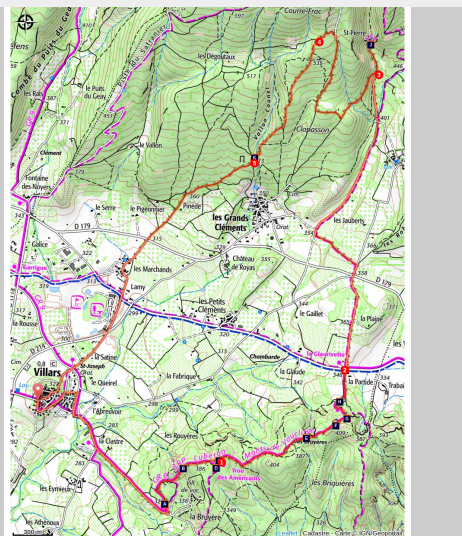


## The Villars secrets

Villars



Villars depuis La Bruyère (©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon)

*Far from the well-known areas, a summary of natural wonders and rural heritage, between ochres, cultures, oak groves and scrublands.*

It is thanks to the work of the inhabitants and volunteer hikers of Villars that some old trail sections have been recently developed. Their combination allows a mischievous route which goes through the ochre massif of La Bruyère and then progresses at the foot of the Monts-de-Vaucluse. The contrast is striking! So much wealth in such few steps ... Eric Garnier, Head of Studies for outdoor sports at the Luberon RNP.

### Useful information

Practice : WALKING

Duration : 4 h

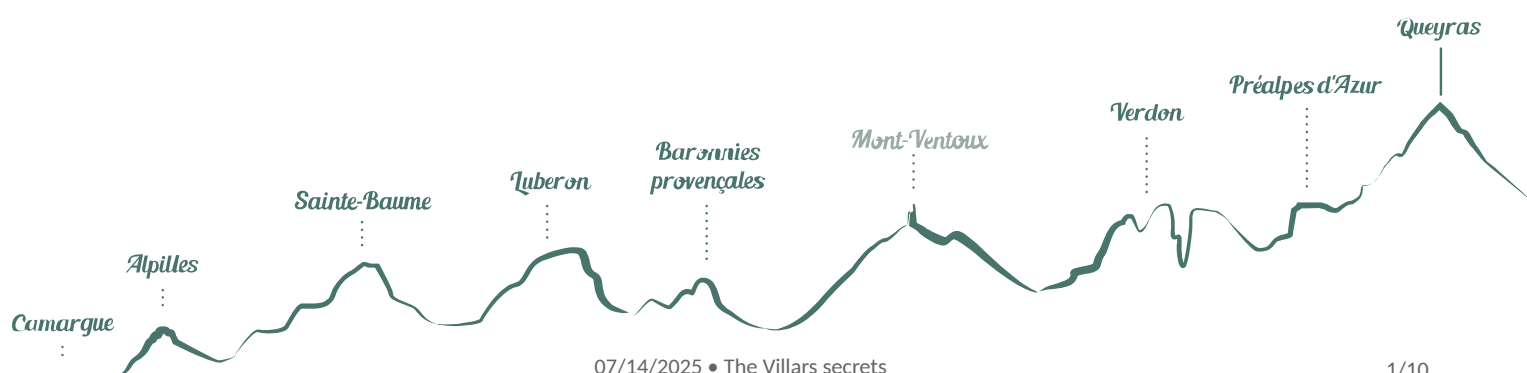
Length : 13.3 km

Trek ascent : 446 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Boucle

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Heritage and history



# Trek

Departure : Outside the town hall of Villars

Arrival : Town hall of Villars

Markings :  GR®  PR  PR local

Opposite the town hall, turn right towards Rustrel. When at the village hall, dive right onto a path that goes into the housing estate boundary (fence). Turn left on the road, cross La Riaille and at the intersection "Clastre", continue straight. 500m further, take the left path (GR®) entering the classified massive and an environmentally sensitive area (ESA). Pass two corners and rise to the left at the top of the hill.

**1** - At the crossroads "Trou des Américains" visit the pond 100m to the right and back to point 1. Continue on the right trail (GR®) and travel through all the ochre massif. Coming out on the road "La Glaurivette", cross the D214.

**2** - Take the opposite track (RP), then cross the D179. Advance on 80m on the path of Fumeirasse and turn left. At the bottom, turn right and go slowly straight to the crossroads "Fumeirasse". Continue the path completely to the left and reach a crossing (point 429).

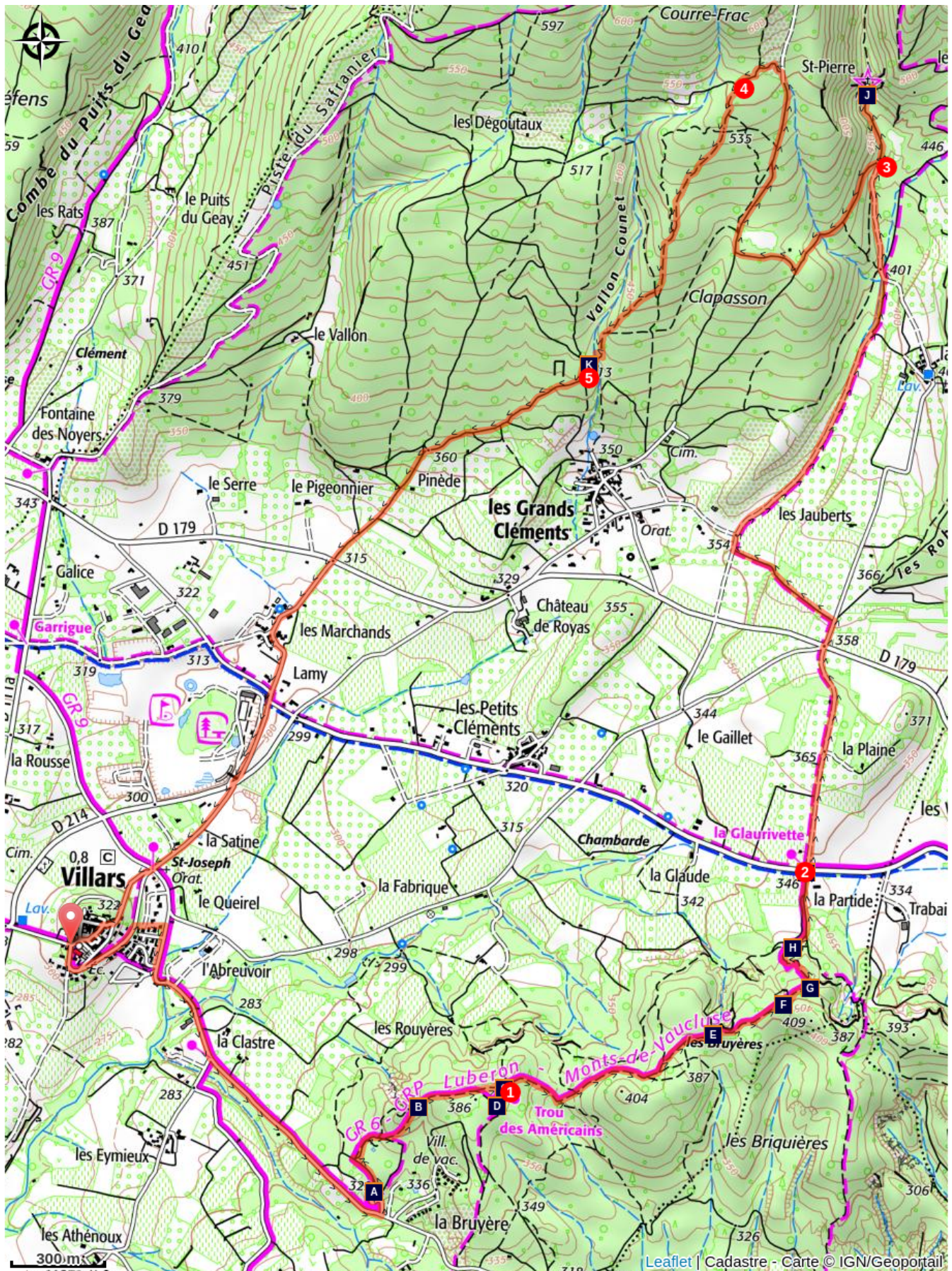
**3** - Go straight until the chapel and go back to point 3. There, ride up the steep path and continue on it. At the top of the second steep path, turn right. Reach to a track. Go up on the right on 650m. Do not miss to the left the road which descends slightly (local RP, green markings).

**4** - In a right turn (cairn) Go across and go straight at the first intersection (cairn). Slowly descend on 700m and turn right on a path that winds through the scrubland (green markings). After two turns, cross the ravine, up to the junction with another path.

**5** - Go down the road for 15m and take the first road to the left. Go straight and turn left to reach the D179 below. Cross the road, pass the Hameau des Marchands, go along the recreation centre and reach the D214. Continue straight through the protected pedestrian crossing. At the crossroads "Saint-Joseph", climb the ramp to the right (no entry sign) and take the second right to return to the centre of Villars.



# On your path...






 ENS de La Bruyère (A)


 La Bruyère hill (C)

 Landslide danger! (E)

 Chestnut from acid soils (G)

 A hut as a maternity ward (I)

 Dry stone, stories of mankind (K)

 This path is of gold, ochre and vermillion ...  
(B)

 Trou des Américains pond (D)

 The Common Bent-wing Bat (F)

 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (H)

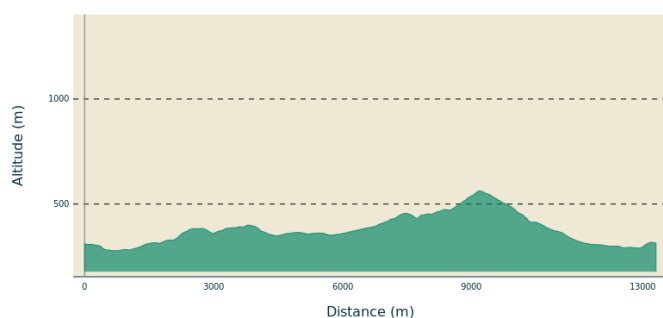
 The Saint-Pierre de Bagnols chapel (J)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

Make sure to stay on the paths and trails; the site of La Bruyère is very sensitive to erosion, trampling and disturbance of species. Refrain from any picking (flora, ochre). This environmentally sensitive area (ESA) is an exceptional territory, open to all under everyone's responsibility. Thank you for respecting this.

## **Altimetric profile**



Min elevation 278 m

Max elevation 563 m

## **Access**

At 9 km northwest of Apt by the D900, D943 and D111.

## **Advised parking**

Opposite the town hall, turn immediately left and slip between the houses to reach the car park hidden behind.

## **Information desks**

House of the Luberon Regional Nature Park

60, place Jean Jaurès, 84400 Apt  
[accueil@parcduluberon.fr](mailto:accueil@parcduluberon.fr)  
Tel : +33 (0)4 90 04 42 00  
<https://www.parcduluberon.fr/>

OTI Pays d'Apt Luberon  
788 avenue Victor Hugo, 84400 Apt  
[oti@paysapt-luberon.fr](mailto:oti@paysapt-luberon.fr)  
Tel : +33 (0)4 90 74 03 18  
<http://www.luberon-apt.fr/>



# On your path...

---



## ENS de La Bruyère (A)

The hill of La Bruyère received the departmental label sensitive natural area (SNA) in 2005. In this context, several plots were purchased by the Luberon Regional Park and the Conservatory of natural areas in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, in a natural heritage preservation objective. These courses are open to the public only on marked trails and within siliceous preservation of this unique island.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

---



## This path is of gold, ochre and vermillion ... (B)

This route, This route, away from the Calavon, flowing between the massifs of the Monts-de-Vaucluse to the north and Luberon to the south, enters the wooded hill of La Bruyère rising above this agricultural valley dominated by vineyards. It includes ochreous soils and cliffs quite colourful, hidden in part by a woodland takeover. This vegetation is used to sandy soils which are a minority in this limestone Provence.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

---



## La Bruyère hill (C)

Like a siliceous island in the middle of a limestone ocean, the hill of La Bruyère (listed and labelled as an environmentally sensitive area) contains a flock of siliceous (silica-loving), acid-loving (likes acid soils) and psammophile (preferring sand) plants. You can come across many species of amphibians (like the Western Spadefoot), birds (such as the European Bee-eater) and bats (like the Greater or the Lesser Horseshoe Bat, the Common Bent-wing Bat).

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

---



## Trou des Américains pond (D)

This wetland is rooted in the ochre activity of the site and served to store the water used for washing the ochre. This is one of the best preserved ponds of the Luberon Regional Nature Park which is a part of the known breeding sites of Western Spadefoot (or Spanish Spadefoot Toad). This rare and vulnerable species in France is considered near threatened globally. With "spades" in its hind feet, it hides in the sand until it rains!

Attribution : ©David Tatin



## Landslide danger! (E)

As holed as cheese, the hill of La Bruyère is pierced with ancient galleries dug by hand. It was an important place for the extraction of ochre. Then, a number of them were transformed into mushroom growing areas. Today, there is no longer human activity. Some have become refuges for large colonies of bats. It is strictly forbidden to enter the galleries (private property), due to frequent landslides and to avoid dramatic disturbance of bats.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon



## The Common Bent-wing Bat (F)

The hill of La Bruyère hosts the largest transit site of Common Bent-wing Bats in the Luberon. This bat feeds on moths. Very sociable, it settles in clusters in ochre galleries. Its protection is primarily based on tranquillity, especially since the closing of holes with grids is harmful to the Common Bent-wing Bat, because its flight, hard to manoeuvre, does not allow it to move easily between the bars.

Attribution : ©DR



## Chestnut from acid soils (G)

A small island in the middle of the limestone mountains of Luberon and the Monts-de-Vaucluse, the ochres are home to species of trees that do not grow in limestone. Thus, the chestnut enjoys this ground as it enjoys the sandy soil in the Var department further to the south.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon



## Lesser Horseshoe Bat (H)

A true little fur ball, this bat weighs only 2 to 5g. The species has a distinctive horseshoe-shaped nose. When roosting and hibernating, the Lesser Horseshoe Bats hang free and wrap their wings completely around their bodies, resembling a pear hanging free. In winter, it occupies ochre galleries. In summer, the females use the huts as maternity wards. Be careful not to disturb them! It is strictly forbidden to enter the galleries and huts (private property), due to frequent landslides and to avoid dramatic disturbance of bats.

Attribution : ©DR-Tanguy Stoeckle



---

### A hut as a maternity ward (I)

In the fields nearby, huts were built to provide shelter and storage. Today abandoned or restored, they are privileged and coveted places by female bats. A true maternity ward, these huts, heated by the sun, are suitable places for birthing and nursing the young. It is strictly forbidden to enter the huts (private property) to avoid dramatic disturbance of bats.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

---



### The Saint-Pierre de Bagnols chapel (J)

The present chapel was rebuilt in the 18th century, after shepherds noticed construction marks leading to the excavations. In the nave, three limestone plates carry the Gallo-Roman inscriptions dating from the 1st century and another medieval inscription of the 11th century. At the time on the site, the Gallo-Romans worshipped Sylvanus (roman tutelary deity). In the Middle Ages, this chapel was erected, built by the Black Monks of Villeneuve, forest settlers.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

---



### Dry stone, stories of mankind (K)

On Monts-de-Vaucluse, they can't be missed! Small walls, pens, retaining walls for terrace fields, or bories. They are everywhere. The construction of these small dry stone structures began when man had to clear his land of stones in order to cultivate it. So what to do with this excess of stones. ? From there came the idea to pile them up in order to build pens, tame slopes or make shelters for men and tools.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon





- En aucun cas les auteurs des contenus de ce site ne sauraient être tenus pour responsables de problèmes ou d'accidents sur les itinéraires cités.
- Cependant, nous comptons sur vous pour signaler toutes contradictions importantes entre cette fiche et le terrain.
- Pensez également à signaler les éventuels problèmes rencontrés pendant votre balade sur <http://sentinelles.sportsdenature.fr> (erreur de balisage, panneau défectueux, pollution, conflit d'usages...).
- La vente de cette fiche est autorisée au coût d'impression.
- Ne pas jeter dans la nature.

L'outil Geotrek a été financé par l'Union européenne, le Parc national des Ecrins et le Parc national du Mercantour.

Le projet Chemins des Parcs est financé par la Région Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur et les Parcs naturels régionaux des Alpilles, de Camargue, du Luberon, du Queyras et du Verdon.

Ce projet partenarial rassemble également le Comité Régional du Tourisme, les agences départementales de développement touristique, les offices de tourisme et les syndicats d'initiative.

- The authors of this website will in no case be held responsible for problems or accidents on the routes mentioned.
- We count on you to point out any inconsistency between this content and the field itineraries
- Please report any problems encountered on the routes (route marking problems, defective panels, pollution, conflict of uses ...) on <http://sentinelles.sportsdenature.fr>
- The sale of this sheet is authorized at the cost of printing
- Please don't litter

The Geotrek tool was funded by the European Union, the Ecrins National Park and the Mercantour National Park.

The Chemins des Parcs project is funded by the Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur Region and the regional nature parks of Alpilles, Camargue, Luberon, Queyras and the Verdon.

This project was developed in partnership with the Regional Tourism Committee, the departmental tourist development agencies, and tourist offices.

**www.cheminsdesparcs.fr**

*Tours et détours dans les Parcs naturels régionaux  
de Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur*

Avec le soutien de

