



Swiss National Park

graubünden

Protect

The Swiss National Park is a strictly protected wilderness where flora and fauna can develop freely and natural processes are allowed to run their course unhindered.

Thanks to the vision of far-sighted pioneers Switzerland's first national park, the oldest in the Alps, was founded more than 100 years ago. According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) the Swiss National Park (SNP) belongs to the highest category – the «Champions League» – of strict nature reserves. Such a high status carries obligations. Within the Park it is not permitted to leave the marked paths; it is prohibited to pick flowers, mow meadows, kill animals or cut down trees. Nature is left untouched; nothing must be changed.

It is not just a question of protection of species; the entire habitat, with all its natural dynamic processes, is strictly protected – fallen trees, avalanches and mudslides also come into this category. The comprehensive and consistent philosophy that has been a crucial element of the SNP since its foundation on 1st August 1914 also guarantees its future development.

Research

How does nature develop without human intervention? Research projects and long-term observation programmes allow scientists to understand complex processes more clearly.

Scientists from various research institutes use this unique open-air laboratory to gain further knowledge of the development of Alpine species and habitats. Minimal human disturbance and the many years of research carried out by earlier generations of scientists offer ideal conditions for a variety of research activities.

The SNP has a unique series of data that have been collected over a considerable period, making it a highly attractive research site. The first long-term observation areas were set up in 1917, since when investigations have been carried out and documented on a regular basis.

SNP field researchers can be easily recognised by their coloured jackets and are always glad to give information about their activities.

Inform

Excursions in the National Park offer a fascinating experience amidst a truly natural landscape. It is well worth visiting the National Park Centre before setting off.

Walking in an untouched natural environment, observing marmots close to, seeing edelweiss growing alongside the path, looking out for a sighting of a bearded vulture, chatting with a Park warden: these are all unforgettable experiences that leave a lasting impression.

The SNP has put together a vast amount of information with the aim of giving visitors a clear idea of how nature interconnects; we hope this will encourage visitors to join us in protecting our natural environment.

Guided excursions, nature trails, teacher training courses, activities for children and schools, lectures, exhibitions, digital walking guides, and various publications: all these are elements of the SNP's environmental awareness programme.

The National Park Centre in Zernez offers a vast array of interactive, hands-on displays and activities, making it an ideal place for young and old to visit before or after a walk in the Park.



Protection regulations

The SNP is one of the best protected areas in the Alps. Visitors are able to witness the dynamic processes that lend this landscape its unique character.

Park wardens are present to enforce the maintenance of the Park regulations and it is their duty to report any contraventions.



Extract from the National Park regulations:

- It is forbidden to leave the marked paths
- It is forbidden to throw away, leave, or bury litter, and to light fires
- Nothing (plants, wood, stones, animals etc.) may be picked or removed
- Dogs are not allowed in the Park, not even on a lead
- No winter sports (skiing or snowshoeing), cycling or flying of any sort are permitted
- Bathing in lakes, pools, streams and rivers is not permitted
- Overnight stays are forbidden, including in parked cars alongside the main Pass dal Fuorn (Ofenpass) road
- Nature must be left undisturbed

Untouched nature

A glance skywards, sharp ears and a sensitive nose: if you remain alert whilst walking in the National Park you will surely enjoy fascinating experiences.

If you want to admire the myriad colours of the alpine flora, we recommend a visit during the months of June and July. This is also the best time to observe young animals. For walks at higher altitudes, such as the Macun lake plateau or Fuorcla Val Sassa, it is best to come in July or August.

The second half of September sees the spectacular rutting season of the red deer. During October the larch forests of the Engadine turn to dazzling gold. Come winter the National Park is closed, allowing the animals to spend the hardest months of the year in their winter quarters, with no disturbance.

Wilderness areas offer unique opportunities to learn about and understand the complexity of natural processes. In treating Nature respectfully we ensure that these havens remain unspoilt so that future generations will also be able to experience the wonders of an untouched natural world.



Facts & Figures

Aims: protect, research, inform
Area: 170.3 km²
Established: 1st August 1914
Municipalities: Zernez, Scuol, S-chanf, Val Müstair
Legal status: foundation governed by public law
Altitude: 1400 – 3173 m above sea level (Piz Pisoc)
Structure: 28 % forest, 21 % alpine meadows, 51 % rock/scree
Bedrock: 80% dolomite and limestone
Mammals: 38 species
Birds: 100 species, of which 60 nest in the Park
Invertebrates: 5000 species
Higher plants: 650 species
Marked paths: 21 routes, altogether 80 km
Visitors per year: approximately 150,000



Looking to the future

Ensuring conservation whilst at the same time allowing development to continue are the key aims of the future. Collaboration at all levels – regional, national and international – is essential.

Since 2010 the SNP and Biosfera Val Müstair together constitute a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. With the proposed extension of the peripheral zone into the Engadine valley the UNESCO label should be definitively secured.

On a national level collaboration with Swiss parks is of prime importance. At the moment two further national parks are in the process of development, and there are various regional nature parks throughout Switzerland.

Cooperation and ecological connectivity within the entire Alpine region is an important concern. ALPARC, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, plays a major role in this context.

www.biosfera.ch
www.paerke.ch
www.alparc.ch

