

Snow variability impact on Swiss tourism

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Swiss ski areas are located on average at higher altitude than those of neighbouring countries. The ski industry, therefore, is expected to be less affected in Switzerland than in the other European alpine countries. Still, snowmaking facilities prove to be valuable in Switzerland under the current climate for reducing the short-term sensitivity of skier visits to the natural snow conditions.

Climate change could modify visitation rates at ski areas not only through a reduction in snowpack, but also through, for instance, a change in sunshine duration at higher elevation sites; sunny conditions at ski areas positively influence the number of skier visits.

Poor snow conditions in lower lying ski areas increase the number of skier visits in higher lying ones; climate change may result in a spatial substitution of favourable ski areas.

Source: Gonseth, 2013. Climatic Change 119: 307–320.

Photo: Trailsource.com (www.flickr.com)