

# Vercors

**Sunday 30 May – Sunday 6 June 2010**

## **Tour Leaders:**

Mike Read  
Bruno Velliet

## **Daily Diary**

### **Sunday 30 May**

Due to disruption by BA staff, only 6 clients made it to Lyon (via trains etc) at the arranged time and they were met by our local guide Bruno Velliet. After lunch at a motorway service station, the next destination was a visit to Grenoble-St-Geoirs airport. On the way east, a couple of White Storks were noted and then at the airport a good quantity of birds were seen. These included 2 male Red-backed Shrikes, Melodious Warbler, 6 Black Kites, Kestrel, Common Buzzard and finally 2 Curlews on the runway! Also in the area were 2 Brown Hares and a Roe Deer buck.

In the village of Vif, a visit was made to an area of fish ponds where some Beaver tracks were noted but sadly there was no actual animal seen. However, a Red Squirrel gave fair views. A few Banded Demoiselles flitted over the water and orchids here included Man, Monkey, Military and Late Spider. Birds noted were Mallard, Reed Warbler and Nightingale.

The group arrived at Chichilianne by 6.00pm and were soon settled in and enjoying a fine evening meal.

### **Monday 31 May**

The rain fell throughout most of the morning yet some hardy souls still embarked on the pre-breakfast walk. Birds seen included Black and Common Redstarts, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Serin, Garden Warbler, Tree Pipit and lots of House Martins hawking low over a field.

After breakfast, a brief visit to Clelles for some shopping produced good views of 5 Griffon Vultures low overhead in the rain. A roadside stop produced numerous wild flowers including Military, Man, Fly, Greater Butterfly and Late Spider Orchids.

The next location visited was the Col de l'Allimas where a Green Woodpecker was noted and there were 15 Alpine Ibex to be seen on the slopes above. From here, the group went to Pas du Serpaton where they were greeted by a cold wind but at least the rain was clearing. Yellowhammer, Alpine Choughs and at least 4 Red-backed Shrikes were seen as was an Alpine Marmot. Flowers included many Spring Gentians and masses of Elder-flowered Orchids.

After a picnic lunch at this location, the group drove to the Col de Prayet where birds were becoming a little more active. Common Buzzard, Tree Pipit, Crested Tit and Bonelli's Warbler were amongst the species seen. However, it was the flowers that proved to be of special note. The usual Lady's Slipper Orchids were not yet blooming in one area and others looked like they had been cut. Other orchids noted included Frog, Fly, Military, Broad-leaved Marsh and even a Military/Lady Orchid hybrid.

This completed the days watching so the group returned to the hotel for a good evening meal while Bruno set off for Lyon to greet the arrival of the remainder of the group who were now able to fly out from Heathrow.

### **Tuesday 1 June**

The day began at a rather leisurely pace due to the very late arrival of some of the group. At 09.30 we assembled in the car park to head out for the day. A few House Sparrows were seen but a nesting pair of

Goldfinches caught our attention as did a pair of Black Redstarts with well grown chicks in a nest in the car park.

We drove to Clelles for some shopping and then paused during the return journey towards Chichilianne to look at some orchids and other flowers. We found many lovely plants including Military, Late Spider, Man, Fly, Lady and Butterfly orchids as well as a Scarce Swallowtail Butterfly. Birds overhead included a dashing Northern Goshawk (seen by just a few of the group), Kestrel, Griffon Vultures, Common Buzzard as well as 2 circling Short-toed Eagles and a passing Golden Eagle.

From here we drove towards Trezanne and a brief stop had us searching for Coralroot Orchid. We eventually found one good specimen. Also here were Bird's Nest Orchid, Broad-leaved and Red Helleborine but the latter two were not yet in bloom. Further along this road we went for a walk where we saw Black Redstart close to the village, Bonelli's Warbler in the trees and more Griffon Vultures drifting along the ridge and we heard a Green Woodpecker calling. Flowers seen in this area included Fragrant, Spitzel's and Lady's Slipper Orchids and Common Wintergreen. During lunch a short distance from Trezanne the major find was a Smooth Snake.

We then drove towards the mountain ridge and took a short walk along a track. Here we found more Lady's Slipper Orchids, a Black Woodpecker was heard calling and there were at least 7 Alpine Ibex high up on the scree slopes.

Our final brief visit for the day was to the Col de Prayet where we saw three more species of orchids, namely Frog, Broad-leaved Marsh and Burnt Orchids as well as a few Griffon Vultures along the ridge.

### **Wednesday 2 June**

A short walk behind the hotel before breakfast produced good views of many common birds including Great Tit, Goldfinch and both species of Redstart. We also heard Cuckoo and Skylark. High up on the grassy slopes of the ridge there were at least 4 Chamois including a young one.

After loading the suitcases into the minibuses we began the journey to the next hotel in La Chapelle-en-Vercors. Due to a road closure at the Col de Menée we had to take a slightly longer route around the southern side of the Vercors. Close to the Col de Luz la Haut Croix we stopped to view at least 8 Griffon Vultures and 2 fairly close Golden Eagles flying around. Also noted here were Common Buzzard, Robin, Blackcap and Wren.

At the Col de Grimone we saw Yellowhammer and Cirl Bunting as well as a fine male Red-backed Shrike and a Woodlark. In the Gorge de Guats we saw a number of Crag Martins and House Martins as well as a passing Wallcreeper.

From here we drove to the Cirque d'Archienne where Bruno found one very distant Alpine Ibex. A Chiffchaff was calling most of the time we were there and a few of the group managed to see it. High overhead was a lone Golden Eagle and at least 30 Griffon Vultures.

Near Pont de Quart there were many Lizard, Bee and Pyramidal Orchids as well as masses of Blue Aphyllanthes. During lunch along this minor road we saw Black Kite, Common Buzzard, a Red Fox searching a field recently cut for hay, while there were a few Bee Orchids and masses of Late Spider Orchids.

Along the roadsides towards Beaufort-sur-Gervanne there were many Sword-leaved Helleborines and Lesser Butterfly Orchids. Down a side track there was a swathe of Nigella in bloom as well as a few Field Gladiolus. Also in this area were a few birds to be seen including 2 Kestrels, a distant Black Kite, Short-toed Eagle, Woodlark, Rock Sparrow, Ortolan Bunting, Skylark and Alpine Swifts, while at least 2 Nightingales were heard singing from the woodland. The field where we often see some good orchids had been recently cut for hay and there was no sign of our usual Red Helleborines in the woodland.

A little behind schedule we set off for La Chapelle only to find that the Col de la Bataille route was closed. This produced a lengthy detour meaning we were rather late arriving at the Hotel Bellier. However, we were given a warm welcome and were soon enjoying a fine evening meal.

### **Thursday 3 June**

A few of the group went for an early stroll along the road behind the hotel. Birds seemed to be a little on the quiet side but we still managed to see Common and Black Redstart, White Wagtail, Common Swift, Blackcap and Serin plus a few other species.

After breakfast we drove to the Col de la Machine where there were numerous House Martins and Alpine Swifts plus a few Crag Martins. Unfortunately the road onwards from here was closed where we intended to search for Wallcreeper but beyond the Col itself, we did manage to see a female Sparrowhawk and at least 2 Chamois down below the road.

We then drove through lovely woodland-lined roads and emerged back into the sunshine as we approached the Font d'Urle a few kilometres further on. A pause just before the main car park showed flowers were blooming in abundance, with Elder-flowered Orchids perhaps the most noticeable to begin with. Also at this spot we saw a couple of Northern Wheatears, Black Redstart, Water Pipit and a few Alpine Choughs. From the main car park area we walked up through a superb Alpine Meadow where at times it was impossible to avoid treading on one species of flower or another. Yellow Rattle, Horned Pansy, Wild Tulips, Poet's Narcissus, Pyrenean Buttercup and Globe Flower were seen, along with various Gentians and Saxifrages. At least 4 Alpine Marmots were seen as we headed towards the Chough nesting cave and there were a couple of Common Kestrels flying over the upper slopes. Within the cave a couple of Alpine Chough nests could be seen but it was obvious that there were more as youngsters could be heard calling other than where we could see. We then wandered over to the Port d'Urle where the wind was, by now, blowing so strongly that a 'tactical withdrawal' seemed appropriate!

After lunch in some nearby woodland we descended to the Memorial de la Resistance on the Plain de Vassieux. Here the surrounding fields held numerous Skylarks while on top of one of the bushes, a male Red-backed Shrike watched for passing insects. Onwards from here, everyone enjoyed the spectacular views from the Col de Rousset before we descended to the vulture feeding station. Raptors were, of course, the main attraction here with about 40 Griffon Vultures, 2 Black Kites and at least 3 Short-toed Eagles noted.

On the way back towards la Chapelle at the end of the day, we did pay a brief visit to a known Golden Eagle nest site but sadly the birds did not put in an appearance.

### **Friday 4 June**

Searching for Black Grouse on the Hauts Plateaux Reserve required an early start so just before 5.00am a few of the group set off from the hotel. A Brown Hare was seen in the vehicle headlights and as we stepped from the vehicle into the crisp morning air we were greeted by a chorus of Blackbirds, Song Thrushes and Mistle Thrushes. A Roe Deer called in the half light as we turned at the foresters hut and soon we were hearing Goldcrest, Tree Pipit and Willow Tit. After walking for some time the sun began to light the pines and the Grand Veymont mountain far far ahead of us. Eventually we could hear the unmistakable calling of Black Grouse in the distance. There were probably 3 males making their distinctive 'song' and it is possible there were one or two more around. Unfortunately they did prove difficult to see however one bird gave brief but good views. Also in this area we saw 4 Citril Finches, 1 Ring Ouzel and at least 8 Common crossbills as well as lots of wild flowers. During the return walk we added Crested Tit, Firecrest and Dunnock to the list.

By 9.30am we had returned to the hotel, eaten breakfast and were ready to set off out for the day. On the way to the Gorges de la Bourne we saw at least 4 Common Buzzards, 2 Firecrests and a lot of Large-flowered Butterwort. Grey Wagtail and a Dipper were seen within the gorge itself and as we emerged back into the sunshine again we found an adult and juvenile Dippers, Eurasian Nuthatch, Wren, Blackcap and a pair of Coal Tits feeding young in and near a nest. The brood of Coal Tits was leaving the nest that day!

In meadows near Lans-en-Vercors we saw at least 3 Marsh Warblers, 3 Whinchats and a family of White Wagtails, whilst another Common Buzzard was seen in the distance. We had lunch in the Gorges du Furon and were able to watch a very active pair of European Robins which were feeding young in a nest near a

cliff, while above, Western Jackdaws were visiting a hole where perhaps they too had young. We then drove to a cliff near Engins and spent some time searching for Wallcreeper. Very distant views were obtained by the leaders but unfortunately it flew before any of the clients could see the bird. The frequent appearance of a Eurasian Sparrowhawk did not help in our attempts to see the Wallcreeper but other species noted here included Barn Swallow, Common Ravens, Kestrel, Crag Martins and a Honey Buzzard. This latter species gave really good views. The flora here was excellent too with orchids, saxifrages and lots more besides.

From here we drove through the Foret de Guiney and over the col to Autrans and in a nearby piece of woodland we walked to a tree that contained a number of old Black woodpecker nest holes. Peering from one of these was a baby Tengmalm's Owl which everyone saw exceptionally well. During our admiration of this youngster, one had to wonder if we were most fascinated by it – or vice versa! Eventually we left to begin the journey back to la Chapelle and as we walked back towards the vehicle, a rather tatty looking Honey Buzzard flew over.

We drove back to La Chapelle passing the huge variety of scenery that this superb 'Parc Naturelle' has to offer. During the drive a couple of Common Buzzards were seen and another Honey Buzzard. We arrived at the hotel in good time to relax before another fine evening meal.

### **Saturday 5 June**

During the short walk before breakfast there were a few birds seen and heard and these included Black and Common Redstarts, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Garden Warbler and Chaffinch. A Roe Deer crossed the grassy track ahead of us and our route was lined with flowers, including Monkey and Man Orchids.

After breakfast we drove over the Col de Romeyère les Ecouges. Here we had excellent views of a Grey Wagtail perched in a tree but unfortunately we could not get through the tunnel and views off the 'edge' of the high ground as the road was closed.

We re-traced our route for a few kilometres and then took a route through almost continuous forest for some distance. The roadside verges were lined with a fine display of wild flowers, including orchids, Solomon's Seal, Bastard Balm and many, many other species. At the Gorges de Nan we spent some time searching for Wallcreeper for those who had missed the species previously. Unfortunately, this much sought-after species remained elusive and did not put in an appearance. However, we were thoroughly entertained by the antics of close Crag and House Martins, a Common Buzzard hovering above the top of the gorge, passing Alpine Swifts as well as a Black Kite and a couple of Black Redstarts.

From here we drove to a point beside the Isère River where a hide would give us views of a quiet back-water. However, lunch was a more pressing requirement and roadside picnic tables were utilised for another fine 'repas'. Afterwards, a short stroll took us to the hide and from here; a good number of species were added to the list. These included Mute Swan, Kingfisher, Reed Warbler, Tufted Ducks, Grey Herons, Cetti's Warbler, Little Grebe and Great Crested grebes with a family of young in tow. Also seen here were 2 or 3 European Pond Terrapins and a couple of large fish which were probably Carp.

Following some time spent here, we took a winding route back towards la Chapelle but, of course, this was not the end of our 'wildlife' for the day. Not far from Presles we paused on the roadside to look at a range of orchids and other flora. There were numerous Pyramidal Orchids and a few Sword-leaved Helleborines but the biggest prize here was a couple of specimens of Drome Orchid. A little later we had one final stop where a single Toothed Orchid was found. There are usually more of this species at this location but it just goes to show how each blooming season can vary. Whilst some of the group were admiring this orchid and other flowers, some had been scanning the nearby cliff for birds – ever hopeful that a Wallcreeper would put in appearance. Once person thought they glimpsed this elusive bird but in the end all we could find were a couple of Black Redstarts.

This completed our day's outing so we began the journey back towards the hotel. However, we did see a couple of Common Buzzards and a Kestrel as we went and then close to les Grande Goulets we saw a Western Whipsnake on the road. This gave quite a fright to a couple of passing cyclists! Back at the hotel, we were soon enjoying another fine evening meal.

**Sunday 6 June**

To allow time for packing ready for the homeward journey, there was no pre-breakfast walk. After our usual breakfast, cases and picnics were loaded and we were heading off just after 9.00am.

The journey northwards to Lans-en-Vercors took us through superb scenery and we saw 3 or 4 Common Buzzards on the way. As we 'dropped off the edge' of the Vercors and headed down towards Grenoble, the scenery remained quite spectacular with views up to amazing cliffs and across to the mountains of the Alps.

To the east of Grenoble we visited an area of lakes which are popular with anglers. Nuthatch and Nightingale called from the hedgerows, two Green Woodpeckers seemed to be having a territorial dispute in the woodland and a colony of European Bee-eaters were nesting in a manmade bank specially provided for them. The quantity of these beautiful birds had somewhat increased in the past 3 or 4 years. Wood Pigeons flew into nearby woodland and a couple of Stock Doves flew over an area where a Little Ringed Plover was feeding close to a Little Egret. However, it was another member of the 'heron' family that provided the greatest attraction. A pair of Little Bitterns were watched for some considerable time and gave excellent views. After spending some time here we drove to Grenoble and dropped off two of the group so that they could catch a TGV to Paris. The remainder of the group then drove to the Lyon-bound motorway and stopped at a service area to have our picnic lunch. After that we paid a visit to the Grenoble-St-Geoirs airport which was missed the previous weekend by the later arriving group. A couple of Corn Buntings were perched close to a male Stonechat while a Common Quail called in a nearby grassy area. There were perhaps a dozen Black Kites around the grassy areas of the airfield and a male Hen Harrier drifted along the fence line. Just before we left this spot, a Stone Curlew was heard calling and Melodious Warbler perched where the Stonechat had previously been. Further around the airport a Eurasian Curlew was noted flying close to the runway and two male Montagu's Harriers drifted over the corn fields; a fine finish to our visit here.

After a coffee stop on the motorway and dropping some of the clients close to the airport, we were soon bidding our farewell and thanks to Bruno. He had, once again, provided excellent knowledge and leadership to this superb yet quiet corner of France. Soon we boarded our homeward flight and arrived at Heathrow in good time.

**SPECIES LIST****BIRDS**

<b>Black Grouse</b>	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>	1 seen and a further 3 males heard during the early walk on 4 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common Quail</b>	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Heard on 30 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> near St-Geoirs airport
<b>Mallard</b>	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	3 near Vif on 30 <sup>th</sup> then seen on the final 3 days of the tour
<b>Common Teal</b>	<i>Anas crecca</i>	A single bird seen on the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Tufted Duck</b>	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	At least 2 seen on the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Great Crested Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	On 5 <sup>th</sup> there were a few on the Isere River including a pair with 2 small young and we also saw the species to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup>
<b>White Stork</b>	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	2 seen during the journey towards the Vercors on 30 <sup>th</sup> and a single bird noted at the same spot on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Little Bittern</b>	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	At least 2 very well seen to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Grey Heron</b>	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1 seen near Vif on 30 <sup>th</sup> . At least 2 on 2 <sup>nd</sup> beside the Drome River. 1 near Lans-en-Vercors on 4 <sup>th</sup> and at least 4 on the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Little Egret</b>	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	A single bird seen to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Common (Eurasian) Kestrel</b>	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Seen every day.

<b>Peregrine</b>	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Just a single bird seen high above the vulture feeding station on 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
<b>European Honey Buzzard</b>	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	At least 2 seen on 4 <sup>th</sup> with excellent views of one of these close to Engins.
<b>Black Kite</b>	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Half a dozen seen on 30 <sup>th</sup> near St Geoirs airport, then small numbers seen on 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>d</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> , then on 6 <sup>th</sup> there were 2 to the east of Grenoble and at least 15 at St Geoirs airport
<b>Eurasian Griffon Vulture</b>	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	The first sighting was of 5 flying very low over Clelles on 31 <sup>st</sup> . The species was then noted on the following 3 days, with the largest quantity being at least 40 at the feeding station on 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
<b>Short-toed (Snake) Eagle</b>	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	A single bird on 31 <sup>st</sup> was then followed by 3 the following day, 1 on 2 <sup>nd</sup> and at least 3 together on 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
<b>Hen (Northern) Harrier</b>	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	A male seen at St Geoirs on 30 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> and a female seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> at the Pas du Serpaton.
<b>Montagu's Harrier</b>	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	One male on 30 <sup>th</sup> and 2 males on 6 <sup>th</sup> all at St Geoirs airport.
<b>Eurasian Sparrowhawk</b>	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	1 on 1 <sup>st</sup> between Chichilianne and Clelles, then a female on 3 <sup>rd</sup> at the Col de la Machine and finally a single bird three times near Engins.
<b>Goshawk</b>	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	A single bird seen briefly between Chichilianne and Clelles on 1 <sup>st</sup> .
<b>Common (Eurasian) Buzzard</b>	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Noted every day.
<b>Golden Eagle</b>	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	A single bird close to Mont Aiguilles on 1 <sup>st</sup> was followed by really good views of 2 and distant views of another on 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>Common Moorhen</b>	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	A single bird seen on the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Eurasian Coot</b>	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Seen on the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup> and on lakes to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Eurasian Stone-curlew</b>	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	1 or 2 birds heard close to St Geoirs airport on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Little Ringed Plover</b>	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	A single bird seen to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Eurasian Curlew</b>	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	2 seen on 30 <sup>th</sup> and 1 on 6 <sup>th</sup> at St Geoirs airport.
<b>Yellow-legged Gull</b>	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	2 seen on the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup> and another 2 on lakes to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)</b>	<i>Columba livia</i>	Seen on 5 days of the tour.
<b>Stock Dove</b>	<i>Columba oenas</i>	2 seen on 6 <sup>th</sup> close to Grenoble.
<b>(Common) Wood Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Noted on 5 days of the tour.
<b>European Turtle Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	3 seen and another one heard on 2 <sup>nd</sup> near Beaufort. Also heard the following day and on 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Eurasian Collared Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia decacocto</i>	Seen every day of the tour except 31 <sup>st</sup> .
<b>Common Cuckoo</b>	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Heard every day except 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Boreal (Tengmalm's) Owl</b>	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	A juvenile seen peering from a nest hole on 4 <sup>th</sup> close to Autrans. This bird allowed everybody to get exceptionally good views.
<b>Alpine Swift</b>	<i>Apus melba</i>	Noted on 4 days with the best views perhaps on 5 <sup>th</sup> in the Gorge de Nan.
<b>Common Swift</b>	<i>Apus apus</i>	Noted every day.
<b>Common Kingfisher</b>	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	A single bird seen on the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>European Bee-eater</b>	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	At least 25 seen at a nesting colony to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Single birds seen on 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Black Woodpecker</b>	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	Heard on 1 <sup>st</sup> close to Chichilianne and on 5 <sup>th</sup> in the Gorges de Nan.
<b>(European) Green Woodpecker</b>	<i>Picus viridis</i>	Heard on the first 3 days and on 5 <sup>th</sup> and 2 were seen to the east of Grenoble on 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Red-backed Shrike</b>	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	2 at St Geoirs airport on 30 <sup>th</sup> and 4 seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> at the Pas du Serpaton, then single birds noted on 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> . This bird seemed to be in relatively short supply this year.

<b>Eurasian Jay</b>	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Just noted on the last 4 days of the tour.
<b>Eurasian Magpie</b>	<i>Pica pica</i>	Seen every day of the tour.
<b>Alpine (Yellow-billed) Chough</b>	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	First noted on 31 <sup>st</sup> at the Pas du Serpaton and also seen on 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> . With the best views being on 3 <sup>rd</sup> at Font d'Urle.
<b>(Western) Jackdaw</b>	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	A single bird noted on 30 <sup>th</sup> during the journey to the Vercors and then seen on 4 <sup>th</sup> near Engins, the 5 <sup>th</sup> in the Gorges du Nan and on 6 <sup>th</sup> during the journey to Lyon.
<b>Rook</b>	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Just noted on 30 <sup>th</sup> during the journey to the Vercors.
<b>Carrion Crow</b>	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Seen every day.
<b>Common Raven</b>	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Seen every day except 30 <sup>th</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>Willow Tit</b>	<i>Parus montanus</i>	1 on 1 <sup>st</sup> near Chichilianne and then noted on 4 <sup>th</sup> on the early Hauts Plateaux walk.
<b>Coal Tit</b>	<i>Parus ater</i>	Noted on four days with 2 nests being found on 4 <sup>th</sup> at the Gorges de la Bourne and near Engins.
<b>(European) Crested Tit</b>	<i>Parus cristatus</i>	Seen at the Col de Prayet on 31 <sup>st</sup> and two well seen during the early walk on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Great Tit</b>	<i>Parus major</i>	Noted every day except 30 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Seen on 5 days of the tour.
<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	A single bird seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> near Chichilianne, then noted on 5 successive days from 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>Eurasian Crag Martin</b>	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>	Seen on 4 successive days from 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>(Common) House Martin</b>	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	A large quantity was feeding low over a meadow during the pre-breakfast walk on 31 <sup>st</sup> , then seen on 5 successive days from 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>Woodlark</b>	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	Just a single bird seen on overhead wires near Beaufort on 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>(Eurasian) Skylark</b>	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Noted on 6 days of the tour.
<b>Cetti's Warbler</b>	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Heard close to the Isere River on 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>(European) Marsh Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	At least 3 on 4 <sup>th</sup> near Lans-en-Vercors.
<b>Eurasian Reed Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Seen on 30 <sup>th</sup> close to Vif, then on 5 <sup>th</sup> beside the Isere River and on 6 <sup>th</sup> to the east of Grenoble.
<b>Melodious Warbler</b>	<i>Hippalais polyglotta</i>	Single birds seen on 30 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> close to St Geoirs airport.
<b>Common Chiffchaff</b>	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Seen or heard on six days of the tour.
<b>Western Bonelli's Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	Seen or heard on four days of the tour, with the best views on 2 <sup>nd</sup> during our lunch stop.
<b>Blackcap</b>	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Seen or heard every day of the tour.
<b>Garden Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	Noted on 31 <sup>st</sup> during a pre-breakfast walk and also on 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Lesser Whitethroat</b>	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	Singles heard on 30 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> close to St Geoirs airport.
<b>Firecrest</b>	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	Heard on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> during the pre-breakfast walks but on the latter date at least 2 were seen in the Gorges de la Bourne.
<b>Goldcrest</b>	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Heard on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> but sadly not seen.
<b>(Winter) Wren</b>	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Seen or heard on the final 5 days of the tour.
<b>(Eurasian) Nuthatch</b>	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	Seen on 4 <sup>th</sup> at the top end of the Gorges de la Bourne and then 2 on 6 <sup>th</sup> to the east of Grenoble.
<b>Wallcreeper</b>	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	A single bird well seen on 2 <sup>nd</sup> in the Gorges de Guats but sadly not everybody saw this bird. Despite considerable search afterwards the only other record was a leader only viewing close to Engins on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Short-toed Treecreeper</b>	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	A single sighting on 30 <sup>th</sup> at Vif fishponds.
<b>Common Starling</b>	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Seen on 6 days of the tour.
<b>Ring Ouzel</b>	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	A single bird seen during the early pre-breakfast walk on 4 <sup>th</sup> at Les Haut Plateaux.
<b>(Common) Blackbird</b>	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Noted every day of the tour.
<b>Song Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Noted on 3 successive days from 3 <sup>rd</sup> .

<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Noted on 5 days of the tour.
<b>(European) Robin</b>	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Seen or heard every day except 30 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Common Nightingale</b>	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	First noted on 30 <sup>th</sup> at Vif fishponds then heard on 2 <sup>nd</sup> near Pont de Quart and on 6 <sup>th</sup> beside lakes to the east of Grenoble.
<b>Black Redstart</b>	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Seen every day of the tour.
<b>Common Redstart</b>	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> during the pre-breakfast walk, then on four successive days from 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>Whinchat</b>	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	At least 3 seen close to Lans-en-Vercors on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Eurasian Stonechat</b>	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	A male seen on 30 <sup>th</sup> and a pair seen on 6 <sup>th</sup> all close to St Geoirs airport.
<b>Northern Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	At least 2 males seen on 3 <sup>rd</sup> at Font d'Urle.
<b>(White-throated) Dipper</b>	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	At least 2 adults seen in the Gorges de la Bourne on 4 <sup>th</sup> where there was also a juvenile bird that everybody had excellent views of.
<b>House Sparrow</b>	<i>Paser domesticus</i>	Seen every day.
<b>Rock Sparrow</b>	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	Just a single bird seen on 2 <sup>nd</sup> close to Beaufort.
<b>Duncock</b>	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	2 seen during the early walk on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Grey Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Single birds seen on 1 <sup>st</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>White Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Small numbers seen every day.
<b>Tree Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	First noted on 31 <sup>st</sup> at the Col de Prayet and then noted on 1 <sup>st</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Water Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	At least 1 seen at Font d'Urle on 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
<b>Common Chaffinch</b>	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Noted every day.
<b>European Serin</b>	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	Noted on the first 6 days of the tour.
<b>(European) Greenfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Seen every day except 30 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>(European) Goldfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Seen every day.
<b>Citril Finch</b>	<i>Carduelis citrinella</i>	This high level species was just noted during the early walk on 4 <sup>th</sup> and at least 4 birds were seen.
<b>Common Linnet</b>	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Just noted on 3 <sup>rd</sup> at Font d'Urle.
<b>Common (Red) Crossbill</b>	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	At least 8 seen during the early morning walk on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>(Eurasian) Bullfinch</b>	<i>Pyrrhula Pyrrhula</i>	Seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> during the pre-breakfast walk and then heard at Les Hauts Plateaux on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Corn Bunting</b>	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	Seen on 30 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> close to St Geoirs airport.
<b>Yellowhammer</b>	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> at the Pas du Serpaton, then on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>Ortolan Bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	A single bird seen close to Beaufort on 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>MAMMALS</b>		
<b>Red Fox</b>	<i>Vulpes Vulpes</i>	2 seen during and just after our lunch break on 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
<b>Roe Deer</b>	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	A male seen close to St Geoirs airport on 30 <sup>th</sup> and singles also seen on 1 <sup>st</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> . Also, barking call of one was heard in the half light early on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Chamois</b>	<i>Rupicaria rupicaria</i>	At least 4 seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> then 2 on 3 <sup>rd</sup> at the Col de la Machine and a single on 4 <sup>th</sup> near Engins.
<b>Alpine Ibex</b>	<i>Capra ibex</i>	At least a dozen seen on 31 <sup>st</sup> at the Col de l'Allimas. 7 on 1 <sup>st</sup> near Chichilianne and a very distant one seen the following day at Cirque d'Archienne.
<b>Red Squirrel</b>	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Just a single seen on 30 <sup>th</sup> at Vif fishponds.
<b>Alpine Marmot</b>	<i>Marmota marmota</i>	1 on 31 <sup>st</sup> at the Pas du Serpaton and at least 4 on 3 <sup>rd</sup> at Font d'Urle.
<b>Brown Hare</b>	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	2 seen at St Geoirs airport on 30 <sup>th</sup> and 1 seen on the way to the early morning walk on 4 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>AMPHIBIANS</b>		
<b>Marsh Frog</b>	<i>Rana ridibunda</i>	

**REPTILES**

<b>European Pond Terrapin</b>	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
<b>Common Wall Lizard</b>	<i>Podarcis muralis</i>
<b>Western Whipsnake</b>	<i>Coluber viridiflavus</i>
<b>Smooth Snake</b>	<i>Coronella austrica</i>

**BUTTERFLIES**

<b>Swallowtail</b>	<i>Papilio machon</i>
<b>Scarce Swallowtail</b>	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>
<b>Large White</b>	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
<b>Small White</b>	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>
<b>Orange Tip</b>	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>
<b>Pale Clouded Yellow</b>	<i>Colias hyale</i>
<b>Clouded Yellow</b>	<i>Colias croceus</i>
<b>Brimstone</b>	<i>Gonopteryx cleopatra</i>
<b>Wood White</b>	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>
<b>Small Blue</b>	<i>Cupido minimus</i>
<b>Green-underside Blue</b>	<i>Glaucopsyche alexis</i>
<b>Common Blue</b>	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
<b>Painted Lady</b>	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>
<b>Small Tortoiseshell</b>	<i>Aglais urticae</i>
<b>Small Heath</b>	<i>Coenonympha pamphilius</i>
<b>Speckled Wood</b>	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>
<b>Wall Brown</b>	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>
<b>Grizzled Skipper</b>	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>
<b>Small Skipper</b>	<i>Thymelicus flavus</i>

**MOTHS**

<b>Cinnabar</b>	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>
<b>Burnett</b>	<i>Zygaena spp.</i>

**DRAGONFLIES**

<b>Banded Demoiselle</b>	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>
<b>Western Demoiselle</b>	<i>Calopteryx xanthestoma</i>

**OTHER INSECTS**

<b>Field Cricket</b>	<i>Gryllus campestris</i>
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**FLORA**

<i>Juniperus communis</i>	<b>Common Juniper</b>
<i>Betula pendula</i>	<b>Silver Birch</b>
<i>Acer campestre</i>	<b>Field Maple</b>
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	<b>Sycamore</b>
<i>Tilia europaea</i>	<b>Lime</b>
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	<b>Box</b>
<i>Polygonum bistorta</i>	<b>Bistort</b>
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	<b>Ragged Robin</b>
<i>Silene nutans</i>	<b>Nottingham Catchfly</b>
<i>Silene dioica</i>	<b>Red Campion</b>
<i>Silene latifolia ssp alba</i>	<b>White Campion</b>
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	<b>Stinking Hellebore</b>
<i>Nigella arvensis</i>	<b>Love-in-a-Mist</b>

*Trollius europaeus*  
*Caltha palustris*  
*Ranunculus pyrenaicus*  
*Delphinium spp.*  
*Clematis vitalba*  
*Aquilegia vulgaris*  
*Papaver rhoeas*  
*Chelidonium majus*  
*Alliaria petiolata*  
*Cardamine heptaphylla*  
*Saxifraga exarata*  
*Saxifraga granulata*  
*Saxifraga paniculata*  
*Filipendula ulmaria*  
*Rubus fruticosus*  
*Rosa canina*  
*Agrimonia eupatoria*  
*Sanguisorba minor*  
*Geum rivale*  
*Geum urbanum*  
*Fragaria vesca*  
*Alchemilla alpina*  
*Sorbus aucuparia*  
*Sorbus aria*  
*Crataegus monogyna*  
*Trifolium montanum*  
*Trifolium repens*  
*Trifolium pratense*  
*Tetragonolobus maritimus*  
*Anthyllis vulneraria*  
*Hippocrepis comosa*  
*Onobrychis vicifolia*  
*Geranium pratense*  
*Geranium sylvaticum*  
*Geranium robertianum*  
*Euphorbia cyparissias*  
*Urtica dioica*  
*Viscum album*  
*Fraxinus excelsior*  
*Ligustrum vulgare*  
*Malva sylvestris*  
*Viola riviniana*  
*Viola cornuta*  
*Viola tricolor*  
*Hedera helix*  
*Anthriscus sylvestris*  
*Pyrola rotundifolia*  
*Primula veris*  
*Armeria alpina*  
*Convolvulus arvensis*  
*Gentiana lutea*  
*Gentiana acaulis*  
*Gentiana verna*  
*Vincetoxicum hirundinaria*  
*Echium vulgare*  
*Symphytum officinale*  
*Melittis melissophyllum*  
*Erinus alpinus*  
*Verbascum thapsus*  
*Veronica chamaedrys*

**Globeflower**  
**Marsh Marigold**  
**Pyrenean Buttercup**  
**Larkspur**  
**Traveller's Joy**  
**Common Columbine**  
**Common Poppy**  
**Greater Celandine**  
**Garlic Mustard**  
**Seven-leaflet Bittercress**  
**White Musky Saxifrage**  
**Meadow Saxifrage**  
**Paniculate/Livelong Saxifrage**  
**Meadowsweet**  
**Bramble/Blackberry**  
**Dog Rose**  
**Agrimony**  
**Salad Burnet**  
**Water Avens**  
**Herb Bennet/Wood Avens**  
**Wild Strawberry**  
**Alpine Lady's Mantle**  
**Mountain Ash/Rowan**  
**Whitebeam**  
**Hawthorn/May**  
**Mountain Clover**  
**White/Dutch Clover**  
**Red Clover**  
**Dragon's-teeth**  
**Common Kidney-vetch**  
**Horseshoe Vetch**  
**Sainfoin**  
**Meadow Cranesbill**  
**Wood Cranesbill**  
**Herb Robert**  
**Cypress Spurge**  
**Stinging Nettle**  
**Mistletoe**  
**Ash**  
**Wild Privet**  
**Common Mallow**  
**Common Dog Violet**  
**Horned Pansy**  
**Heartsease**  
**Ivy**  
**Cow Parsley**  
**Round-leaved Wintergreen**  
**Cowslip**  
**Mountain Thrift**  
**Field Bindweed**  
**Great Yellow Gentian**  
**Trumpet Gentian**  
**Spring Gentian**  
**Swallow-wort**  
**Viper's Bugloss**  
**Common Comfrey**  
**Bastard Balm**  
**Fairy Foxglove**  
**Great Mullein**  
**Germander Speedwell**

*Rhinanthus alectorolophus*  
*Globularia cordifolia*  
*Globularia nudicaulis*  
*Pinguicula grandiflora*  
*Orobanche spp*  
*Asperula taurina*  
*Crucia laevipes*  
*Lonicera xylosteum*  
*Sambucus ebulus*  
*Sambucus nigra*  
*Lonicera periclymenum*  
*Valeriana saluunca*  
*Phyteuma nigrum*  
*Phyteuma orbiculare*  
*Dipsacus fullonum*  
*Bellis perennis*  
*Taraxacum officinale group*  
*Leucanthemum vulgare*  
*Cirsium palustre*  
*Centaurea montana*  
*Aphyllanthes monspeliensis*  
*Anthericum liliago*  
*Lilium martagon*  
*Erythronium dens-canis*  
*Polygonatum multiflorum*  
*Convallaria majalis*  
*Narcissus poeticus*  
*Gladiolus byzantinus*

*Aceras anthropophorum*  
*Anacamptis pyramidalis*  
*Epipactis helleborine*  
*Cephalanthera damasonium*  
*Cephalanthera longifolia*  
*Cephalanthera rubra*  
*Coeloglossum viride*  
*Corallorhiza trifida*  
*Cypripedium calceolus*  
*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*  
*Dactylorhiza majalis*  
*Dactylorhiza sambucina*  
*Gymnadenia conopsea*  
*Himantoglossum hircinum*  
*Limodorum abortivum*  
*Listera ovata*  
*Neottia nidus-avis*  
*Ophrys apifera*  
*Ophrys fuciflora*  
*Ophrys drumana*  
*Ophrys insectiflora*  
*Orchis mascula*  
*Orchis militaris*  
*Orchis pallens*  
*Orchis purpurea*  
*Orchis simia*  
*Orchis spitzelii*  
*Orchis tridentata*  
*Orchis ustulata*  
*Platanthera bifolia*

**Greater Yellow Rattle**  
**Matted Globularia**  
**Leafless-stemmed Globularia**  
**Large-flowered Butterwort**  
**Broomrape spp**  
**Southern Woodruff**  
**Crosswort**  
**Fly Honeysuckle**  
**Dwarf Elder**  
**Elder**  
**Common Honeysuckle**  
**Entire-leaved Valerian**  
**Black Rampion**  
**Round-headed Rampion**  
**Teasel**  
**Daisy**  
**Common Dandelion**  
**Ox-eye/Moon Daisy**  
**Marsh Thistle**  
**Mountain Cornflower**  
**Aphyllanthes**  
**St Bernard's Lily**  
**Martagon Lily**  
**Dog's Tooth Violet**  
**Angular Solomon's Seal**  
**Lily of the Valley**  
**Poet's/Pheasant's-eye- Narcissus**  
**Field Gladiolus**

**Man Orchid**  
**Pyramidal Orchid**  
**Broad-leaved Helleborine**  
**White Helleborine**  
**Sword-leaved Helleborine**  
**Red Helleborine**  
**Frog Orchid**  
**Coralroot Orchid**  
**Lady's Slipper Orchid**  
**Common Spotted Orchid**  
**Broad-leaved Marsh Orchid**  
**Elder-flowered Orchid**  
**Fragrant Orchid**  
**Lizard Orchid**  
**Violet Limodore**  
**Twayblade**  
**Bird's-nest Orchid**  
**Bee Orchid**  
**Late Spider Orchid**  
**Drome Orchid**  
**Fly Orchid**  
**Early Purple Orchid**  
**Military Orchid**  
**Pale-flowered Orchid**  
**Lady Orchid**  
**Monkey Orchid**  
**Spitzel's Orchid**  
**Toothed Orchid**  
**Burnt Orchid**  
**Lesser Butterfly Orchid**

*What a super place the Vercors is! As we strolled through beautiful alpine meadows full of blues, pinks and whites, birds such as Alpine Swifts and Griffon Vultures drifted by overhead in all we noted 106 species of birds and a whole mass of flowers including 30 orchids. Needless to say the scenery was magnificent as always at this location and added greatly to the experience of being in this fabulous national park.*

*In general terms the weather was kind to us and at times we were seeking the shade for our picnic lunches etc. As usual, Bruno knew where to find just about everything but despite his best efforts, not everyone saw the elusive Wallcreeper. Obviously a few had not developed the 'leader Velcro syndrome' (e.g. if you want to see everything, stick with the leader!)*

*Mike Read*

**Mike Read, June 2010**

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