

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 46 (2019)  
**Heft:** 4

**Vorwort:** An ornithological observation  
**Autor:** Lettau, Marc

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

#### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 18.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

# An ornithological observation

## 5 Mailbag

## 6 Focus

Thousands of young people are demanding consistent climate policy

## 11 Culture

Swiss cheese is a fan of hip-hop music

## 12 Society

The city of Geneva is moving closer to its lake

No precedent: The Federal Supreme Court annuls a popular vote

## 14 Politics

Clear-cut case: Switzerland tightens its gun laws

Perennial issue: Still no end in sight to the wrangling over old-age pensions

## 17 Literature series

Heinrich Anacker? Switzerland's embarrassment about its most "successful" poet

## 18 Politics / Elections 2019

e-voting comes up against strong resistance

The lack of transparency regarding party financing

## 22 OSA news

## 26 news.admin.ch

Useful facts on the coming parliamentary elections

## 28 Images

The monumental paintings of artist Franz Gertsch

## 30 Books / Sounds

## 31 Top pick / News



I am not an ornithologist. But I do like birds. Preferably those which are flying free, which are not stuck in a cage. I recently came across a bird I had never seen before, early one morning in the Bernese Alps. A strange, loud, rolling sound pierced the silence. What was that? A proud black grouse, *Lyrurus tetrix*, appeared on a nearby hill. Its magnificent blue-black plumage glistened, its tail feathers glowed white, and its crest red. Its call reverberated through the vast basin of the valley. Then it flew away. It was a stroke of luck for me. As a potentially endangered species, the animal is included on the Red List and has become so rare on the northern side of the Swiss Alps that I was highly unlikely to cross its path. This is nothing new: biodiversity is under extreme pressure in Switzerland too.

The Swiss parliament is also presently occupied with the topic of protected animals. It wants to permit the shooting of hitherto strictly protected animals. There is still disagreement about whether to now target wolves and beavers – or perhaps wolves and lynxes. It was further proposed that levels of protection of the grey heron, the goosander and the unremarkable woodcock should be relaxed. Our black grouse was also included in the debate. This raised the question in the Council of States as to why the Confederation puts endangered species – including the black grouse – on the Red List and then simultaneously permits their numbers to be depleted.

First protect, then decimate. That is clearly a dramatic change of position. Furthermore, the more contradictory established policy seems to be, the more incomprehensible it appears to outsiders. Perhaps this is why students are currently taking to the streets in their thousands. They are calling loudly for consistent climate policy, as this is the only way to avoid a potentially disastrous shift in the climate change process. They clearly have little confidence in policy to date.

From an ornithological perspective, the city centres on strike days can be compared to a noisy aviary. However, the old hands in the political establishment are increasingly responding to the youthful twittering: in light of the coming elections, the majority of Swiss parties are painting themselves green. This is reason enough for the "Swiss Review" to pay closer attention and explore the issue in depth. What makes the young people who are marching at the forefront of these demonstrations tick (Page 6)? MARC LETTAU, CHIEF EDITOR