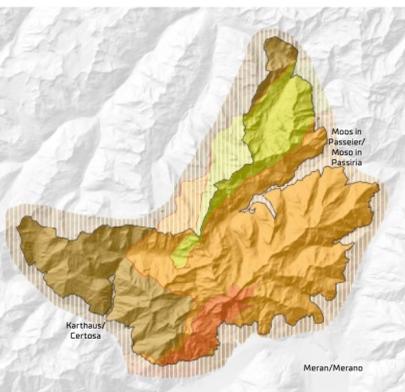


WATER AND LIGHT

There is a difference in altitude of 2,857 metres between the lowest and highest points of the nature park. It ranges from the vineyards in the valley through the dry vegetation of the Sonnenberg/Monte Sole group in the lower Vinschgau/Val Venosta and deciduous, mixed and larch forests, to the alpine pastures and rocky regions. The glaciers are well over 3,000 metres above sea level. Its diversity is based on the different altitudes and geological formations and on slope orientation and climate. The availability of water is also a particularly significant factor.

Geology and water balance

Three geological zones can be distinguished in the Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park. The Texel Unit, including the Partschinsner/Parcines Orthogneiss, is the lowest geological element and forms the mountain massif between Vinschgau/Val Venosta in the south and west and Passeiertal/Val Passiria in the east. The Schneeberg/Monteneve Unit forms a wide arc that stretches from Sterzing/Vipiteno via Monteneve, Seebertal/Val di Seeber and Hohe Wilde/Cima Altissima all the way to the upper Pflössental/Val di Fosse. The Ötztal-Stubai Unit is the term used to describe the rocks in the north-eastern corner (Timmelsjoch/Passo del Rombo) and on the western edge (Pfossen/Fosse and Schnals/Senales valleys) of the nature park. This unit forms the uppermost layer of the rocky strata. Due to its geometric position, this rock sequence was not exposed to the strong pressure and high temperatures of the other units during the formation of the Alps.



The sketch shows the three main geological units of the nature park.

- Texel/Tessa Unit including the Partschins/Parcines orthogneiss
- Schneeberg/Monteneve Unit
- Ötztal-Stubai unit
- Nature park boundary

Sketch: Amt für Geologie und Baustoffprüfung/Ufficio geologia e prove materiali



- 1) QUARTZITE in the Texel/Tessa Unit: Fine-grained, relatively hard, plate-shaped rock consisting almost exclusively of quartz and used in construction and art.
- 2) MICA-SCHIST in the Schneeberg/Monteneve Unit: quartz, muscovite, biotite, chlorite and plagioclase form this metamorphic rock featuring schistosity. The embedded mineral grains are usually large enough to be visible to the naked eye.
- 3) MICA SCHIST in the Ötztal-Stubai crystalline rocks: Quartz, muscovite, biotite, chlorite and plagioclase form this metamorphic rock with a schistose structure. The mineral grains are usually large enough to be visible to the naked eye.

Photos: Benno Baumgarten, South Tyrol Nature Museum

Depending on the type of rock, exposure and climate, the water has created different landscape outlines.



During the warm phases of the interglacial periods, flowing water acts as a landscape architect. It carves out V-shaped valleys and, where it leaves steps, waterfalls form. The Partschins/Parcines Waterfall is almost one hundred metres high and is one of the highest and most beautiful waterfalls in the Alps. It is designated a natural monument.

Photo: Benno Baumgarten



The dry scrub forests of the nature park are home to a rich variety of wildlife, including numerous insects such as the fritillaries. The host plants of this noble butterfly include, among others, the Small Scabious and the Field Scabious.

Photo: Sepp Hackhofer

Habitats, animals and plants

With an altitude difference of almost 3,000 metres, the nature park encompasses the entire range of biotic communities in South Tyrol – from the upper limit of the sub-Mediterranean vegetation zone to the perennial snow fields. Thousands of kilometres to the north, all the way to the Arctic tundra, would have to be travelled to encounter all these vertical biotic communities on the same horizontal line.

The forests

Coppice woodland

On steep, warm and dry southern slopes, Downy Oaks and Manna-ash trees combine with Juniper, Barberry, Snowy Mespilus and Sweet Chestnut to form a sparse scrub forest with a diverse flora.

Mixed deciduous and Pine Forest

The southern slopes of the Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa are covered with mixed deciduous forests and Scots Pine forests up to an altitude of around 1,000 metres. In the more humid valley incisions, Beech trees grow alongside Silver-firs. Sweet Chestnuts, Downy Oaks, Ash trees, Silver Birches, Grey Alders, Hop Hornbeams, Field Maples and Sycamore maples grow in the drier locations.

The steep, sunny and sometimes rocky slopes of Schnalstal/Val Senales are home to extensive Larch forests interspersed with Juniper and Barberry. In spring, the Larch trees refresh the landscape with their green colour, and in autumn they glow golden on the slopes.

Photo: Franz Müller



Tree line

Alpine grasslands

Above the tree and shrub line, extensive grasslands cover the slopes. Centuries of use as alpine pastures have shaped and transformed the landscape and the composition of the flora.

High-altitude peat bogs, small lakes

These relics of the Ice Age play an important role in the water balance and provide habitats for many specialised animal and plant species. They are also important carbon sinks.

In the rocky areas there are smaller and larger lakes, most of which lie in depressions of glacial origin. The ten Sprons/Sopranes lakes are particularly noteworthy. Numerous smaller lakes have silted up over the millennia.

The glacial moraines have created the conditions for the development of small, high-altitude peat bogs.

Photo: Christian Widmann



The *Pulsatilla vernalis* is a delicate perennial plant with white to pale purple flowers that can be admired in spring in the alpine and subalpine regions of Europe.

Photo: Claudio Sfera



The stoat, also known as the short-tailed weasel, is a small, agile predator with a characteristic white winter coat and black tail tip. This solitary animal uses its slender body to move through narrow crevices and rock fissures.

Photo: Tetraon



Majestic and alert, the Alpine ibex roams the rocky heights of the Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park – a symbol of wildness, adaptability and alpine freedom amidst barren rocky landscapes and steep ridges.

Photo: Manuel Plackner

One nature park, three climate zones

Sonnenberg/Monte Sole in Vinschgau/Val Venosta

Sonnenberg/Monte Sole is an area of extremes, with a maximum of 500 mm of precipitation per year. Constant winds dry out the soil. The average annual temperature is 8° to 10°C, but the area is subject to enormous temperature differences, even reaching up to 50°C in 12 hours in summer.



The barren landscape on Sonnenberg/Monte Sole in Vinschgau/Val Venosta.

Photo: Nature Park Office



The picture shows the Hohe Weiße/Cima Bianca Grande (3,278 m a.s.l.) as seen from Pflössental/Val di Fosse. As with other mountains, such as the Weißkogel/Cima Palla Bianca, the name was inspired by their marble deposits.

Photo: Peter Schreiner

Lake 'Focknlacke', a natural monument at around 2,300 metres above sea level, is located in Pflösser/Plan towards Kreuzjoch/Passo Croce – a quiet, small high mountain lake in the middle of the Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park.

Photo: Isidor Plangger



Passeiertal/Val Passiria

This valley opens up to the south while high mountains form a natural barrier to the north. As a result, it enjoys a comparatively mild climate with average annual temperatures of 9° to 10°C at the bottom of the valley and around 1°C at 2,500 metres a.s.l. The valley receives around 1,000 mm of precipitation annually, while the mountains receive as much as 1,300 mm.

Schnalstal/Val Senales and Pflössental/Val di Fosse

Surrounded by high mountains, Schnalstal/Val Senales and Pflössental/Val di Fosse are as dry as Vinschgau/Val Venosta (500 to 700 mm of precipitation). In the mountains, precipitation rises to 1,100 to 1,200 mm. The average annual temperatures are 5.4°C in Vernagt/Vernago and 2.9°C in Kurzras/Maso Corto at the end of the valley at 2,000 m a.s.l. At 2,800 metres above sea level they drop to 0°C.

The 'Waal' was responsible for maintaining the canals and ensuring the lawful distribution of water. The 'Walschelle', also known as the 'Waalhammer', helped with this task: a water wheel attached to the Kandel lifted with each turn a loosely mounted hammer, which then fell onto a piece of sheet metal or a cowbell. The repetitive sound, which could be heard from afar, told the 'Waal' that the water was flowing regularly.

Photo: Nature Park Office



Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is a European nature conservation project. It aims to create a network of protected areas for the long-term protection of natural and semi-natural habitats as well as for wild animals and plants in order to safeguard biodiversity. All South Tyrolean nature parks are part of the Natura 2000 network and their designation is based on two European directives: the Flora-Fauna Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. Other Natura 2000 sites lie outside the nature park boundaries, for example the Biotop Steppenvegetation Sonnenberg/Biotopo Vegetazione Steppica Sonenberg.



The bearded vulture: With a wingspan of up to 2.8 metres, this specialised scavenger glides majestically over the Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park. As a Natura 2000 species, it is one of Europe's specially protected bird species.

Photo: Maurizio Azzolini

Man and nature

The influence of humans is visible in many places in the Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park and especially on Sonnenberg/Monte Sole, where, in order to feed the cattle, alpine pastures and hay meadows were expanded at the expense of the mountain forest. These traditionally managed areas have a high landscape value and considerable biodiversity. Quite impressive is also the irrigation system created over the centuries using the simplest of means: in Vinschgau/Val Venosta alone, no fewer than 600 'Waaale' (irrigation ditches) divert water from higher-lying streams into earth/rock/wood lined channels (called 'Kandeln'). The Malser Heide/Muta di Malles irrigation system was added to the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage in 2024.

From right to left: Hohe Weiße/Cima Bianca Grande, Lodner/Cima Fiammante, Cima Tschigat (on the back page), Langsee/Lake Langgo (also pictured).

Photo: Lukas Schuler

Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park Visitor Center

Photo: Aldo Amert



TEXELGRUPPE/GRUPPO DI TESSA NATURE PARK VISITOR CENTER
Piazza Bernardin Astfäller Platz 1
39025 Naturns/Naturno (BZ)
Phone +39 0473 668 201
info.tg@provinz.bz.it



Opening hours:
nature-parks.province.bz.it/en
Free admission!



NATURE PARK OFFICE
Rittner Straße/via Renon
39100 Bozen/Bolzano
Phone +39 0471 417 770
natur.bozen@provinz.bz.it
nature-parks.province.bz.it

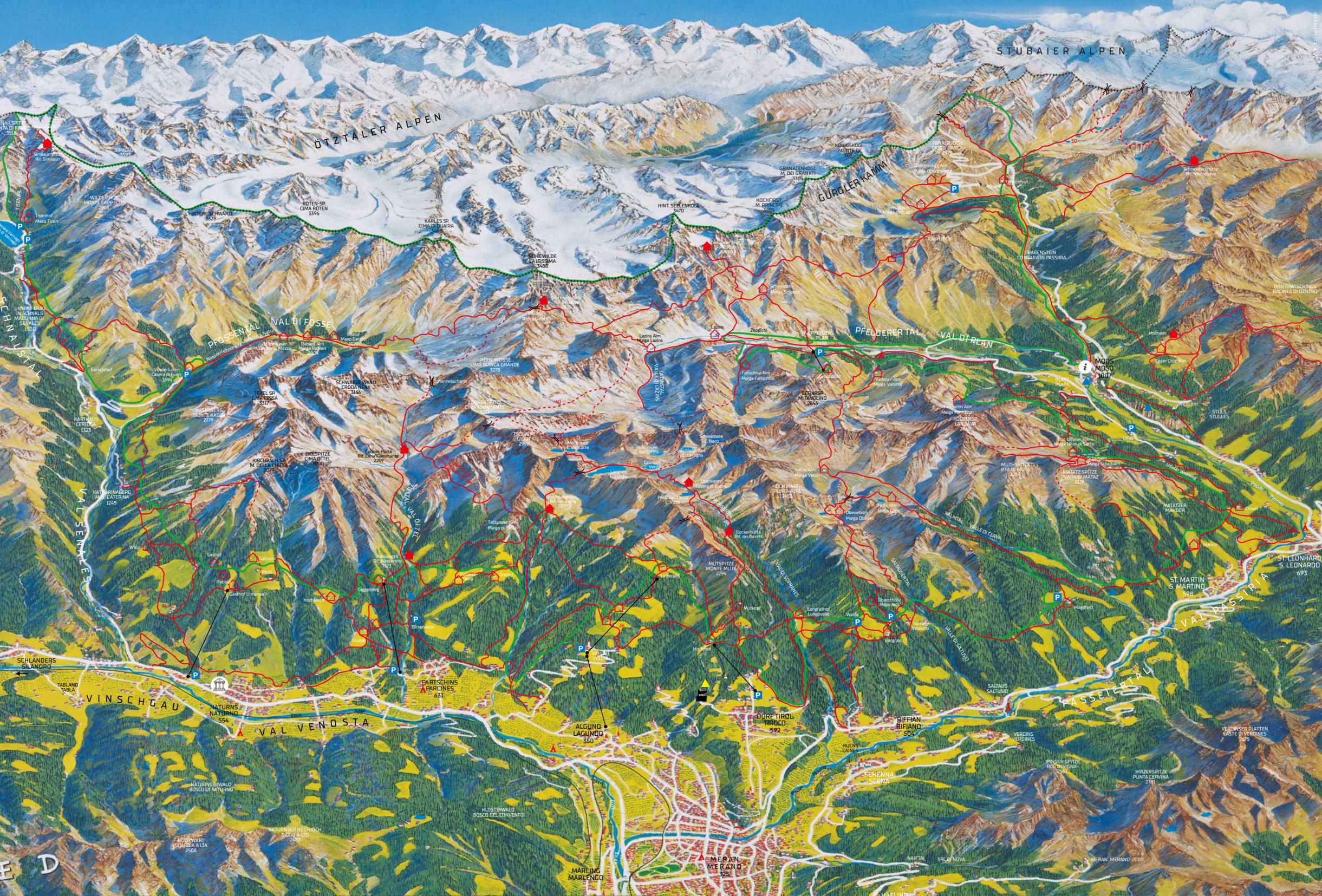


NATURPARK
PARCO NATURALE
PARC NATURAL
NATURE PARK

TEXELGRUPPE
GRUPPO DI TESSA

TEXELGRUPPE/
GRUPPO DI TESSA
NATURE PARK
Water and Light

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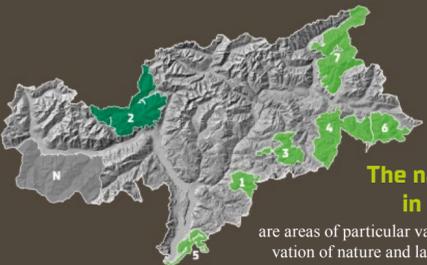


TEXELGRUPPE/ GRUPPO DI TESSA NATURE PARK Water and Light

- Alpine rescue signal**
- 1 Within 1 minute, emit 6 acoustic or visual signals (at 10 second intervals)
 - 2 Pause for 1 minute
 - 3 Repeat the signal (until response arrives)
 - 4 Response: 3 signals within 1 minute

Emergency call centre **112**

- Key**
- Nature park boundary
 - State border
 - Access road
 - Car park
 - Ascent system
 - Nature Park Visitors' Centre
 - Infopoint
 - Marked hiking trail
 - Difficult trail
 - Via ferrata
 - Mountain pass
 - Water body
 - Waterfall
 - Earth pyramids
 - Inn/Rest area
 - Mountain hut
 - Bivouac
 - Camping
 - Castle or castle ruins



The nature parks in South Tyrol

are areas of particular value for the conservation of nature and landscape, research, awareness-raising and environmental education. They offer numerous opportunities for direct and respectful interaction with nature.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Schlern-Rosengarten
Sciliar-Catinaccio
7,288 ha
2,156 m
★ 1974 | 5 Trudner Horn
Monte Corno
6,873 ha
1,571 m
★ 1980 |
| 2 Texelgruppe
Gruppo di Tessa
31,407 ha
2,857 m
★ 1976 | 6 Drei Zinnen
Tre Cime
11,878 ha
1,961 m
★ 1981 |
| 3 Puez-Geisler
Puez-Dolie
Pöz-Odles
10,729 ha
1,499 m
★ 1978 | 7 Rieserferner-Ahrn
Vedrette di Ries-Aurina
31,334 ha
2,610 m
★ 1988 |
| 4 Fanes-Sennes-Prags
Fanes-Senes-Braies
25,485 ha
1,929 m
★ 1980 | N Nationalpark
Stilfserjoch
Parco nazionale dello Stelvio
53,447 ha
3,255 m
★ 1935 |

The Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park in a nutshell

The Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa Nature Park was founded in 1976 and is the second oldest of the seven nature parks in South Tyrol. With an area of 31,407 hectares it is also the largest.

The park covers an area bordered by Vinschgau/Val Venosta to the south, by Schnalstal/Val Senales to the west, by Passieretal/Val Passiria to the east and by the main Alpine ridge to the north. The Texelgruppe/Gruppo di Tessa mountain range, which gives the park its name, forms the heart of the park. It also includes the Ötztal Alps with the Cresta di Schnals/Senales and the Crinale di Gurgl ridges and the Stubai Alps, with a small section between Timmelsjoch/Passo del Rombo and Timmelsjochberg/Monte del Rombo.

The nature park's municipalities

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Schnals/Senales
Nature park's share 8,932 ha
Tourist office
Ph +39 0473 679 148
www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/schnalstal-valley | Algund/Lagundo
Nature park's share 553 ha
Tourist office
Ph +39 0473 448 600
www.algund.info | St. Martin in Passeier/S. Martino in Passiria
Nature park's share 1,209 ha
Tourist office
Ph +39 0473 656 188
www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/passeiertal-valley |
| Naturns/Naturno
Nature park's share 985 ha
Tourism Cooperative
Ph +39 0473 666 077
www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/naturns | Tirol/Tirolo
Nature park's share 1,638 ha
Tourist office
Ph +39 0473 923 314
www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/dorf-tirol | Moos in Passeier/Moso in Passiria
Nature park's share 11,969 ha
Tourist office
Ph +39 0473 656 188
www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/passeiertal-valley |
| Partschins/Parcines
Nature park's share 3,387 ha
Tourist office
Ph +39 0473 967 157
www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/partschins-rabland-und-toell | Riffian/Rifiano
Nature park's share 2,732 ha
Tourist office
Ph +39 0473 656 188
www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/passeiertal-valley | |

- Rules of behaviour**
- Don't pick
 - No vehicles
 - Don't camp
 - Don't trash
 - No noise
 - Dog on a leash
 - No fire
 - No drones
 - Don't destroy