



Swiss National Park (SNP) since 1914
Area: 170.3 km²
Number of municipalities: 5
Inhabitants: 7000
Canton of Grisons



The Swiss National Park Centenary

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In 2014 the Swiss National Park (SNP) will be 100 years old. It is not only the oldest national park in the Alps, but also the most well protected. When the park was founded in 1914, the nature conservancy pioneers of those days wanted to leave a piece of the Swiss mountain landscape entirely to its own natural development and to explore the resulting changes. The result of this was one of the most important “open-air laboratories” throughout the whole of the Alps. From the start it was important to the promoters to inform the public about the national park and its development. In the meantime the SNP has developed to a nature education centre that brings nature and the wilderness closer to all those interested.

In spite of two world wars, economic crises and tourist development, Switzerland has succeeded in maintaining this island of natural sovereignty. The strict ideas for its protection and the systematic implementation are recognised internationally. The SNP is a unique reference area for scientific research, but great importance is also attached to its function as a place for understanding nature. Every year around 150,000 people visit the SNP, of which three quarters come from our own country.

In the «Wild East» of Switzerland

The SNP is in the canton of Grisons, in the eastern corner of Switzerland, on the border to Italy. It comprises an area of 170 km², which is similar in size to the Principality of Liechtenstein. It is part of the Engadine Dolomites with its characteristic loose scree slopes. Since the foundation of the park, human intervention is no longer permitted in the SNP, so that natural processes can freely take effect. No animals are hunted, no trees are felled and no meadows are mown. Visitors must keep to the 80 kilometres of marked walking trails. This total protection is unique throughout the whole of the Alps and also a reason why wild animals can be particularly easily observed in the SNP. According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the SNP belongs to category I in the “strictly-protected nature reserves” or “wilderness areas”.

Inspire enthusiasm for nature

With its wide range of offers, the national park presents to all those interested both exceptional experiences in the preserved nature and makes them aware of the ecological relationships. An important element in this educational work is the excursions, in which the personal experience is at the focus of attention. Every year about 5000 people take advantage of a guided tour, which provides the opportunity of discovering the secrets of the SNP with its abundant flora and fauna.

For preparing and following-up a park visit, the national park centre which was opened in 2008 in Zernez, offers a wide range of opportunities. The principle item is the comprehensive and interactive exhibition encompassing over 800 m² and offering a rich and diverse experience. This is supplemented with personal information, digital information systems, temporary exhibitions and a shop. Almost 40,000 people visit the new centre every year.

www.nationalpark.ch