

Editorial by Heinrich Haller



The current edition of *eco.mont* contains eight articles that are relevant not only to the subject of protected areas research and management but also to the geographical area that this journal covers, namely mountain areas. The studies in this issue refer to the Alps (3), the Carpathians (2), the Pontic Mountains, the Tian Shan and the Andes (see map on the inside back cover). There is a common theme – all the papers deal with practical questions concerning specific information and the approach to protected areas, although the topics and the spatial scale vary considerably.

The first and last articles are about animals in the Alps (insects and the fire salamander) as well as the people – more precisely, schoolchildren – who took part in these projects. The active involvement of the younger generation is a prime element

of the objectives that protected areas set out to achieve, and is particularly welcome. The other articles in this issue deal even more specifically with people; no fewer than three pieces from Central Europe look at questions of the impact of outdoor tourism and improved management thereof. In addition, from China we read about a mathematically-based method for delimiting the boundaries of a World Heritage Site, a paper from Turkey evaluates analysis factors and methods to find the most suitable management in a national park, and from Chile we discover more about the challenges faced by a biosphere reserve situated in a densely populated and therefore heavily frequented area.

Having been the director of a national park for almost 19 years, I am familiar with all these topics. Over the years I have been confronted with all of these issues in some form or another, which goes to show that the content of *eco.mont* corresponds to the needs of those responsible for the management of protected areas. It is important to be kept up to date with background knowledge of current problems and to be made aware of experts in specific fields, thereby facilitating the sharing of experiences. From this point of view, *eco.mont* has become an important platform alongside other bodies and instruments.

As far as experience is concerned, my employer, the Swiss National Park – the oldest national park in the Alps – has an important role to play. It is of course clear that any results must be put into a geographical context. The 100-year history of the SNP can nevertheless provide a stimulus, especially on a scientific level, considering that our institution is the prototype of a scientific nature protection area.

Our jubilee year (2014) has provided an opportunity not only to stage various high profile events and projects that honour our institution as a wilderness area and promote our name and status, but also to take stock of scientific research. This took place in the form of three comprehensive books (see references below), each of which without doubt provides a motivating influence.

Patrick Kupper's book *Wildnis schaffen*, published in 2012, looks at the history of the SNP in a transnational context and describes in more detail the foundation and running of the park as the first large-scale field laboratory. The *Atlas des Schweizerischen Nationalparks*, a comprehensive cartographic work produced in collaboration with more than 100 authors, came out in 2013 – just in time for the start of the jubilee year. There are 93 contributions, covering topics from springs to alpine flora and from dinosaur prints to traffic emissions on the Pass dal Fuorn, all of which are presented cartographically wherever possible. In early December 2014 another collaborative work, *Wissen schaffen* was published. Here we find a synthesis of the diversity of research carried out in the SNP and a summary of outstanding results. Some of the findings have been significant for our understanding of untouched nature and the processes that occur when nature is left to return to a state of wilderness.

These three books, as well as all the other SNP research contributions, provide us with an excellent scientific base as we go forward into the second century of our park. Much information is already available: for example, there is exceptional detail about the park's inventory, but ever more information is being revealed about ecosystem interactions and changes within the park. However, the overall view of the object, understanding the complexity of so many variables and their interaction over a period, will certainly keep us busy for a long time. This extremely demanding task will not be easy to accomplish, but every step brings us closer to an in-depth understanding and provides a basis for targeted management practices, as do the examples we find in this issue of *eco.mont*.

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The author of this editorial has been director of the Swiss National Park (SNP) since 1996. He studied at the University of Bern (CH) and was honoured with a professorship at the University of Göttingen (D). His specialist fields are mountain ecology in general, and large wild animals in the Alps in particular.

References

Kupper, P. 2012. *Wildnis schaffen. Eine transnationale Geschichte des Schweizerischen Nationalparks*. Nationalpark-Forschung Schweiz 97. Bern: Haupt Verlag. (English version 2014: *Creating Wilderness. A transnational history of the Swiss National Park*. New York: Berghahn Books).

Haller, H., A. Eisenhut & R. Haller (eds.) 2013. *Atlas des Schweizerischen Nationalparks. Die ersten 100 Jahre*. Nationalpark-Forschung Schweiz 99/I. Bern: Haupt Verlag (also available in French, 99/II).

Baur, B. & T. Scheurer (Red.) 2014. *Wissen schaffen. 100 Jahre Forschung im Schweizerischen Nationalpark*. Nationalpark-Forschung Schweiz 100/I. Bern: Haupt Verlag (2015 also available in French, 100/II).

Related projects according to the **European Mountain Pool**

At the editorial office of eco.mont, we maintain the **European Mountain Pool** on research in European protected mountain areas. http://4dweb.proclim.ch/4dcgi/ProtAreas/en/BuildSearch_ProtArea

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The effect of communicative and on-site measures on the behaviour of winter-sports participants within protected mountain areas – results of a field experiment by *Ursula Immoos & Marcel Hunziker*

Trail management, off-trail walking and visitor impact in the Pieniny Mts National Park (Polish Carpathians) by *Anna Kolasinska, Paweł Adamski, Szymon Ciapała, Juraj Svajda & Zbigniew Witkowski*

Management alternatives in national park areas: the case of Ilgaz Mountain National Park by *Sevgi Öztürk & Sezgin Ayan*

Standards of quality for outdoor recreation in Tatra National Park: a contribution to integrated visitor monitoring and management by *Eva Streberová & L'ubica Jusková*

Related projects in the **European Mountain Pool**

Andreas Bernasconi: Forest recreation and sustainable management. CH-4725

Urska Drofenik: Mountain Biking in Protected Areas in Case of Triglav National Park. CH-5077

Reto Rupf: Management toolkit outdoor recreation and nature – MAFREINA. CH-3785

Arne Arnberger: Ökologische und soziale Tragfähigkeiten als Herausforderungen für das Management stadtnaher Biosphärenparks. CH-3448

Matthias Furrer: Situationsanalyse der Erholungsnutzung im Naturschutzreservat Aletschwald. CH-4536

David Horsfield: Cairngorms – Trampling and browsing damage. CH-1577

Münster Marc: Nachhaltigkeitsmanagement für Pärke. CH-4666

Adrian Kräuchi: Integrated management system for Swiss parks. CH-4665

Reto Rupf: Besuchermanagement im Parc Adula. CH-4944

Patrick Laube: Agenten-basierte Modellierung von Besucherströmen im Sihlwald / Langenberg. CH-4882