

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 34 (2007)
Heft: 2

Artikel: Special-issue set of coins : new National Bank and National Park coins
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-907554>

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New National Bank and National Park coins

The Swiss National Bank celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. To commemorate the centenary, the federal mint – Swissmint – has produced a gold and a silver coin modelled on past and present banknotes. By contrast, the first of a new special-issue set of coins in the Swiss National Park series features an ibex. All the coins have been produced in a strictly limited edition.



100 years of the Swiss National Bank 2007, gold coin. Nominal value: CHF 50

100 years of the Swiss National Bank 2007, silver coin. Nominal value: CHF 20

Swiss National Park, ibex 2007, bimetallic coin. Nominal value: CHF 10

The new special-issue sets are dedicated to two of the country's most important institutions: the Swiss National Bank (SNB) and the Swiss National Park (SNP), the former as the custodian of the Swiss franc, the latter as a protected habitat for flora and fauna.

The double issue of a gold and a silver coin on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the National Bank underlines its significance for the country's welfare. The SNB first took up its role as independent central bank in 1907. Since then, it has sought to keep prices stable while taking economic changes into account, a basic condition for the development of the economy, for growth and prosperity. In addition, the National Bank supplies the market with banknotes, is responsible for distributing coins and is one of the main bodies responsible for underpinning the payments system. The Swiss National Bank has offices in Berne and Zurich.

The backs of the CHF 50 gold coin and CHF 20 silver coin depict artworks from two centuries. The silver coin depicts part of the current CHF 20 banknote containing the portrait of the Swiss composer Arthur Honegger (1892–1955) as drawn by the Genevan

artist Roger Pfund. For the gold coin, Swissmint chose "The woodcutter" by Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918), one of the artist's most famous works. "The woodcutter" formed part of a set commissioned by the National Bank from 1908, when Hodler was asked to design Switzerland's first set of banknotes. The image of the woodcutter was created for the CHF 50 note.

The bimetallic ibex coin is the first of a four-part series of coins that Swissmint will be issuing in honour of the Swiss National Park, and depicting selected wild animals native to Alpine regions. The National Park is the oldest park of its kind in the Alps, and is located in the Engadine and the Münstertal valley in the canton of Grisons. Since it was established in 1914, it has provided a unique refuge for local flora and fauna in an area of 170 square kilometres at an altitude of between 1400 and 3100 metres above mean sea level. Strict conservation regulations have earned the park international fame. The ibex is seen as the king of the wild animals of the Alps on account of its massive physique and mighty horns. Due to a misguided belief in the medicinal properties of various ibex prepara-

tions, the animal was hunted almost to extinction hundreds of years ago, and only survived in the Italian Gran Paradiso massif. It was from there that 100 young ibex were smuggled into Switzerland and resettled in the National Park in 1920. Today, somewhere between 300 and 450 ibex inhabit the park.

The special CHF 10 coin was designed by Grisons artist Gian Vonzun. The other coins in the four-part Swiss National Park series showing typical Alpine animals will be issued between 2008 and 2010. To symbolise our country's multilingualism, the term "Swiss National Park" is engraved in one of the four official languages on the outermost ring. As the first in the series, the ibex coin carries the Rhaeto-Romanic inscription "Parc Naziunal Svizzer".

The new special-issue coins are available from selected coin dealers, banks and over the Internet at www.swissmint.ch. The money raised from sales of the coins will be used to fund cultural projects throughout Switzerland.