

Flying in the Gesäuse

Aviation, Drones & Birds



The Gesäuse region stands for "wild water, sheer cliffs." And we could add "silent expanse". If you add the "airspace" between and above the mountains to the national park, then this is the largest habitat area. It is the domain of the national park's birds – to keep it that way, aviation enthusiasts and pilots must follow our restrictions.

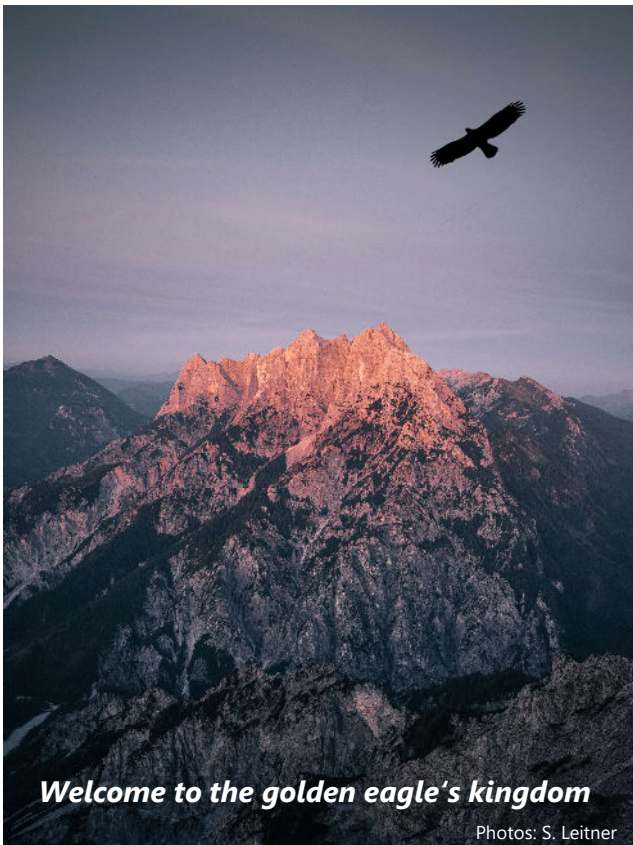
Realm of the birds...

...in the Gesäuse region lies mainly between the wild waters of the river Enns and the sheer cliffs of Hochtorn, Reichenstein and Buchstein. On the Enns above all it's the common sandpiper, as a gravel bank breeder, that's particularly sensitive to disturbance from land, water and the air. Between the Enns and the rocks either side of it Eurasian crag martins hare about. These acrobatic flying artists often hunt for insects in large flocks.

Large cliff-breeding raptors are particularly susceptible to disturbance. The golden eagle, the peregrine falcon and the eagle owl breed on cliffs near the valley floor. For their protection, we have designated a number of nesting-protection zones in the national park, in which the use of any aircraft is prohibited. For the rest of the area, it is important to minimize flight operations.

Aircraft

- **Minimum flight altitude** of 150m GND. The higher you fly, the less dramatic wild animals' reactions will be.
- Don't fly tightly over **ridges**! The sudden appearance of an aircraft shocks wild animals. Startled, the animals flee in panic far and wide.
- **Take-off and landing** is only by permission of the national park. Permissions are only granted for transporting material (shelters, etc.) and occasionally for exercises by rescue teams.



Welcome to the golden eagle's kingdom

Photos: S. Leitner

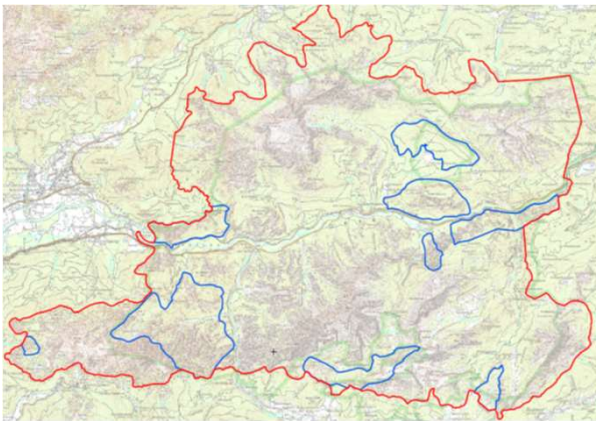
Rescue flights

- Air ambulance operations are exempt from the above restrictions.
- Wherever possible, the aims of the national park should still be taken into account.

Air sports

- **Minimum flight altitude** of 150m GND
- Permission is generally refused for **take-off and landing** in the national park area.
- Hang gliding, paragliding and the use of other recreational aircraft are prohibited in the **nesting- protection zones** (shown on the map in blue) as per Natura 2000 regulations [LGBL, Section 27, No. 69/2012, §2b, Item 1 f.].

This is to ensure undisturbed breeding activity for the cliff-breeding birds found there (e.g. golden eagle, peregrine falcon, eagle owl and rock martins).



Annual nest protection

Through annual monitoring of cliff-breeding birds, disruption to nests caused by flight operations can be largely prevented by informing flight operators and emergency services. Incubated nests are avoided when delivering shelters and, if possible, also by operational flights. A distance of **1,000m** is considered reasonably safe.

Did you know?

Among the rock breeders in the national park there are true acrobats: the peregrine falcon reaches speeds of more than 300 km/h in a nosedive, the rock martin performs true acrobatics when hunting insects. But the glider among them is the golden eagle, the king of the skies in the Gesäuse...



A crag martin takes off...

Unmanned aircraft

Drones are increasingly dominating airspace. Nature is now taking the hit as areas close to ground level and previously rarely disturbed by air traffic are now being impacted.



However, in order to leave these areas to the national park's birds and, above all, to ensure undisturbed reproduction, drones are **not allowed to take off or land**.

What can I do?

- Animals are disturbed when approached within approx. 300-500 meters. Your **consideration** makes it easier for wild animals to survive!
- Flying over the national park area is technically permitted by law. Support our goals by not exploiting the legal loophole. **Fly higher voluntarily!**
- Your drone must take off outside the national park. Get permission to take off from the landowner and do not fly into the national park.
- Please direct enquiries regarding flights or current bird-nesting activities in the national park to the national park administration.

Further information

Further details about aviation, drones and air traffic in the national park are available on our website. Current bird-breeding activity is also highlighted there:

<https://nationalpark-gesaeuse.at/en/aviation/>