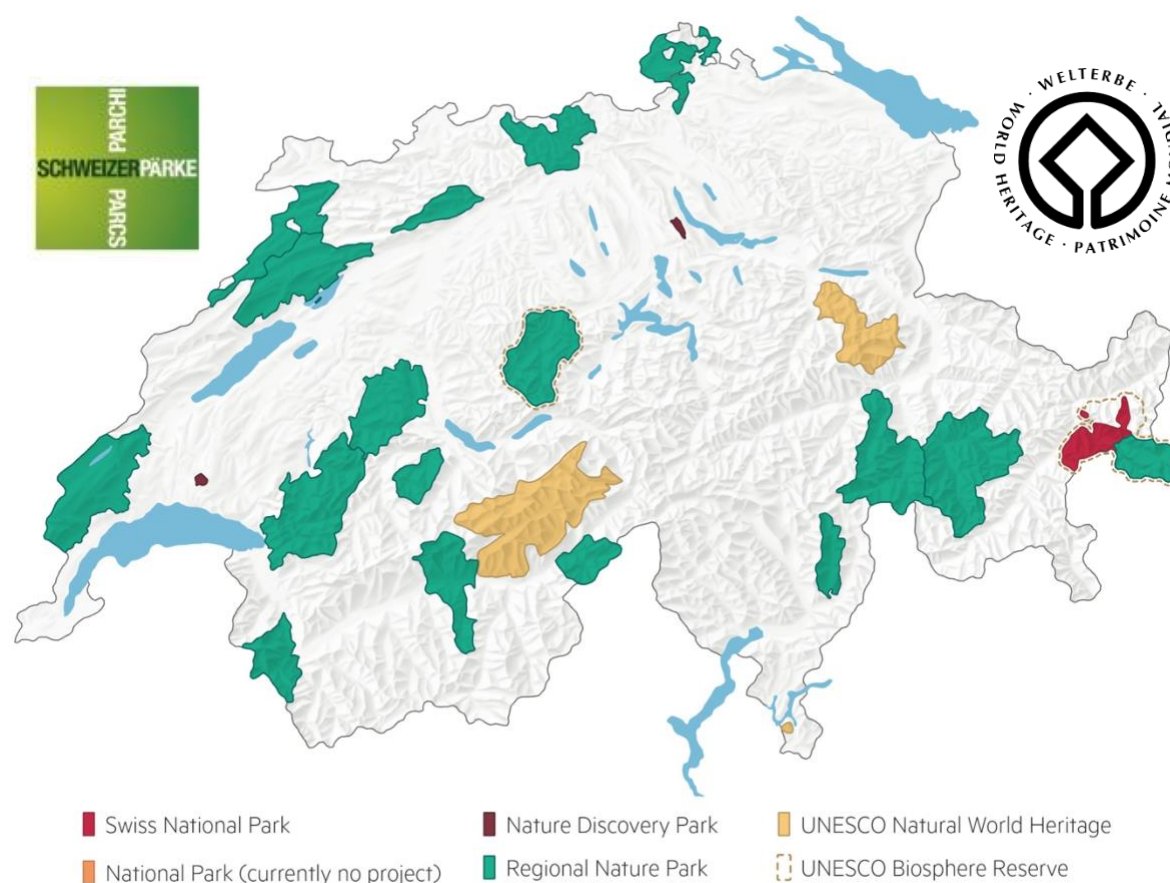


# Information leaflet on research in, around and about Swiss parks and UNESCO areas

*This leaflet is intended for all researchers who are researching or wish to research Swiss parks, biosphere reserves, world heritage sites or geoparks.*

## A brief look at the most important aspects

- If you are researching in, around or about a Swiss park, a biosphere reserve, a world heritage site or a geopark, we would ask you to please contact the park management.
- Contact details of those responsible for research in each area can be found at the [Swiss Parc Research Database](#) (click on the individual area).
- Those responsible for research can assist you with local knowledge, fundamental information and contacts, communication issues, permits and other requirements.
- Your research aids area and regional management, as your research activity contributes to regional development and regional aims and purposes.
- Data and research work is collected in a database, contributing to monitoring and the exchange of knowledge.



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Swiss parks and designated UNESCO areas are extraordinary regions notable for beautiful scenery and vibrant traditions. All of these regions endeavour to conserve natural, landscape and cultural assets and enhance economic development, education and research. The Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) issues three category labels for Swiss Parks. These include designated UNESCO areas that enjoy international recognition, namely natural world heritage sites and biosphere reserves. These types of regions pursue the aforementioned goals to differing degrees (see image below). Added to these are the UNESCO Geoparks, although no park in Switzerland currently bears this designation.

**Swiss National Park (IUCN Cat. Ia)**

- Ensuring unrestrained natural development
- Education and sensitization
- **Research**

**Regional Nature Parks**

- Preservation and enhancement of the cultural and natural landscape
- Promotion of sustainable management
- Education and awareness

**Nature Discovery Parks**

- Core zone: Ensuring unrestrained natural development
- Providing a variety of nature experiences
- Education and awareness

**UNESCO Natural World Heritage**

- Protection of OUV (outstanding universal value) sites / monitoring
- Education and awareness
- International cooperation
- **Research**

**UNESCO Biosphere Reserves**

- Preservation and enhancement of the cultural and natural landscape
- Promotion of sustainable management
- Education and awareness
- International cooperation
- **Research**



Source: Swiss Parks Network, 2022

Source: FOEN landscape conservation measures, Switzerland Tourism

**Research in, around and about Swiss parks and designated UNESCO areas**

Their special status and the goals pursued by parks, biosphere reserves, world heritage sites and geoparks regarding sustainable development make these regions increasingly important as reference and preferential areas for research. In addition to comparative research, they also play a significant role in applied, transdisciplinary and transformative research. On account of their status and legal bases, the Swiss National Park, UNESCO biosphere reserves, world heritage sites and geoparks are obliged to promote and coordinate research. This is voluntary in the case of regional nature parks and nature discovery parks. Monitoring and the measurement of success are issues of increasing importance in research activities for all types of areas.

**Swiss Parks Research coordination**

Swiss Parks Research is affiliated to the Forum Landscape, Alps, Parks (FoLAP) of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT). It coordinates research in, around and about Swiss parks and designated UNESCO areas at a national level by networking researchers and those responsible for research in the parks, identifying relevant issues and archiving research projects in a public database. These tasks receive strategic support from the [Monitoring Group Park Research](#).

The Swiss Parks Research coordination is happy to be of assistance in addressing overarching questions relating to coordination, topics and existing work. It provides support in the selection of regions and parks and in contacting those responsible for research in parks. It is also responsible for questions relating to and entries in the [Swiss Parc Research Database](#). FoLAP also publishes a [list](#) of existing research fellowships in the areas of landscape, the Alps and parks, and provides a [marketplace](#) for student and research work.

[www.parkforschung.ch](http://www.parkforschung.ch), [parkforschung@scnat.ch](mailto:parkforschung@scnat.ch), +41 31 306 93 43

**Researchers in parks and designated UNESCO areas**

In the park management team, the majority of parks and all designated UNESCO areas have an individual who is responsible for research and who coordinates, supports and/or helps shape research activities. The Swiss National Park has its own [Research Commission](#). Other areas have a research concept (e.g. Naturpark Thal), a scientific advisory board (e.g. TAS) or are associated with a university chair (e.g. the UNESCO SAJA chair). **Contact details of those responsible for research in each area** can be most easily found through the [Swiss Parc Research Database](#): Simply

click on the respective park on the map. This activates details about the park and contact information.

All park management bodies have a fundamental interest in the research being conducted in, around and about the respective park and are happy to support any research projects. However, they do not have individual financial means to support this research.

**Whenever you, your research group or students of your university are researching in, around or about a Swiss park, a biosphere reserve, a world heritage site or a geopark, we ask you to please contact the park management.** This also applies to research on the (spatial or thematic) environment of the regions. Direct contact offers you the following advantages:

- *Excellent knowledge of the terrain:* The park management knows the region very well and can, if necessary, provide you with valuable information for your project.
- *Access to data and literature:* Regional authorities have data, geodata and literature from earlier research, monitoring and implementation projects and are happy to share this with researchers. See also the [Parcs Data Center](#).
- *Contact with local stakeholders:* The park management has excellent networks with a variety of stakeholders, particularly cantonal and local authorities, farmers, forestry staff, etc., and is happy to provide contacts and valuable information on establishing contact. This can also contribute to the support and promotion of transdisciplinary research.
- *Obtaining of permits and/or access to locations:* Access to certain locations is limited, including for research, or it may be necessary to obtain a permit. The park management can help you obtain a permit, grant direct access where appropriate or inform local stakeholders (e.g. farmers) about your project. Individual parks such as the Swiss National Park issue their own permits. The park management can also provide assistance in obtaining informal authorisation (e.g. from landowners) and information on the rules that apply locally (e.g. which areas may be accessed, and when).
- *Support in the implementation of projects:* Assistants can be found among park management personnel, freelancers and local networks for the implementation of research activities (support during fieldwork, surveying and excursions, etc.).
- *Support during the communication of research findings:* The park management maintains constant contact and communication with the population and has its own expertise and communication channels. These are willingly provided for events such as joint media releases. Events such as presentations and conferences are frequently organised together with the park and research team.
- *Assistance with the entry in the Swiss Parc Research Database:* The park management is happy to amalgamate and forward your projects and publications for entry in the [Swiss Parc Research Database](#).
- *Exchange with other researchers:* Some park management bodies organise regular exchanges among researchers in their park. This can provide support for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teams and new project ideas.
- *Some parks offer the opportunity to book inexpensive accommodation, expense allowances, receive nature park snacks, etc.* Some parks and designated UNESCO areas can provide researchers with additional support. Please contact the respective management in this respect.