

Snow variability in the Swiss Alps 1864-2009

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Data on new snow sum and days with snowfall over the period 1864-2009 show large decadal variability. For low stations in the Swiss Alps the lowest values were recorded in the late 1980s and 1990s; for higher stations the values of late 1980s and 1990s are at least among the lowest since the late 19th century. The amount of maximum new snow shows no clear trend over this 145 year period, however.

There are changes in the Swiss Alpine snow pack that may be due to climate change. However, the complex local influences on the snow pack via temperature, precipitation, radiation, wind and humidity and the large decadal variability in the mid-latitude climate system makes it difficult to understand the details of changes in Swiss Alpine snow pack.

Source: Scherrer et al., 2013. International Journal of Climatology 33: 3162–3173

Photo: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (www.flickr.com)