

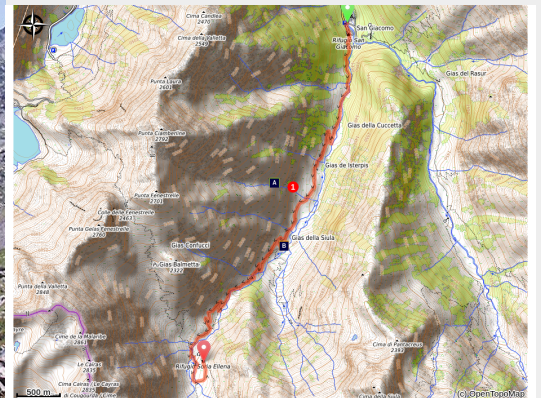


The Soria Ellena Refuge

Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime - Entracque



Il Pianoro del Praiet si apre a monte del Passaggio di Peirastretta (Roberto Pockaj)



A relatively comfortable ascent, entirely on a dirt road (with possible shortcuts on the path) and with some steeper sections, leads to the pleasant Piano del Praiet, a large grazing plain at the edge of which stands the Soria Ellena Refuge.

The Vallone della Barra, up which the trail climbs after a cool initial tract through beech woods, opens onto broad, sunny pastures. This valley was chosen by Park management as the site for releases of bearded vultures in the international reintroduction program.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 2 h 18

Length : 6.9 km

Trek ascent : 617 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Round trip

Themes : Fauna, Refuge

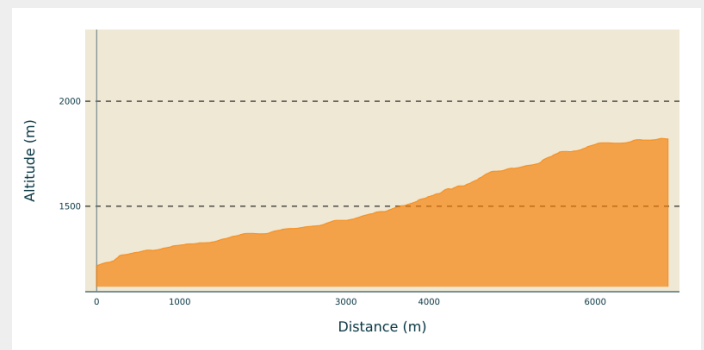
Trek

Departure : San Giacomo di Entracque (1226 m)

Arrival : Soria Ellena Refuge (1840 m)

Cities : 1. Entracque

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1217 m Max elevation 1823 m

After San Giacomo di Entracque (1226 m), shortly beyond the park hiking refuge, the road becomes unpaved and, with a few switchbacks, rises up into the Vallone della Barra.

The beech woods rapidly thin out and give way to lush meadows interspersed by occasional patches of brush. The trail continues to climb at a mild gradient, near the valley floor; passing to the right of the Gias Isterpis, recently restructured, the trail continues on a long traverse until it reaches Piazzale dei Cannoni, where it passes by a mule track on the left leading to the Gias della Siula.

The road climbs with two switchbacks (shortcut possible here), then proceeds, alternating traverses and occasional switchbacks: at about 1650 m, next to a switchback heading right and at the foot of a rocky outcropping, there is another small path leading off to the left, easy to see but a bit difficult, that shortens the route.

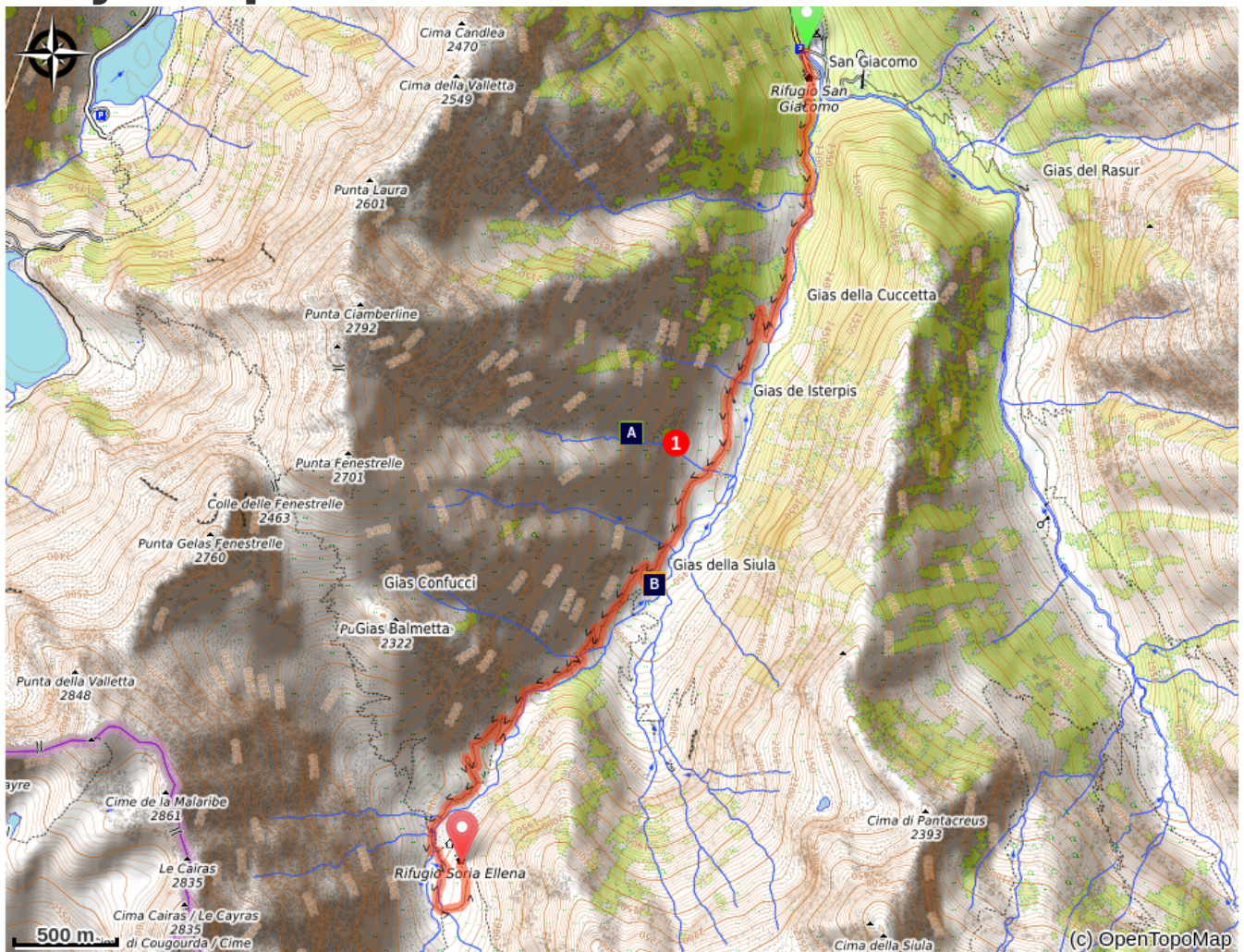
After passing the narrow bottleneck known as the Passaggio di Peirastretta, the steepest part of the trail is finished: passing by the trail for Colle di Fenestrelle on the right, the dirt road fords the Gesso della Barra torrent at the mouth of the Piano del Praiet plateau.

Hikers should cross the torrent on the wooden footbridge, a few meters to the left of the ford. Just over the footbridge, there is a fork: the route continues on the left fork and, on a trail half-hidden by weeds, leads to the Praiet shelter. Here the trail turns right and climbs up a steep ramp over a rocky ridge, atop which stands the Soria Ellena Refuge (1840 m, 2 hours and 10 minutes - 2 hours and 20 minutes from San Giacomo di Entracque).

If you prefer to avoid this tract of trail as well, after crossing the footbridge, follow the dirt track leading southward into the broad pastures of the Piano del Praiet until it meets another branch of the torrent, just at the turnoff on the right for Colle di Finestra and the Pera de Fener.

The track fords this stream as well and, turning sharply northward, climbs up the hillside to the Soria Ellena Refuge.

On your path...



The bearded vulture (A)



The Piazzale dei Cannoni (B)

All useful information

Is in the midst of the park

The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors.

How to come ?

Transports

Nuova Benese service company - Regular line Cuneo, Valdieri, Entracque -
Telephone: 00 39 (0) 171 69 29 29 - www.benese.it

SNCF line TER Provence Alpes-Côte d'Azur For travel in the PACA region and towards Cuneo www.ter-sncf.com/pac

Trenitalia for travel in the Piedmont region <https://www.trenitalia.com/it.html>

Access

From Borgo San Dalmazzo go up the Valle Gesso. After Valdieri, turn left for Entracque. Before the village, turn right for San Giacomo and then right again for San Giacomo. Always follow the signs for San Giacomo. Paid parking in the summer season.

Advised parking

San Giacomo di Entracque (1226 m)

On your path...



The bearded vulture (A)

The bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), also known as the lamb vulture, has a wingspan that can reach 285cm and can weigh more than 6 kilos. An accomplished glider, it can exploit even the mildest ascending thermals. It is a carrion eater, feeding exclusively on carcasses of dead animals, ungulates for the most part, both wild and domestic. It consumes bones, cartilage and ligaments, and is known to drop bones from great heights in order to break them into manageable pieces. Monogamous and long-lived, the bearded vulture nests on rocky cliff faces at altitudes between 1,000 and 3,000 meters.

Attribution : Michelangelo Giordano



The Piazzale dei Cannoni (B)

The name Piazzale dei Cannoni, or better still, Piana dei Cannoni, is due to the presence there of the 181st Artillery Battery, armed with 210/8 mortars, during the Second World War. The mortar emplacements are just south of the dirt road, along the slope, but they are not easy to spot. On the opposite side of the valley, across the torrent, there are the remains of probable logistical outposts and even an open-air kitchen.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj