

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 46 (2019)  
**Heft:** 6

**Rubrik:** Switzerland in figures : about Emmas, lightning strikes and waste

### **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:** 04.12.2025

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



Researcher Eva Knop and Dark-Sky activist Lukas Schuler observe an artificial light experiment in the star park. Photo: Marc Lettau

That is also necessary, says Eva Knop, a researcher at the University of Zurich and the Swiss Confederation's Centre of Excellence for agricultural research, Agroscope: "We still do not know enough about the ecological importance of the night." It is true that life as we know it couldn't even exist without the day-night cycles. However, we are only just starting to understand what happens when the night disappears. For example, Knop came to understand through her field research just how much artificial night light affects biodiversity. In the past, we did not see just how much occurs in the meadows at night, she says. A surprising number of insects pollinate flowers at night. "They do this a lot less when artificial light disturbs them," says Knop. Insects that are active during the day are not capable of compensating for the absence of nocturnal pollinators. If the subsequent experiments substantiate these initial findings, then this would unfortunately be a "new problem to address", says Knop.

### Clarity instead of bravery

In light of the seriousness of the situation, Mayor Hanspeter Schneider was also praised for his bravery in unscrewing fuses and prescribing more darkness for his municipality. Schneider waves that aside: "Bravery changes nothing at all. But the power of persuasion may do." This can only happen when the people living here understand the importance of a star park. Thus, a great deal depends on the principle of hope and mutual encouragement. When asked whether the "dark heart" would one day see more circumspect handling of the night beyond its limited borders, Dahinden responds: "It is written in the stars."

Further information on the topic:  
[www.sternenpark-gantrisch.ch](http://www.sternenpark-gantrisch.ch)  
[www.ogy.de/nachtdunkelheit](http://www.ogy.de/nachtdunkelheit)  
[www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org); [www.darksky.ch](http://www.darksky.ch)

## Switzerland in figures

### About Emmas, lightning strikes and waste

# 30.7

Statistics back the claim that women are having children later in life. The average age of Swiss women on the birth of their first child is currently 30.7 years. In Europe, only Spain and Italy have a slightly higher average age.

# 504

A propos births: of the 42,838 girls born in Switzerland last year, 504 were called Emma and now there are more than 41,500 Emmas in Switzerland. The only name more popular is Maria (82,500). The most popular name for boys in 2018 was Liam. However, Liam is (still) a minority name: the Swiss prefer traditional names like Daniel (62,500), Peter (58,500) and Thomas (52,500).

# 85,270

There were 85,270 lightning strikes recorded in Switzerland during June, July and August this year. That is an unusually high number. By way of comparison, the electronic monitoring network recorded 53,430 strikes in summer 2018. Ticino was the main lightning hotspot.

# 24,849

How many kilometres do the Swiss cover in a year? On average 24,849 km. The most common mode of transport is the car (10,371 km), followed by the aeroplane (8,986 km) and the train (3,499 km). On foot the distance covered is 459 km, and by bike it is 301 km. It is interesting to note that holidays and leisure pursuits account for far more kilometres than commuting to work.

# 706

The Swiss recycle or compost more than half their waste every year. At the same time, the volume of their waste is on the rise, with 706 kg of municipal waste per person, per year. That is a lot higher than the European average of 486 kg.