.

June 14 – Gavarnie

So much for weather alerts: it was the best day of the week. Despite the wet evening it was again a bright and clear morning and ideal to return to Gavarnie to walk towards the cirque. We had the usual excellent breakfast and then it was off to the buses to make the most of the sunshine in the morning for the walk to the cirque. Some 45 minutes later we departed, having been delayed by a 'raptorfest'. Two golden eagles were harassed by kestrels, there were five griffon vultures and two lammergeiers, with one adult lammergeier in front of the hill ahead of us: it then perched and sunned itself on the hillside giving excellent 'scope views and an opportunity for a bit of iPhone video. As the excitement died down, two short-toed eagles flew over. At last, we could leave!

Gavarnie's cirque today looked bigger and closer than our previous somewhat gloomy visit and the sun was holding well so off we set. With the navigation straightforward, we split into three groups. Daphne and Celia walked to the high café and beyond. Christine and Oliver also walked on and, among other things, encountered a snake that from later examination of photos was an asp viper. We all met each other at times and shared sightings. As for the main group, above us on the crags griffon vultures and alpine choughs took to the air, though having enjoyed birds of prey back at Gèdre, we didn't linger. As well as the flower-filled meadows, small rockfaces were a delight with livelong saxifrages, ferns and ramonda in the crevices.

Where the path climbs, near some of the National Park's information signs, a tree pipit perched and a red-billed chough fed actively. A black-veined white butterfly rested on one of the many common spotted orchids, now added to the list. In among the pine trees we tried to see crested tit and while they didn't show the detour from the path was rewarded with a lovely patch of lily-of-the-valley and the surprise plant of the day, edelweiss. 'Small and white' ... we couldn't resist singing.



Edelweiss (CD) and chough (JC)

The weather was still kind for this walk, clean and bright (like the edelweiss) and not too hot so we continued up toward the hotel/café that overlooks the cirque. As the path rose, the view changed again as we weaved among rocks and trees. This last climb is always a little taxing and best done when the café is open as the reward of a great view is much enhanced with a chair and a glass of shandy. From the terrace we looked across the last part of the route and up toward *la grande cascade*, the highest waterfall in France. For the eight of us in this group, this was our stopping point but other brave souls continued to the base of the pretty waterfall. We watched and had lunch before making our way back down the path.

We found firecrest, garden warbler, spring squill and wood white butterfly on the route down. A slight detour across the river took us to a meadow that is always rich and productive but this year especially so: hundreds of marsh orchids lined the streams with many fragrant and greater butterfly orchids, all against the magnificent backdrop of the cirque.

After soaking up this spectacle we again set off on the final part of the path back to a café in town. It was now mid-afternoon and the sun had stayed with us. As we neared Gavarnie it became cooler and we reunited with the rest of the group over tea, hot chocolate and coffee. The rain came down again but this time it didn't matter.

After dinner we shared the guitar and a few songs and at dusk, armed with a bat detector, some walked to the confluence of the two rivers. There were certainly common pipistrelles and probably another bat species at 45kHz.

June 15 – Bué valley, and home

There was much excitement before breakfast as we finally added blue tit to the list!

It was another dry morning, thank goodness. The road we took to Saugué also forks to a high meadow at Bué, taking us alongside the hills and meadows we see from the hotel and then up into wooded hillside and ending in a steep meadow. The meadow held a secret: delicate frog orchids, hard to see among the grass until you see one and then more appear as your eyes get the idea of what to look for.



Frog orchid, yellow pea and Pyrenean toadflax (CD) all at Bué

We set off down the road to explore the woodland plants beside the track but first paused to watch a honey buzzard flying up the valley, then perching for a while and flying on. Yellow Welsh poppies, valerians, yellow pea, wood saxifrages, alpine and Pyrenean toadflaxes and many more plants lined roadsides or grew on banks. Some had walked on fairly quickly but all bar one were picked up as Chris and I retrieved the minibuses and drove back towards Gèdre. We stopped on the way back for pictures above the village before driving back to the hotel, where Peter was enjoying a beer having walked all the way. We had lunch in the meadow behind the hotel before saying farewell to Odile, our excellent hostess for the week.

Keen eyes on the journey back to the airport kept trying to add new birds and succeeded with magpie, little egret, swift, peregrine and grey heron interspersed with numerous black kites. Once the slow process through bag-drop was done it wasn't long before we were on the plane, though take-off was delayed on account of heavy rain. We returned safely and only a little late to Stansted.

Thank you for being a great group and shrugging off inclement weather in style.

Ivan and Chris

The best bits

After the checklists on the final evening, we collected holiday highlights, and here they are:

Christine	Spectacular scenery; orchids and gentians; snowfinches in flight.
Oliver	The sheer abundance of flowers; lammergeier views; citril finch.
Carol	Orchids; thyme-leaved sandwort (Chris took her to see it on the hotel's steps); Mike's conversion to wildlife watching.
Mike	The 'wonderful feel' to the holiday; the meadows; Ivan's photographic instruction.
Jan	Lammergeier; snowfinch, St Bernard's lily; fairy foxglove; the walk at Gavarnie.
John	The scenery; lammergeier; Ivan's photography help; snowfinches; alpine accentor.
Joan	Lammergeier; the LPO talk; snowfinches; flower meadows; black-veined white; sunbathing marmot.
Peter	Snowfinches; marmots; breathtaking scenery.
Celia	Meadows; yellow wood violet; gentians; 'Judy Garland' flower; Ivan and her camera's exposure button; 'the rat' (you have to imagine that in a New Zealand accent), actually a snow vole.
Daphne	Awesome scenery; carpets of Pyrenean buttercups; wonderful French cuisine.
Ivan	Lammergeier; flower-rich meadows with lots of insects that you so rarely see at home.
Chris	Snowfinches; edelweiss; the meadow at Gavarnie.



View from the Col de Tourmalet (IN)

On the final evening we also swapped a few lammergeier limericks, and here's one by Mike:

A young lammergeier called Fritz
 Said eating old bones is the pits
 So he made lots of money
 With some tour guides called Honey
 Now he dines every night at the Ritz.

WILDLIFE LISTS

BIRDS	
Grey heron	On route to airport
Little egret	On route to airport
Honey buzzard	Possible at airport, and one seen at Bué
Black kite	Many seen on route from the airport
Red kite	On route as we got into the higher ground and at Gèdre
Lammergeier	Seen on all days except one
Griffon vulture	Seen most days
Short-toed eagle	Two hunting above Gèdre, seen on two separate occasions
Golden eagle	Adult pair around Gèdre, a younger bird at Lac de Gloriettes was seen intercepting a lammergeier food drop
Common buzzard	Seen on most days
Kestrel	Pair in Gèdre, mobbing golden eagle
Peregrine	Just one sighting, near airport
Swift	On route to airport
Alpine swift	At Gavarnie
Quail	Heard at Saugué
Feral pigeon	At Gavarnie
Woodpigeon	Seen on two days
Collared dove	At lower altitudes
Green woodpecker	Seen and heard in Gèdre, heard at Saugué
Great spotted woodpecker	Heard and seen near the hotel
Skylark	Heard at Saugué only
Swallow	On route to airport
House martin	Seen alongside crag martins in Gèdre
Crag martin	Seen daily; nesting in Gèdre
Tree pipit	Singing at Saugué and seen at Gavarnie
Water pipit	At all the higher altitude stops, feeding in snowmelt and wet areas of pasture
Grey wagtail	Gèdre, Gavarnie
White wagtail	Seen daily, and regular in Gèdre
Dipper	Gèdre and Gavarnie
Wren	Heard on several days
Dunnock	Around Gèdre, several in Val d'Estaubé
Alpine accentor	Two males singing at Cirque de Troumouse
Robin	Heard or seen on most days
Black redstart	Daily in Gèdre and at most locations
Whinchat	Saugué
Northern wheatear	At all the high altitude stops
Rock thrush	Adult male with food at Lac de Gloriettes; near Tourmalet; descent from Troumouse
Blackbird	Daily in Gèdre
Song thrush	Heard around Gèdre
Mistle thrush	In the Glère valley near Chez Louisiette and two other days
Blackcap	Heard daily, seen opposite the hotel
Whitethroat	Gavarnie
Garden warbler	Heard and seen in Gavarnie valley, near the hotel
Northern chiffchaff	Singing in the meadow area in the Gavarnie valley
Great tit	Recorded almost every day, feeding young behind hotel
Blue tit	Gèdre, final day!
Coal tit	In the pine woods at Gavarnie and at Gèdre-Dessus
Crested tit	Reported from behind the hotel
Nuthatch	At Gèdre and by car parking area at Gavarnie
Red-backed shrike	A male near Saugué
Jay	Seen on most days
Raven	Frequent over Gèdre and at most stops
Carrion crow	Gavarnie, Gèdre, not often seen
Red-billed chough	At Saugué and Gavarnie
Alpine chough	Flocks at Saugué, Val d'Estaubé, smaller numbers than previous years
Maggie	Just on the airport journeys
Chaffinch	Seen daily
Linnet	Saugué, Ossoue
Serin	Seen daily
Citril finch	Two in meadow at Glère valley
Snowfinch	Nesting at Col du Tourmalet lower ski station and near the café at the top
House sparrow	Seen daily
Yellowhammer	Saugué and around the snow melt at Tourmalet
Rock bunting	Ossoue
Corn bunting	Saugué

MAMMALS

Alpine marmot Snow vole Soprano pipistrelle Isard Wild boar (rootings)

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Common frog Pyrenean brook newt Common wall lizard Southern smooth snake Asp viper



Asp viper (C&OD)



Young southern smooth snake (CD)

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail	Clouded Apollo	Painted lady	Small tortoiseshell
Camberwell beauty	Comma	Pearl-bordered fritillary	Heath fritillary
Meadow brown	Large wall brown	Piedmont ringlet	Small heath
Speckled wood	Large white	Small white	Wood white
Orange tip	Black-veined white	Brimstone	Clouded yellow
Common blue	Adonis blue	Mazarine blue	Small blue
Sooty copper	Purple-edged copper	Green hairstreak	Brown argus
Dingy skipper	Grizzled skipper	Oberthur's grizzled skipper	Red-underwing skipper

MOTHS

<i>Metaxmeste phrygialis</i>	Forester sp.	Lackey caterpillar
Chimney sweeper	6-spot burnet	Hummingbird hawkmoth
Small elephant hawkmoth	Black-veined moth	Burnet companion

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

<i>Hirudo medicinalis</i> medicinal leech	<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i> banded snail
<i>Helix aspersa</i> garden snail	<i>Arion ater</i> a large black slug
<i>Gryllus campestris</i> field cricket	<i>Libellula depressa</i> broad-bodied chaser
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i> four-spotted chaser	<i>Anechura bipunctata</i> an earwig
<i>Nepa cinerea</i> water scorpion	<i>Libelloides coccajus</i> an ascalaphid
<i>Graphosoma italicum</i> Italian shield bug	<i>Pyrhocoris apterus</i> fire-bug
<i>Cicindela campestris</i> green tiger-beetle	<i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i> 7-spot ladybird
<i>Phylloperla horticola</i> garden chafer	<i>Vespa crabro</i> hornet
<i>Bombus pascuorum</i> common carder-bee	<i>Eucera</i> sp. a long-horned bee
<i>Formica rufa</i> wood ant	<i>Tipula maxima</i> a crane-fly
<i>Gerris</i> sp. (probably pond skater)	



Clouded Apollo (IN)



Orange tip (JC)



Libelloides coccajus (JC)

FLOWERING PLANTS

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

Acer campestre
Acer pseudoplatanus

Aegopodium podagraria
Bupleurum falcatum
Conopodium pyrenaicum
Daucus carota
Eryngium bourgatii
Heracleum sphondylium ssp. *pyrenaicum*
Laserpitium siler
Myrrhis odorata
Peucedanum ostruthium

Vincetoxicum hirundinaria

Achilla millefolia
Adenostyles alliariae ssp. *pyrenaica*
Antennaria dioica
Aster alpinus
Bellis perennis
Carduus carlinoides
Carlina acanthifolia
Centaurea montana
Centaurea nigra
Cirsium eriophorum
Centaurea palustre
Hieracium lanatum
Hieracium pilosella
Homogyne alpina
Lactuca perennis
Lactuca serriola
Leontopodium alpinum
Leucanthemum (or *Tanacetum*) *corymbosum*
Leucanthemum vulgare
Leuzea conifera
Mycelis muralis
Petasites albus
Tragopogon pratensis
Tussilago farfara

Betula pendula

Echium vulgare
Myosotis alpina
Myosotis discolor
Pulmonaria officinalis

Arabis turrata
Cardamine amara
Cardamine impatiens
Cardamine raphanifolia
Cardamine resedifolia
Erysimum decumbens
Fibigia clypeata
Iberis amara

Buxus sempervirens

Campanula trachelium
Jasione montana
Phyteuma orbiculare
Phyteuma pyrenaicum

Lonicera periclymenum
Lonicera pyrenaicum
Sambucus ebulus
Sambucus nigra
Sambucus racemosa

Arenaria grandiflora
Arenaria serpyllifolia

Dicotyledons

Aceraceae

Field maple
Sycamore

Apiaceae

Ground elder
Sickle-leaved hare's-ear
Pyrenean pignut
Wild carrot
Pyrenean eryngo
Hogweed
A sermountain
Sweet cicely
Masterwort

Asclepiadaceae

Swallow-wort

Asteraceae

Yarrow
Adenostyles
Cat's-foot
Alpine aster
Daisy
Pyrenean thistle
Cardabelle (= *acanthus*-leaved carline thistle) NiF
Perennial cornflower
Black knapweed
Woolly thistle
Marsh thistle
Woolly hawkweed
Mouse-ear hawkweed
Alpine (=Purple) colt's-foot
Blue lettuce
Prickly lettuce NiF
Edelweiss
like a many-headed ox-eye daisy
Ox-eye daisy
Cone knapweed
Wall lettuce
White butterbur NiF
Goat's-beard
Colt's-foot NiF

Betulaceae

Silver birch

Boraginaceae

Viper's-bugloss
Alpine forget-me-not
Changing forget-me-not
Lungwort

Brassicaceae

Towercress
Large bittercress (purple-flowered form)
Narrow-leaved bittercress
Radish-leaved bittercress
Mignonette-leaved bittercress
a treacle-mustard
very silvery hairy, big oval pods, at Gèdre-Dessus NiF
Wild candytuft

Buxaceae

Box

Campanulaceae

Nettle-leaved bellflower
Sheep's-bit
Round-headed rampion
a spiked rampion with slaty blue flowers

Caprifoliaceae

Honeysuckle
Pyrenean honeysuckle
Dwarf elder
Elder
Alpine elder

Caryophyllaceae

Large-flowered sandwort
Thyme-leaved sandwort

Cerastium cerastoides
Dianthus deltoides
Dianthus monspessulanus
Gypsophila repens
Paronychia. polygonifolia
Silene acaulis
Silene alba
Silene dioica
Silene nutans
Silene vulgaris
Spergularia rubra
Stellaria holostea

Chenopodium bonus-henricus

Helianthemum apenninum
Helianthemum canum
Helianthemum nummularium
Helianthemum nummularium ssp. pyrenaicum

Hypericum nummularium
Hypericum perforatum

Corylus avellana

Sedum acre
Sedum album
Sempervivum tectorum

Cuscuta sp.

Knautia dipsacifolia
Scabiosa columbaria

Drosera rotundifolia

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi
Erica arborea
Rhododendron ferrugineum

Euphorbia amygdaloides
Euphorbia characias
Euphorbia cyparissias

Astragalus monspessulanus
Anthyllis vulneraria
Hippocrepis comosa
Lathyrus laevigatus
Lathyrus sp.
Lathyrus montanus
Lathyrus pratensis
Lotus (corniculatus) alpinus
Lotus corniculatus
Medicago sativa
Ononis natrix
Ononis rotundifolia
Robinia pseudacacia
Trifolium alpinum
Trifolium campestre
Trifolium incarnatum
Trifolium ochroleucon
Trifolium pratense
Trifolium repens
Vicia cracca
Vicia sepium

Castanea sativa
Fagus sylvatica
Quercus petraea
Quercus pubescens

Corydalis solida

Gentiana acaulis
Gentiana alpina
Gentiana verna

Starwort mouse-ear
Maiden pink
Fringed pink
Alpine gypsophila

Moss campion
White campion
Red campion
Nottingham catchfly
Bladder campion
Sand spurrey
Greater stitchwort

Chenopodiaceae

Good King Henry

Cistaceae

White rock-rose
Hoary rock-rose
Common rock-rose
with pink flowers

Clusiaceae (Hypericaceae)

Western St. John's-wort NiF
Perforate St. John's-wort

Corylaceae

Hazel

Crassulaceae

Biting stonecrop
White stonecrop
Common houseleek

Cuscutaceae

Dodder NiF

Dipsacaceae

Wood scabious
Small scabious

Droseraceae

Round-leaved sundew NiF

Ericaceae

Bearberry
Tree heather NiF
Alpenrose

Euphorbiaceae

Wood spurge
Large Mediterranean spurge
Cypress spurge

Fabaceae

Montpelier milk-vetch
Kidney vetch
Horseshoe vetch
Yellow pea
an everlasting pea
Bitter-vetch
Meadow vetchling
Alpine birdsfoot-trefoil
Birdsfoot-trefoil
Lucerne (=alfalfa)
Large yellow restharrow
Round-leaved restharrow
False acacia
Alpine clover
Hop trefoil
Crimson clover
Sulphur clover
Red clover
White clover
Tufted vetch
Bush vetch

Fagaceae

Sweet chestnut
Beech
Sessile oak
Downy/white oak

Fumariaceae

Tuberous corydalis

Gentianaceae

Trumpet gentian
Southern gentian
Spring gentian

Erodium cicutarium
Geranium molle
Geranium phaeum
Geranium pusillum
Geranium pyrenaicum
Geranium robertianum
Geranium rotundifolium
Geranium sanguineum
Geranium sylvaticum

Ramonda myconi

Globularia nudicaulis
Globularia repens

Acinos alpinus
Ajuga reptans
Galeopsis pyrenaica
Lamium galaeobdolon
Lamium maculatum
Prunella grandiflora
Salvia verbenaca
Stachys recta
Teucrium pyrenaicum
Thymus serpyllum

Pinguicula grandiflora

Linum catharticum

Viscum album

Malva moschata
Malva neglecta

Fraxinus excelsior

Orobancha gracilis

Oxalis acetosella

Chelidonium majus
Meconopsis cambrica
Papaver rhoeas

Plantago media

Polygala vulgaris

Polygonum viviparum
Rumex acetosa
Rumex acetosella
Rumex scutatus

Androsace (carnea) laggeri
Androsace chamaejasme
Lysimachia nemorum
Primula elatior
Primula farinosa
Primula integrifolia
Primula veris

Aconitum anthora
Aconitum napellus
Aquilegia vulgaris
Caltha palustris
Clematis vitalba
Helleborus foetidus
Helleborus viridis
Hepatica nobilis
Ranunculus acris
Ranunculus bulbosus
Ranunculus pyrenaicus
Ranunculus repens
Thalictrum aquilegifolium
Trollius europeaeus

Geraniaceae

Common storksbill
Dovesfoot cranesbill
Dusky cranesbill
Small-flowered cranesbill
Pyrenean cranesbill
Herb Robert
Round-leaved cranesbill
Bloody cranesbill
Wood cranesbill

Gesneriaceae

Ramonda

Globulariaceae

Leafless-stemmed globularia
Creeping globularia

Lamiaceae

Alpine calamint
Bugle
Pyrenean hemp-nettle
Yellow archangel
Spotted dead-nettle
Large self-heal
Wild clary
Yellow woundwort
Pyrenean germander
Wild thyme

Lentibulariaceae

Large-flowered butterwort

Linaceae

Purging (= fairy) flax

Loranthaceae

Mistletoe

Malvaceae

Musk mallow
Dwarf mallow

Oleaceae

Ash

Orobanchaceae

Slender broomrape

Oxalidaceae

Wood-sorrel NiF

Papaveraceae

Greater celandine
Welsh poppy
Common poppy

Plantaginaceae

Hoary plantain

Polygalaceae

Common milkwort

Polygonaceae

Alpine bistort
Common sorrel
Heath sorrel
French sorrel (= Rubble dock)

Primulaceae

Pink rock-jasmine
Ciliate rock-jasmine
Yellow pimpernel
Oxlip
Birdseye primrose
Entire-leaved primrose
Cowslip

Ranunculaceae

Yellow monkshood
Monkshood NiF
Columbine
Marsh marigold
Traveller's-joy
Stinking hellebore
Green hellebore
Hepatica NiF
Meadow buttercup
Bulbous buttercup
Pyrenean buttercup
Creeping buttercup
Great meadow-rue
Globe-flower

Reseda lutea
Reseda glauca

Alchemilla alpina
Alchemilla vulgaris
Amelanchier ovalis
Cotoneaster integerrimus
Crataegus monogyna
Dryas octopetala
Fragaria vesca
Geum urbanum
Geum pyrenaicum
Potentilla erecta
Potentilla montana
Prunus mahaleb
Rosa canina
Rosa glauca
Rosa pimpinellifolia
Rubus fruticosus
Rubus idaeus
Sanguisorba minor
Sorbus aria
Sorbus aucuparia

Asperula (or Galium) hirta
Cruciata laevipes
Galium (mollugo) album
Galium aparine
Galium pyrenaicum
Galium odoratum
Galium verum

Populus tremula
Salix elaeagnos (= *S. incana* = *S. rosmarinifolia*)

Saxifraga aizoides
Saxifraga aretioides
Saxifraga granulata
Saxifraga exarata
Saxifraga hirsuta
Saxifraga longifolia
Saxifraga paniculata
Saxifraga umbrosa

Antirrhinum majus
Bartsia alpina
Erinus alpinus
Euphrasia alpina
Linaria alpina
Linaria supina
Pedicularis palustris
Scrophularia canina
Scrophularia nodosa
Scrophularia pyrenaica
Rhinanthus minor
Verbascum densiflorum
Veronica beccabunga
Veronica chaeaedrys
Veronica ponae
Veronica serpyllifolia

Atropa belladonna
Solanum dulcamara

Daphne cneorum
Daphne laureola ssp. *philippii*
Daphne mezereum
Thymelea tinctoria ssp. *nivalis*

Tilia platyphyllos

Centranthus ruber
Valeriana montana
Valeriana officinalis
Valeriana pyrenaica
Valeriana tripteris

Resedaceae

Wild mignonette
Pyrenean mignonette

Rosaceae

Alpine lady's-mantle
Lady's-mantle
Snowy mespilus
Wild cotoneaster
Hawthorn
Mountain avens
Wild strawberry
Wood avens or herb bennett
Pyrenean avens
Tormentil
a white cinquefoil
St Lucie's cherry
Dog rose
Blue-leaved rose
Burnet rose
Blackberry/bramble
Raspberry
Salad burnet
Whitebeam
Rowan

Rubiaceae

Crosswort
Upright hedge bedstraw
Goosegrass
a cushion bedstraw
Woodruff
Lady's bedstraw

Salicaceae

Aspen

Saxifragaceae

Yellow mountain saxifrage NiF
Yellow saxifrage
Meadow saxifrage
Musky saxifrage
Kidney-leaved saxifrage
Pyrenean saxifrage
Livelong saxifrage
Wood saxifrage

Scrophulariaceae

Snapdragon
Alpine bartsia
Fairy foxglove
Eyebright
Alpine toadflax
Pyrenean toadflax
Marsh lousewort or red rattle
Alpine (= French) figwort
Common figwort
Pyrenean figwort
Yellow-rattle

Brooklime
Germander speedwell
Pyrenean spiked speedwell
Thyme-leaved speedwell

Solanaceae

Deadly nightshade
Bittersweet or woody nightshade

Thymelaeaceae

Garland flower
Spurge-laurel
Mezereon
'La passerine des neiges'

Tiliaceae

Large-leaved lime

Valerianaceae

Red valerian

Valerian
Pyrenean valerian

Verben officianalis

Viola biflora
Viola cornuta
Viola palustris
Viola pyrenaica
Viola tricolor

Eriophorum angustifolium

Tamus communis

Iris latifolia

Allium sphaerocephalon
Anthericum liliago
Asphodelus albus
Convallaria majalis
Dipcadi serotinum
Gagea fistulosa
Hyacinthus amethystinus
Lilium martagon
Narcissus assoanus (=juncifolius)
Narcissus pseudonarcissus bicolor
Scilla liliohyacinthus
Scilla verna
Tofieldia calyculata

Anacamptis pyramidalis
Epipactis atrorubens
Cephalanthera longifolia
Coeloglossum viride
Dactylorhiza fuchsii
Dactylorhiza majalis ssp. alpestris
Dactylorhiza sambucina
Epipactis helleborine
Gymnadenia conopsea
Listera ovata
Nigritella nigra
Ophrys apifera
Ophrys insectifera
Orchis mascula
Orchis ustulata
Platanthera chlorantha

Briza media
Dactylis glomerata
Nardus stricta

Abies alba
Larix decidua
Pinus nigra ssp. salzmannii
Pinus sylvestris
Juniperus communis

Asplenium adiantum-nigrum
Asplenium ruta-muraria
Asplenium scolopendrium
Asplenium septentrionale
Asplenium trichomanes
Ceterach officinarum
Cystopteris fragilis
Phegopteris connectilis
Polypodium vulgare
Polystichum lonchitis
Pteridium aquilinum

Verbenaceae

Vervain

Violaceae

Yellow wood violet
Horned pansy
Bog violet
Pyrenean violet
Wild pansy

Monocotyledons

Cyperaceae

Cotton-grass

Dioscoreaceae

Black bryony

Iridaceae

English iris NiF

Liliaceae

Round-headed leek
St Bernard's lily
Asphodel
Lily-of-the-valley
Dipcadi
Yellow gagea
Pyrenean hyacinth
Martagon lily NiF
Rush-leaved narcissus
Daffodil
Pyrenean squill NiF
Spring squill
Tofield's asphodel

Orchidaceae

Pyramidal orchid
Dark red helleborine (in bud)
Narrow-leaved helleborine
Frog orchid
Common spotted-orchid
Broad-leaved marsh-orchid
Elder-flowered orchid
Broad-leaved helleborine (leaves)
Fragrant orchid
Common twayblade
Black vanilla orchid
Bee orchid
Fly orchid
Early purple orchid
Burnt-tip orchid
Greater butterfly-orchid

Poaceae (very incomplete)

Quaking-grass
Cocksfoot
Mat-grass

CONIFERS

Silver fir
European larch
Pyrenean black pine
Scots pine
Juniper

FERNS

Black spleenwort
Wall-rue
Hartstongue Fern
Forked spleenwort
Maidenhair spleenwort
Rusty-back fern
Brittle bladder fern
Beech fern
Common polypody
Holly fern
Bracken