



Changing Landscape of Alps: Europe

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Why in News

A recent study by the **ETH technical university in Zurich, Switzerland** shows that **climate change** has dramatically altered the **Swiss Alp landscape**.

Key Points

- **Important Findings:**

- Melting **glaciers** have **created more than 1,000 new lakes** across the mountains.
The inventory of Swiss Glacial lakes showed that almost **1,200 new lakes have formed in formerly glaciated regions of the Swiss Alps** since the end of the Little Ice Age around 1850 and around **1,000 of them still exist today**.
- Glaciers in the **Swiss Alps are in steady decline**, losing a full 2% of their volume last year alone.
- Even if the world were to fully implement the **2015 Paris Agreement**, two-thirds of the Alpine glaciers will likely be lost.

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, in December 2015.

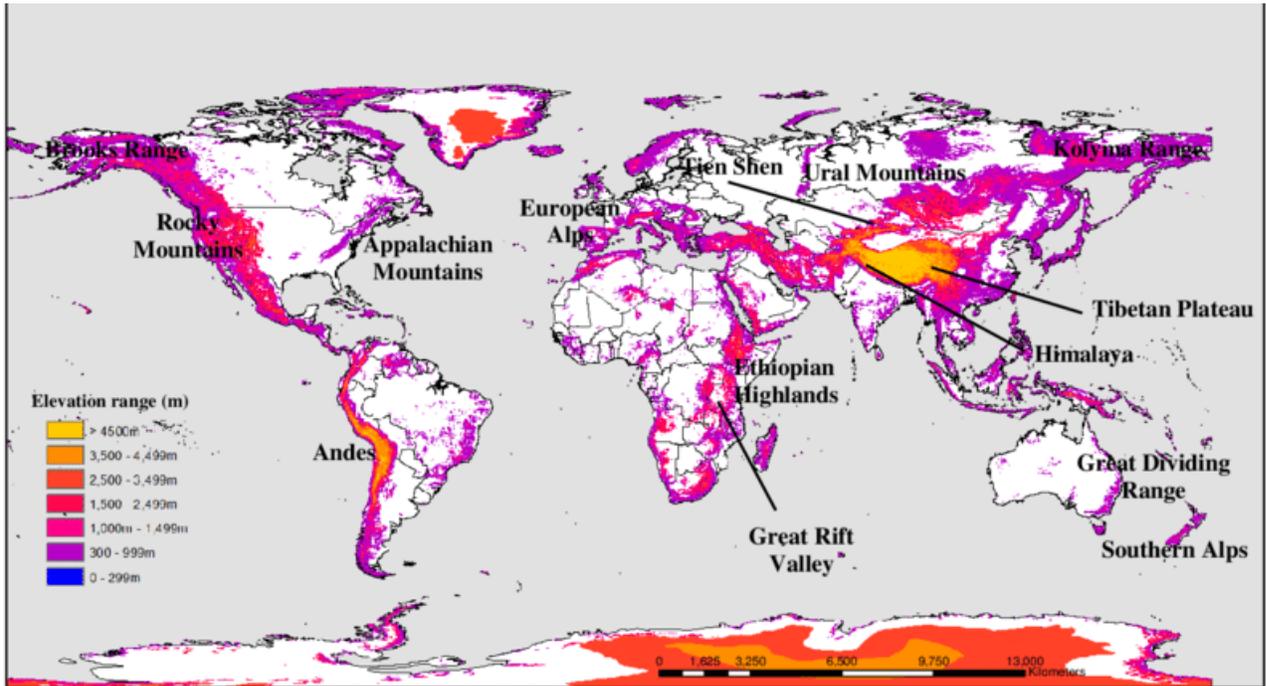
- **Alps:**

- **About:**



- The Alps **emerged during the Alpine orogeny** (mountain-building event), an event that began about **65 million years ago** as the **Mesozoic Era** was drawing to a close.
- Alps are **young fold mountains** with rugged relief and high conical peaks.
- They are the **most prominent of western Europe's physiographic regions**. Some **750 miles long** and more than **125 miles wide** at their broadest point between Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, and Verona, Italy, the **Alps cover more than 80,000 square miles**.
- The Alps extend north **from the subtropical Mediterranean coast** near Nice, France, **to Lake Geneva before trending east-northeast to Vienna, Austria**. There they touch the **Danube River** and meld with the adjacent plain.
- Because of their **arclike shape**, the Alps **separate the marine west-coast climates of Europe from the Mediterranean areas** of France, Italy, and the **Balkan region**.
- **Countries Covered:**
 - The Alps form part of **France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Albania**.
 - Only **Switzerland and Austria** can be considered **true Alpine countries**.
- **Important Peaks:**
 - **Mont Blanc** is the highest peak in the Alps and in Europe, reaching a lofty 4,804 meters above sea level. It is located in the Graian Alps and lies within France, Switzerland, and Italy.
 - **Monte Rosa** is a massif (a compact group of mountains) consisting of several peaks. The highest peak in this range (**Dufourspitze**) has an elevation of 4,634 meters, claiming the title of **Switzerland's highest peak**.
 - **Dom**, which is located near Monte Rosa, Dom stands at **4,545 meters** and is known as one of the "easier" tall peaks in the Alps to summit because of its **straightforward routes**.
 - Other major peaks are Liskamm, Weisshorn, Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, Grand Combin etc.

Major Mountain Ranges of the World



Source: TH