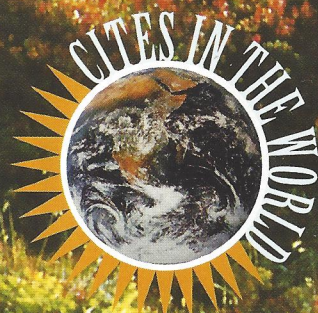


SWITZERLAND



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C

onservation of wild fauna has a long history in Switzerland.

Hunting regulations are reported from as early as the XIV century. In the XV century, some Cantons introduced licensing requirements, closed seasons and temporary hunting bans for certain species, including ibex, chamois and marmot. The XVI Century saw the establishment of two large game reserves in the Canton of Glaris (see box), which exist still today. In the XVII Century some Cantons banned the use of traps and snares for the catching of certain mammals and of birds (e.g. Lucerne and Berne).

Following the French Revolution, the term "égalité" was interpreted in a way such that hunting was a basic right of all citizens and, after the conquest of Switzerland by Napoléon Bonaparte's armies in 1798, most of the existing hunting regulations were resumed. Following this deregulation, the wildlife populations collapsed. After a few decades, larger mammals had become extremely scarce and when, in 1875, the first Federal Law on Hunting and the Protection of Birds entered into force, beaver, wolf, ibex, red deer and wild boar had completely disappeared. The roe deer was restricted to some areas along the Swiss-German border, and the chamois was the only ungulate species still having a wider distribution in the Alps, although its density was low. Two of the large carnivores were still present but since they had to rely on the killing of sheep and goats for food, they were severely persecuted and their num-

bers became lower and lower. The last lynx was shot in 1894, the last brown bear ten years later.

The 1875 Law aimed to increase the stocks of herbivorous animals and game birds by affording total or far-reaching protection to females and juveniles, by totally protecting certain species, and by establishing a network of Federal Game Reserves. The hunting seasons for carnivores were also restricted. The use of traps and snares was banned, except for trapping fox, marten, polecat and otter, and the use of poison was generally prohibited. This law was replaced in 1904 by a new one which, among other things, extended the list of protected birds. A third law, adopted in 1925, introduced the negative-listing concept for birds: all species were protected except those explicitly designated as open to hunters. This law was revised several times and in 1986

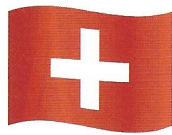
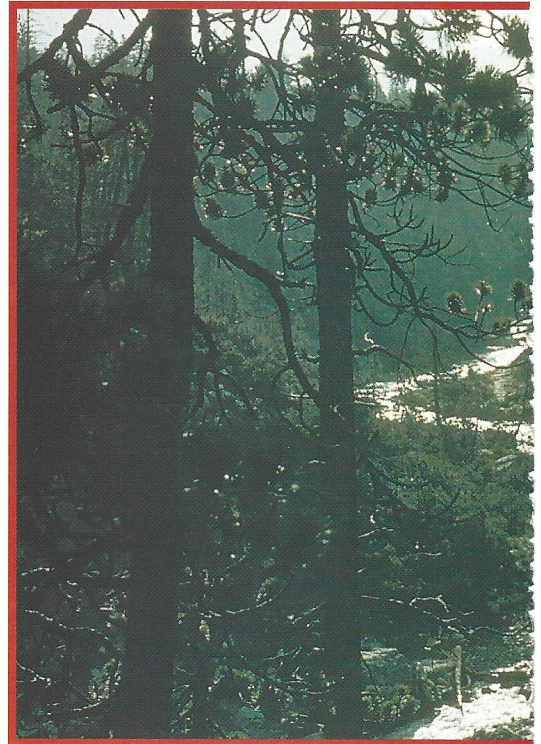


PHOTO: PETER DOLLINGER/LIEBEFELD-BERNE

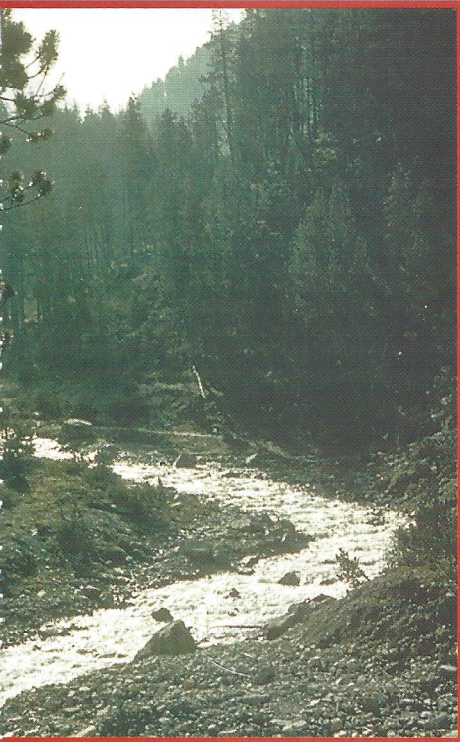


The Fuorn River in the Swiss National Park, located in the Lower Engadine Valley.

Two female mountain goats (*Capra ibex ibex*) in the Gemmenalphorn hillsides.



PHOTO: PETER DOLLINGER/LIEBEFELD-BERNE



Thirteen percent of Swiss territory was declared “landscapes of national importance” in 1966, when the Law on the Protection of Nature and Landscape went into force.

SWITZERLAND



Population: 7,000,000 inhabitants.

Urban population: 70 percent.

Population density: 170 inhab./sq.km.

Area: 41,294 sq.km.

Capital: Berne.

Other major cities: Zurich, Basel, Geneva, Lausanne, Winterthur, Lucerne.

Languages: Swiss German (62 percent), French (19 percent), Italian (7 percent), Romansh (1 percent), other (11 percent).

Religion: Mostly Roman Catholic (46 percent) and Protestant (40 percent).

Currency: Swiss Franc.

People: While its roots date back to the XIII Century, Switzerland was internationally recognized as an independent, sovereign state in the year 1648. The country is a democratic Confederation made up of 26 Cantons with a total of 3,018 municipalities. Eighty-two percent of its inhabitants are Swiss and 18 percent foreigners, predominantly from EU countries and from former Yugoslavia.

Geography: The Swiss Alps are Europe's headwater region. They form a watershed between several catchment areas, the most important being the Aare/Rhine (to the North Sea), the Rhone/Doubs (to the Mediterranean Sea), the Ticino (via the Po to the Adriatic Sea), the Rom (via the Adige to the Adriatic Sea) and the Inn (via the Danube to the Black Sea). The Alps, with peaks of up to 4,634 meters above sea level, also separate the southern valleys with their Mediterranean climate and flora and fauna from the Plateau, which is a typical central European landscape. To the north, the Plateau is confined by the Jura mountains which run along the western and northern border of the country. Forests cover 27.6 percent of Switzerland.

Most endangered species: Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*, possibly extinct), Lynx (*Felis lynx*, reintroduced), Bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*, reintroduced), Corncrake (*Crex crex*), Scops owl (*Otus scops*), Viperine snake (*Natrix maura*), Warty newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

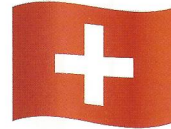
Hardly any species is threatened by hunting. But human settlement, environmental pollution and very intense agricultural land use have an extremely negative impact on the wild fauna and flora.

was replaced by a new, more comprehensive Law on Hunting and the Protection of Wild Mammals and Birds.

While fishing has also been regulated at the federal level since 1875, wild flora, invertebrates, amphibia, reptiles and small mammals have enjoyed federal protection only since 1966, when the Law on the Protection of Nature and Landscape went into force. This law also designates 13 percent of the Swiss territory as "landscapes of national importance" and affords protection to specific types of habitat, such as 10,000 hectares of riverine forest.

The Swiss National Park – an area of about 17,000 hectares in the Lower Engadine Valley and with a summer population of more than

4,000 ungulates – was proclaimed in 1914 by a "Federal Decision." Also, 41 Federal Game Reserves – totalling 149,380 hectares and jointly containing about 15,000 chamois, 4,200 ibex, 1,400 roe deer, 1,200 red deer and so on – as well as nine Ramsar Reserves and two Migratory Bird Reserves of national importance have been established under the Federal Hunting Law. In addition, there are a large number of Cantonal Game Reserves.



THE CURRENT STATUS

The Federal Hunting Legislation resulted in the restoration of most of the large mammalian species: the chamois population recovered and totals today 88,000 head. The roe deer spread over all suitable areas, and its official population size is now 111,000, which may be well below the real figure. The red deer immigrated from Austria at the beginning of this century, and more than 21,000 animals occupy the whole eastern half of the country today. The wild boar, having immigrated from France, is now widely distributed in the western and northern parts of Switzerland, and small populations of mouflon and sika deer established themselves from animals having been released or having escaped in France and in Germany.

The reintroduction of the ibex is a success story per se. In the entire Alpine range only one herd of about sixty animals had survived in the King of Italy's hunting reserve (later the Gran Paradiso National Park). In 1906, two illegally captured ibex from this herd were purchased and smuggled across the border. The costs for this acquisition were 1,819

UNDER CONTROL

The Federal Veterinary Office is divided into five divisions. The International Traffic Division, more specifically its Endangered Species Section – which consists of one biologist, one veterinarian and 1.5 posts for clerical staff – is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of CITES.

Annually, the Section issues about 3,500 import permits for wild animals (including unprotected species) and wild animal products, and about 20,000 export permits/re-export certificates. Normally, a re-export certificate is processed within 24 hours.

CITES border controls of live animals and animal products are carried out by eight full-time and 25 part-time Border Veterinary Officers who are either employed or contracted by the Border Vet Section of the Division.

Inland controls may be carried out by staff of the Division or, upon request, by the Cantonal Veterinary or Wildlife Services.

The Customs Investigation Service is responsible for the prosecution of infractions.



PHOTO: PETER DOLLINGER/LIEBEFELD-BERNE



A red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris fuscoater*) in a park in downtown Basel.

Swiss franc – including a fine of 36 francs for the illegal import of two ruminants into Switzerland. (Incidentally, a member of the Swiss Veterinary Service committed this infraction!) In the same year, a third kid was received, and more animals followed – some legal, some illegal. All animals were kept in a small zoo at St. Gall where, in 1909, they started to breed. In 1911 the first five ibex were released in the Swiss Alps, and today the total Swiss population exceeds 15,000 animals. Other species which have been reintroduced more recently are the beaver, the lynx, the white stork and the

bearded vulture.

Following the involuntary introduction of *Dreissena polymorpha*, a freshwater mussel, Swiss lakes have become a most important feeding ground and wintering area for various duck species. Up to 7,000 goldeneyes, 50,000 pochards, 211,000 tufted ducks and many other waterfowl from Northern Europe congregate annually in our Ramsar Reserves.

The annual take by the 32,000 Swiss hunters includes about 70,000 ungulates, 46,000 carnivores, 12,000 hares and marmots, and 125,000 birds. While this is sus-

tainable – and hardly any species is threatened by hunting, capturing or collecting – human settlement (every year another 2,400 hectares of land are covered with buildings or tarred roads), environmental pollution (e.g. by PCBs) and, most of all, very intense agricultural land use have an extremely negative impact on the wild fauna and flora.

This impact is reflected by a long "red list" which includes – in the categories "extinct," "highly endangered" and "seriously threatened" – 18 percent of the mosses, 24 percent of the ferns and flowering plants, 8.2 percent of the 376 vertebrate species and 23 percent of the 2,369 invertebrates which have been included in the review. Formerly common species dependent on fields and meadows, such as the partridge, have disappeared from the major part of the midlands, and others, such as brown hare and field lark, which are still widely distributed, occur at low densities only. Hopefully, the new agricultural policy which must be introduced under the rules of the World Trade Organization will lead to increases in the populations of these species.

PHOTO: PETER DOLLINGER/LIEBEFELD-BERNE



Chamois (*Rupicapra r. rupicapra*) in Vanil Noir in the canton of Friburgo.



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CITES

Unlike in most other countries, CITES is implemented in Switzerland not by a nature conservation authority but by the Veterinary and Phytosanitary Services. In a country that is mainly importing and re-exporting, and where hardly any specimens are taken from the wild for the purpose of international trade, this has some advantages. The Federal Veterinary Office (which is the principal Management Authority) and the Phytosanitary Service of the Federal Office for Agriculture have their own agents at the border. This means that CITES border controls are carried out by specialized Border Veterinary Officers and Plant Health Inspectors and not just by Customs officials.

When issuing import permits for live animals, the Federal Veterinary Office will deal with CITES as well as all relevant animal health and animal welfare aspects. Similarly, an import permit for meat from a CITES-listed species will not only ensure that CITES rules are respected, but will also define the guarantees to be given with regard to public health. This approach facilitates the paperwork and is very much appreciated by the applicants.

Another unique aspect is that Swiss Management Authorities are responsible not only for Switzerland but also for the Principality of Liechtenstein, since the two countries form a Customs Union. However, Liechtenstein remains involved as it has designated its own Scientific Authority (ScA). Both the Swiss ScA (which is a Committee of nine zoological or botanical experts) and the

Liechtenstein ScA (the Director of the State Forestry Office) annually hold three joint meetings in Switzerland and one in Liechtenstein.

As can be seen from the annual reports of the Federal Veterinary Office, trade in live animals is decreasing. This may be due to the stringent animal welfare legislation, which subjects trade in animals and the keeping of certain wild animal species to a cantonal licence and which sets minimum keeping standards for many species. On the other hand, trade in reptile leather and its products continues to be very important. Most of the yearly 20,000 export/re-export documents are issued for the re-export of reptile leather watch straps. The issuance of such a large number of documents means a significant administrative burden with which the Office can cope only thanks to a sophisticated computer program. Another burden with limited value for conservation is the monitoring of the huge trade in artificially propagated plants which



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Aletsch Glacier Reserve in the Swiss Alps.

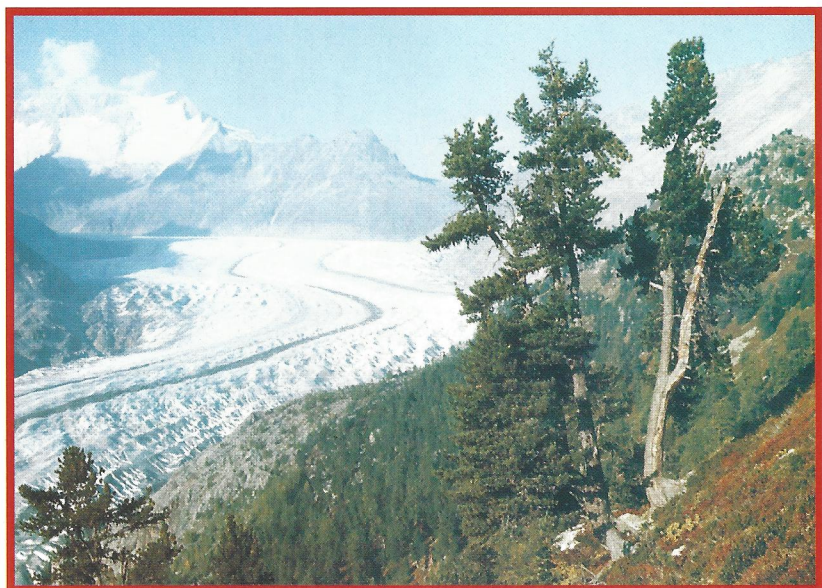


PHOTO: HARTMUT JUNGUIS/WWF

comprised 3.8 million Appendix-II specimens in 1993.

THE DEPOSITARY GOVERNMENT

To other Parties, Switzerland is best known as "The Depositary Government" which, in this capacity, is the only permanent member of the Standing Committee (although with limited voting rights).

To be the Depositary Government means that all other Parties must send their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession, their reservations against amendments of the appendices or any de-

nunciation of their membership to the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs which then deposits these documents in its archives and notifies all Parties accordingly. Although strictly legally Switzerland has no other obligations, the Swiss Government had felt morally obliged to do a bit more, especially as Switzerland is also the host country of the CITES Secretariat. In this spirit the country offered to host, in 1976, the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Berne, and provided funding to hold the 1989 meeting in Lausanne, after another Party was unable to maintain its invitation.

Representatives of the Swiss Authorities took – and still take – an active part in almost all CITES committees and working groups. Furthermore, a lot of labor and money is invested in the CITES Identification Manual, and many special projects are financially supported.

Switzerland believes that CITES will be a useful tool in conservation if Parties do their best to implement it properly and as long as – at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties – the text of the Convention is respected, decisions are based on science, and Parties refrain from using double standards. ☉

A PROTECTED PARADISE

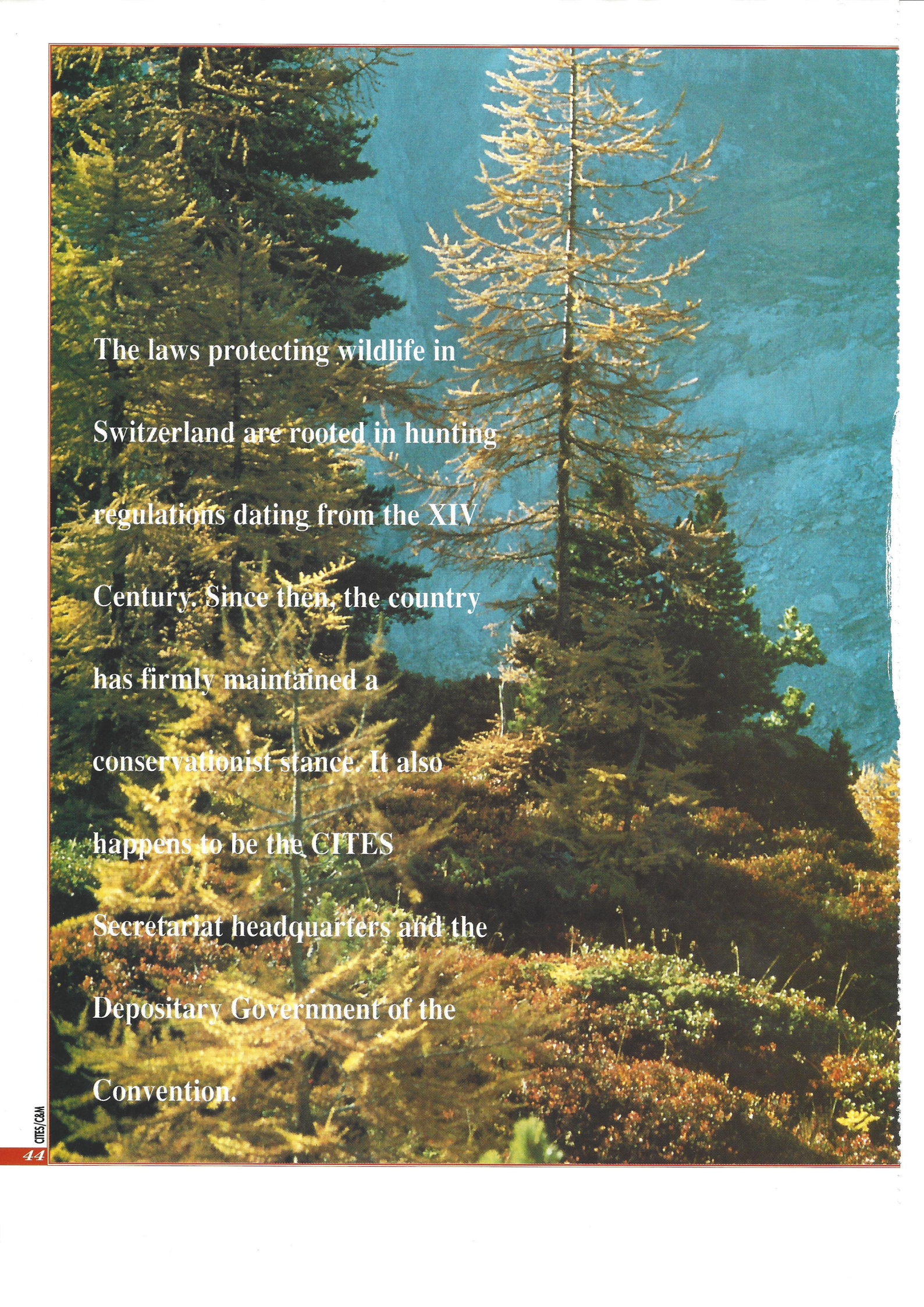
The World's oldest game reserve that is still in existence today is the 10,200 hectare Kärpf Mountain Reserve in the Canton of Glaris. The reserve, locally called "Fryberg" (free mountain), was proclaimed by the "Landsgemeinde," the Citizen's Assembly, of Glaris in 1548. After twenty years, the reserve was deproclaimed, but as the ungulate populations dwindled rapidly, the Landsgemeinde reestablished it the following year, and it has remained protected ever since.

The protection of the game in the "Fryberg" was, however, not absolute. The "Frybergsschützen," the official game wardens, were charged with shooting annually a certain number of chamois, which were then presented to members of the government, to foreign ambassadors, and – on the occasion of their wedding – to reputed citizens of the Canton. In 1875, the "Fryberg" became a federal game reserve in the terms of the Federal Hunting Law.

Today, 447 years after its first proclamation, the "Fryberg" is one of the most important protected areas of Switzerland. It is characterized by a high biological diversity, including wetlands, subalpine hay meadows, deciduous and coniferous forests, alpine grasslands, rocky cliffs and mountain peaks and boulder-slopes. The reserve hosts a rich alpine avifauna

including, among others, capercaillie, black grouse, hazel hen, ptarmigan, golden eagle, eagle owl, raven, alpine chough, nutcracker, wallcreeper and citril finch. The smaller mammals are represented by an important alpine marmot population of nearly 500 animals, and many other species such as brown and blue hare, red fox, badger, and pine and beech marten. Although a few lynx hunt on the steep slopes of the "Fryberg," the important ungulate stock of about 100 ibex, 120 red deer, 140 roe deer and 770 chamois still needs to be regulated by the game wardens.

The area of the "Fryberg" is a prime example of sustainable multiple land use: apart from being a game reserve, it provides grazing for livestock; timber and firewood are extracted from its forests; and, while some sources supply drinking water to the neighboring communities, several of its waters feed a hydroelectric power plant. A cableway leads up to an altitude of 1,600 metres where a dam, well stocked with trout, and a restaurant are enjoyed by both fishermen and tourists. Hikers continue to the hut of the Swiss Alpine Club beautifully situated at 2,272 meters above sea level and, if well trained, may mount another 522 meters to the peak of the Kärpf Mountain.



The laws protecting wildlife in Switzerland are rooted in hunting regulations dating from the XIV Century. Since then, the country has firmly maintained a conservationist stance. It also happens to be the CITES Secretariat headquarters and the Depository Government of the Convention.