

Editorial

This editorial was written during COP30 in Belém, Brazil. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) launches the Conference of the Parties (COP) each year. This body is responsible for making decisions on how countries will implement their commitments to tackling climate change. The aim of COP30, held in November 2025, was to encourage voluntary climate action from civil society, businesses, investors, cities, states and countries, with the goal of intensifying emission reductions, climate adaptation, and the transition to sustainable economies.

Just a few weeks earlier, in October 2025, the 29th IUCN World Conservation Congress took place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. This event brought together nature conservation experts, leaders and decision-makers. The Congress aimed to advocate for the transformative change needed to secure a sustainable future for both nature and humanity.

In September 2025, the 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, convened by UNESCO, took place in Hangzhou, China. This congress, held every ten years, evaluates progress, shares experiences and determines the future direction of the MAB (Man and the Biosphere) Programme. It also shapes the 2026–2035 MAB Strategy and Action Plan.

These and many other meetings at regional, national and international levels emphasised the urgent need for action on biodiversity loss, climate change, water insecurity, sustainable development and so on, recognising that these challenges are interconnected and require holistic solutions.

In this issue of *eco.mont*, we present examples from around the world that demonstrate the importance of providing a platform for studies in mountain protected areas, as well as tackling the aforementioned challenges. The authors in this issue write about becoming active and initiating structural changes at a regional level, analysing management models, studying and monitoring biodiversity, examining the factors influencing mountaineers' spending behaviours, and facilitating the presentation and discussion of scientific findings within the community.

Parque Andino Juncal is situated in the High Andean wetlands playing a strategic role in water provision, climate regulation and biodiversity conservation. Aldana Calderón-Archina, Leandro Manuel Alvarez, Andrés Moreira-Muñoz & Pablo Mansilla Quiñones report on climate adaptation and resilience strategies as well as on the protests of the installation of mining projects in the area.

The study on the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mont Viso as a model region for economically sustainable development in the Cottian Alps by Carlotta Sauerwein-Schlosser focuses on structural conditions shaping the actions of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It conceptualizes territorial agency as the capacity of protected areas to initiate and sustain structural transformation.

Maria Thaís Affonsoon presents the concept on how to benchmark different landscape management models based on their ability to minimize trade-offs using the UNESCO Biosphere Entlebuch (UBE) as a case example.

Andrea Battisti, Daniele Stellin and Massimo Bocca's study of the butterfly hotspot in the Mont Emilius Massif in north-western Italy presents the first comprehensive checklist of butterflies (Papilionoidea) for this area. The data confirmed 140 butterfly taxa out of a total of 146 for the area; these represent 50.3% of Italian butterfly species. Dana Repánová and Juraj Švajda ask whether adequate and relevant biodiversity data is being collected. Using the Malá Fatra National Park in Slovakia as a case study, they highlight the need for more intensive mapping efforts to improve our understanding of the area's biodiversity and species distribution.

The study on determinants influencing the spending of mountaineering in Spain's Protected Natural Areas by Víctor Dorado & Estela I. Farías-Torbidoni aims to analyse the determinants influencing direct spending of mountaineers on different peaks. Remarkably, the research revealed *overcrowding* as a substantial predictor of mountaineering expenditure.

Insights from the Research Symposium SNP+ 2025 with the topic *Landscape evolution* give Stefanie Gubler, Roger Keller, Angelika Abderhalden, Linda M. Feichtinger, Thomas Rempfler & Simon Aeschbacher. The second edition of the Research Symposium SNP+, organized on the occasion of the 111th anniversary of the Swiss National Park (SNP), explored landscapes as a multidimensional phenomenon.

These contributions underscore the essential role of mountain protected areas as laboratories for learning, collaboration and innovation. As global commitments intensify, such place-based research offers valuable guidance for shaping resilient futures. We hope this issue inspires continued dialogue and decisive action across disciplines and regions.

Valerie Braun – co-editor of *eco.mont*