



Press Release

Swiss Earthquakes in 2014: A Review

Zurich, January 27, 2015

In 2014, the Swiss Seismological Service registered and localized around 950 earthquakes in Switzerland and its neighboring countries – nearly twice as many as in the previous years. The areas most affected by the increase in seismic activity were the region to the west of Lake Thun, the municipalities between Walensee and Liechtenstein, and the cantons of Valais and Graubünden.

Compared to previous years, the number of recorded earthquakes is almost double (2013 about 600 earthquakes, 2012 about 500 earthquakes). This increase is mainly due to a lowering of the threshold for earthquake detection, the result of the densification of the seismic network over the past years. In addition, several earthquake sequences occurred in Switzerland in 2014, which contributed to the increased number of recorded earthquakes. For the earthquakes in 2014, the local magnitude (i.e. Richter scale) ranged between -0.4 and 3.2. The number of probably felt earthquakes with local magnitude of 2.5 and larger was 21, which is close to the yearly average number of 23 recorded over the last 39 years.

A remarkable earthquake sequence occurred at Diemtigen (BE), west of Lake Thun. Between April and December 2014 more than 260 earthquakes were recorded here, the three largest events occurred on May 10 (ML 2.7), June 25. (ML 2.7), and October 15. (ML 3.2).

In addition to the largest events of the Diemtigen sequence, the earthquakes in the region of Biel (January 8, ML 2.8 and 3.2), Volketswil (ZH) (November 8, ML 2.8), and Walenstadt (SG) (November 14, ML 3.1) were widely felt by the public. None of these earthquakes, however, was strong enough to cause damage.

In 2014, as in previous years, a large portion of the seismic activity was concentrated in the Valais and Graubünden. Other seismically active regions in 2014 were the area between Lake Walen and Liechtenstein, Central Switzerland, canton Fribourg, and the Swiss Jura.

Further information

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The Swiss Seismological Service at ETH Zurich

The Swiss Seismological Service (SED) at ETH Zurich is the official federal agency for earthquake monitoring. The SED monitors earthquake activity in Switzerland and its neighboring countries and assesses Switzerland's seismic hazard. When an earthquake happens, the Swiss Seismological Service informs the public, the authorities, and the media about the earthquake's location, magnitude, and possible consequences. Further information can be found at

http://www.seismo.ethz.ch/index_EN.