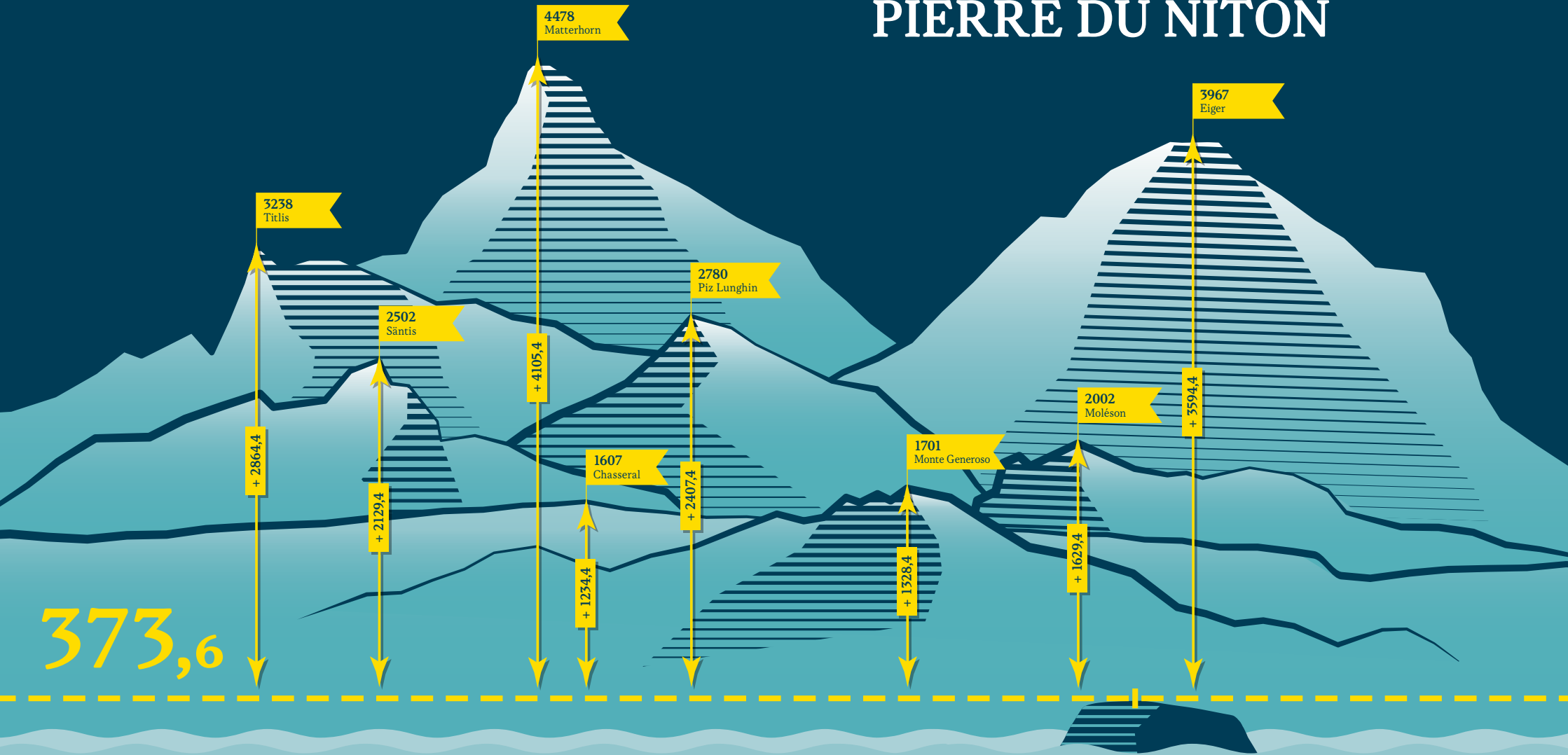


REPÈRE PIERRE DU NITON



373,6



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Federal Office of Topography swisstopo
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REPUBLIQUE
ET CANTON
DE GENEVE

POST-TENEBRAS LUX

THE STARTING POINT FOR SWISS HEIGHT MEASUREMENTS

How the Pierre du Niton marker was created

Height is usually measured in metres above sea level. Because Switzerland is a land-locked country and cannot be measured from the sea, it needs a reference point for its height system. In the 19th century, French measurements were used for this purpose. In the first instance, the height of the signal on the Chasseral was used. Later, a reference point for the Swiss height system was placed on the Pierres du Niton in Lake Geneva's basin – the “Repère Pierre du Niton” (Pierre du Niton marker). Its actual height is based on measurements from the Mediterranean Sea in Marseille.

How the height of the Pierre du Niton marker has changed

In Europe, each country determined sea level itself and measured land to varying levels of accuracy. This resulted in discrepancies within the height system. Over time, land heights were standardised to facilitate international cooperation. The height of the Pierre du Niton marker was therefore also adjusted in 1902... by several metres in fact!

The cultural significance of the Pierres du Niton

The Pierres du Niton are not only associated with national surveying, but are also of cultural significance as landmarks of the Geneva basin. They have been immortalised in various paintings and historical documents – for example in “La Pêche miraculeuse” by Konrad Witz.

Close to the landing stages

The Pierre du Niton marker can be found on the smaller granite boulder in the basin, further away from the shore and close to the landing stages. The stone is clearly visible from the shore and you can take a boat trip that goes directly past it.

FIND OUT MORE:

The Canton of Geneva as well as the Federal Office of Topography swisstopo provides various information and activities relating to the Pierre du Niton marker.

373m6.ge.ch

