



**PRÉFET  
DE LA HAUTE-SAVOIE**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

Departmental territories directorate  
**Water and environment department**  
Natural environments. forest and living space unit

The préfet of Haute-Savoie  
Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur  
Chevalier de l'ordre national du Mérite

Annecy, 1 October 2020

**GOVERNMENT ORDER no. DDT-2020-1132**  
**incorporating creation of the zone of protection of natural habitats of the Mont-Blanc –  
Exceptional site**

**GIVEN** the international convention on the protection of the Alps ("Alpine convention") signed on 7 November 1991 and which entered into force on 6 March 1995 and in particular its "nature and maintaining of the landscape" and "tourism" protocols ;

**GIVEN** the registration of mountaineering, in December 2019, in UNESCO's immaterial cultural heritage, which notably promotes the importance of "knowledge of the high mountainous environment", aesthetic references such as "the communion with the natural environments traversed" or ethical principles such as "leaving no trace of one's passage" and proposes safeguard measures such as "the prevention of risks linked to the normalisation of practices and their places of exercise and the reinforcement of the preventive watch in the face of attacks on the environment";

**GIVEN** directive DAU/SP of 22 July 1996 relating to the collection or extraction of crystals in the Mont Blanc classified site;

**GIVEN** articles L411-1, L411-2, L415-5, R411-17-7, R411-17-8 and R415-1 of the environmental code;

**GIVEN** the decrees of 14 June 1951, 5 January 1952 and 16 June 1976 classifying among the picturesque sites the foothills of the Mont Blanc range on the territory of the municipalities of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, Vallorcine, les Houches and les Contamines-Montjoie;

**GIVEN** the amended decree no. 2004-374 of 29 April 2004, relating to the powers of the préfets, to the organisation and to the action of the State's departments in the regions and departments;

**GIVEN** the decree of 29 July 2020 appointing Mr Alain ESPINASSE, préfet, as préfet of Haute-Savoie ;

**GIVEN** the ministerial order of 19 December 2018 establishing the list of natural habitats that may be the subject of a prefectural order for the protection of natural habitats in mainland France;

**GIVEN** the order of 5 March 2001 creating a regulated zone in the Mont-Blanc mountain range;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the departmental nature, landscapes and sites commission (CDNPS) of 16 June 2020;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the natural heritage regional scientific council (CSRPN) of 26 June 2020 ;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the national forests office (ONF) of 29 June 2020;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the municipality of Saint-Gervais-les-Bains of 10 July 2020;

**GIVEN** the presentation of the project to the committee of the Alps mountain range of 16 July 2020;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the municipality of les Houches of 20 July 2020;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the regional delegation of the national centre of forestry property of 24 July 2020;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the Savoie Mont Blanc chamber of agriculture of 25 August 2020;

**GIVEN** the opinion of the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc municipality of 26 August 2020 ;

**GIVEN** the observations formulated during the public consultation held from 19 August to 9 September 2020 inclusive, in application of article L123-19-1 of the environmental code;

**considering, on the one hand:**

- ⑩ the environmental diagnosis of ASTERS–Conservatoire d’espaces naturels Haute-Savoie – report dated 5 May 2020, which enabled the habitats meeting the criteria for the designation of an APHN to be identified (list of habitats in **appendix 1**) and which provided scientific criteria enabling the perimeter of the protection zone to be determined (**appendix 2**);
- ⑩ that the Mont-Blanc sector is home to exceptional natural habitats which must be preserved from any attack likely to cause damage to their condition of conservation, their rarefaction, or even their disappearance;
- ⑩ That the remarkable intrinsic characteristics of these habitats, their importance for the landscape and the rarity of the protection measures on this type of geotype in France and/or the Alps gives this heritage inherited from the geological and climactic history of the land great importance;
- ⑩ that the foreseeable climactic evolutions engender significant modifications for Alpine environments, with in particular a significant evolution of the principal glaciers and rocky walls, the appearance of new environments today covered in glaciers, the evolution of the permafrost, changes which it will be fundamental to observe, study and characterise within the perimeter of the protected sector;
- ⑩ that the large glaciers of the protection zone will figure, due to their unique topographical situation in the Alps and irrespective of the greenhouse gas emission scenario, among the last great masses of the whole Alpine chain to subsist at the end of the 21st century;
- ⑩ that the sectors left behind by the glaciers (lakes or terrestrial environments) will be subject to active colonisation by animal and plant species, the dynamic of which must be studied;

**considering, on the other hand:**

- ⑩ that the Mont-Blanc, the highest peak in the Alps and Western Europe, rising to 4,810 m and the theatre of the history of mountaineering, which was first scaled in 1786, constitutes a unique site in France and in Europe, of international renown and of which the scaling difficulty is technically relatively within reach and that, for these reasons, it generates a very high footfall;
- ⑩ that scaling it currently attracts between 15 and 20, 000 mountaineers every year and up to 500 a day, whereas the overpopulation threshold is estimated at between 300 and 400 people per day, given the sensitivity of the environment, the accommodation capacities of the refuges and having only one authorised campsite at Tête Rousse, in the Saint-Gervais-les-Bains municipality;
- ⑩ that it is imperative to give back to the scaling of the Mont-Blanc its veritable Alpine value, by awareness of the physical and psychological test that this represents, the risks that this implies and the respect for the location that this supposes;
- ⑩ that access to the peak of the Mont-Blanc is a feat of mountaineering and thus necessitates sufficient physical qualities, specific knowledge and equipment or acknowledged skilled monitoring, indispensable conditions to be able to undertake its scaling under the necessary and sufficient safety conditions;
- ⑩ that everything should be done to be able to ensure both its environmental preservation and respect for the spirit of the location and safe scaling conditions for those wishing to reach the peak;
- ⑩ that numerous acts of incivility or damage to the site, particular by the leaving of litter, have been reported in recent years, in particular along the usual path by the aiguille du Goûter, damaging the integrity of the

site, its landscape quality, the environments undergoing colonisation, and the serenity legitimately sought by most people wishing to reach the peak;

- ⑩ that events of all kinds, in particular for advertising or militant reasons, generate an increase in the number of visitors unrelated to the traditional practice of hiking and mountaineering and contribute to the denaturation of the location;
- ⑩ that 80 to 100 emergency interventions occur each year on the access routes to the Mont-Blanc, that 45% of these are linked to exhaustion due to poor physical preparation or lack of acclimatisation, that 30% of those ascending receiving emergency treatment present injuries and that only 40% of these attempting to scale it reach the peak;
- ⑩ that, consequently, it is necessary to define safety conditions to reduce accidents and emergency operations likely to lead, in addition to the human victims, to negative impacts on the environment;

**considering** that the overpopulation of the normal Mont-Blanc path by the aiguille du Goûter and the incivility observed over several years have led the préfet of Haute-Savoie to take, by temporary prefectural order, special and seasonal measures regulating the conditions of access to the route of the usual patch by the aiguille du Goûter;

**considering** lastly that:

- ⑩ concerning flight paths, the perimeter of the APHN is covered by a regulated zone (R30B) active from 1 July to 31 August of each year, the current provisions of which deserve to be reexamined in order to adapt them;
- ⑩ this adaptation will be initiated by the competent authorities and will be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2021 ;

**AT** the proposal of the lady secretary general of the préfecture ;

## **ORDERS**

### **I – LIMITATION**

#### **Article 1: purpose of the order and limitation of the perimeter**

In order to guarantee the conservation of the natural habitats present on the limited site below and figuring in **appendix 2** of this order, a zone of protection of natural habitats is created under the name "Mont-Blanc – Site d'exception (exceptional site)" constituted by a central zone and transition zones:

- ⑩ the central zone corresponds principally to high-altitude Alpine environments, mountaineering and Alpine skiing sectors.
- ⑩ the transition zones are constituted principally of medium-altitude Alpine environments, accessible to all visitors, hiking locations and starting points for the usual access paths to the Mont-Blanc peak.

The perimeters thus limited are composed of plots registered in the land registry indicated in **appendix 3**.

#### **Central zone:**

- ⑩ municipality of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc : 1 371 ha
- ⑩ municipality of les Houches: 588 ha
- ⑩ municipality of Saint-Gervais-les-Bains : 669 ha.

#### **Transition zones:**

- ⑩ municipality of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc : 93 ha
- ⑩ municipality of les Houches : 117 ha
- ⑩ municipality of Saint-Gervais-les-Bains : 337 ha.

The total surface area of the site is **3,175 ha**, divided into **2,628 ha** of central zone and **547 ha** of transition zones.

### **II – PROTECTION MEASURES**

#### **Article 2: regulation of the number of visitors to the site and activities**

In order to prevent the destruction and physical damage of the natural habitats, to conserve the landscape quality and the tranquillity of the site, it is prohibited, inside the perimeter:

## 2.1: of the whole site

2-1-1: to enter with any type of vehicle (motorised or non-motorised) ;

2-1-2: to land by any other means, except for the delivery of fresh supplies to the refuges, carry out authorised works and for mountaineering-paragliding linking and paralpinism in strict compliance with the aeronautical regulations in force;

2-1-3: to have pets enter the zone, with the exception of animals on a leash on the hiking routes within the transition zones;

2-1-4 : to camp outside the Tête Rousse base camp, within the limit of the validity of the waiver granted under the classified site and upon nominative reservation;

2-1-5: to bivouac, except in the event of force majeure, on the route and near to the Mont-Blanc usual access route by Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, due to the presence of several refuges on this route;

2-1-6: to use the pathway along the Mont-Blanc tramway track;

2-1-7: concerning access by the usual route of the Mont-Blanc by the aiguille du Goûter:

- ⑩ to undertake, during the summer period, the stewardship of the refuges, scaling without nominative reservation, except for scheduled return journeys on the same day and made possible by the technical level and physical condition of the persons concerned;
- ⑩ to voluntarily distance yourself from the usual routes for those scaling the peak who use the usual patch of aiguille du Goûter or the arête Payot;
- ⑩ to spend the night and stay at the abri Vallot, except in the event of force majeure;
- ⑩ or to spend the night at the forest hut of les Rognes.

## 2.2: of the central zone

2-2-1: to practise any other activity than mountaineering, mountaineering-paragliding, paralpinism, skiing/snowboard-mountainering;

2-2-2: in order to avoid the damage to and disturbance of the environment, in particular those related to emergency interventions:

- ⑩ to access the site for the purpose of scaling the Mont-Blanc without being equipped with appropriate individual and collective equipment for visiting the locations under safety conditions compliant with the customs defined by the mountain professionals;
- ⑩ to progress in roped parties of more than three people, except in the situations imposed by those ensuring the safety of or assistance to others ascending;
- ⑩ to transport equipment or objects other than those strictly necessary for mountaineering, for individual or collective protection and subsistence.

### **Article 3: prevention of pollution or damage of the environment**

It is prohibited inside the perimeter of the whole site:

3-1: to throw away, deposit or pour away any chemical products, any materials, residues, waste or substances of any kind whatsoever;

3-2: to destroy, pull up, mutilate or introduce in any way any plant species;

3-3: to destroy, remove or introduce any animal species, irrespective of their stage of development, and their nests or homes;

3-4: to light a fire, in any form whatsoever;

3-5: to organise events of whatever kind (sporting, festivities, cultural events, etc.);

3-6: to plant flags or edify any structure or artifice of whatever kind, even temporary;

3-7: to roll out banners or any other visual, auditive or olfactory manifestation, of an advertising, commercial, artistic, political, humanitarian or militant nature;

3-8: to extract and remove materials of any kind except:

- ⑩ those necessary to carry out authorised works on the classified site;
- ⑩ the traditional harvesting of crystals under the conditions provided for by directive DAU/SP of 22 July 1996 (not requiring, due to the small size of the pieces, either mechanical or explosive means for their extraction, nor vehicle for their transport) subject to compliance with the rights of the owners of the ground and, where applicable, the municipal orders regulating this harvest.

### **Article 4: scope of application**

The provisions of this order do not apply:

- ⑩ to action carried out within the framework of the exercising of safety, surveillance, control and emergency assignments;
- ⑩ to activities and works necessary to prevent natural risks and the securing of the site;
- ⑩ to scientific activities to monitor the evolution of the environments validated by the préfet following the opinion of the mayors of the municipalities concerned;
- ⑩ to works authorised within the framework of an instruction relating to the classified site of the foothills of the Mont Blanc;
- ⑩ to the pastoral exploitation of the alpage du Pré de l'Are (municipality of Saint-Gervais-les-Bains) and of other sectors which may prove propitious, subject to the validation by the steering committee of a management plan accompanied by an evaluation of incidences enabling the pastoral activity to be accounted for, with the characteristics of the habitats being maintained;
- ⑩ actions in respect of game in the transition zones (counts and sample taking under the regulations in force).

### **Article 5: waivers**

In accordance with article R411-17-8 of the environmental code, waivers to this order may be granted by prefectural order following the opinion of the natural heritage regional scientific council, waivers to this order may be granted by prefectural order following the opinion of the natural heritage regional scientific council(CSRPN) and the mayor(s) concerned.

### **Article 6: steering committee**

A steering committee composed of the préfet of Haute-Savoie, or his representative, and of the mayors, or their representative, of the municipalities of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, Les Houches, Saint-Gervais-les-Bains shall be put

in place. Chaired by the préfet, a place of exchange and concertation, it shall meet at least once a year and shall inform on any difficulty identified in implementing this order. This committee also has the role of evaluating the condition of conservation of the zone, proposing the administration means to be implemented and any regulatory changes necessary to maintain and enhance the condition of conservation of the site's habitats. It may be called upon to issue an opinion on the waiver requests.

**Article 7: monitoring committee**

A monitoring committee chaired by the préfet de la Haute-Savoie or his representative, the composition of which shall be determined by prefectural order, shall include all the stakeholders of the site which is the subject of this order, including, in particular, the services of the State, the local authorities, the public establishments, the federations, the socio-professional structures and bodies, the environmental protection associations, the mountain prevention and rescue associations, the research bodies, the experts, the representatives of the site's private properties, the infrastructure managers.

This committee shall meet at least once a year. It shall aim to inform and exchange on the evolution of the environments, the number of visitors to the site and the practices. It may make suggestions to improve the regulatory mechanism and the administration means.

**III – SANCTIONS**

**Article 8:**

Breaches of the provisions of this order shall be sanctioned by the penalties provided for in articles L415-3 et R415-1 of the environmental code.

**IV – PUBLICATION**

**Article 9: publicity and information to third parties**

This order shall be:

- ⑩ posted in each of the municipalities concerned;
- ⑩ published in the register of administrative deeds of the préfecture of Haute-Savoie and put online on the website of the services of the State in Haute-Savoie;
- ⑩ mentioned in two local newspapers;
- ⑩ notified to all the owners concerned.

**V – EXECUTION**

**Article 10:**

The lady secretary general of the the prefecture, the departmental territories director, the mayors of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, les Houches and Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, the commander of the unit of the departmental gendarmerie of Haute-Savoie, the head of the departmental service of the French office of biodiversity, the director of the departmental agency of the national forests office are responsible, as each is concerned, for the execution of this order.

*The préfet*

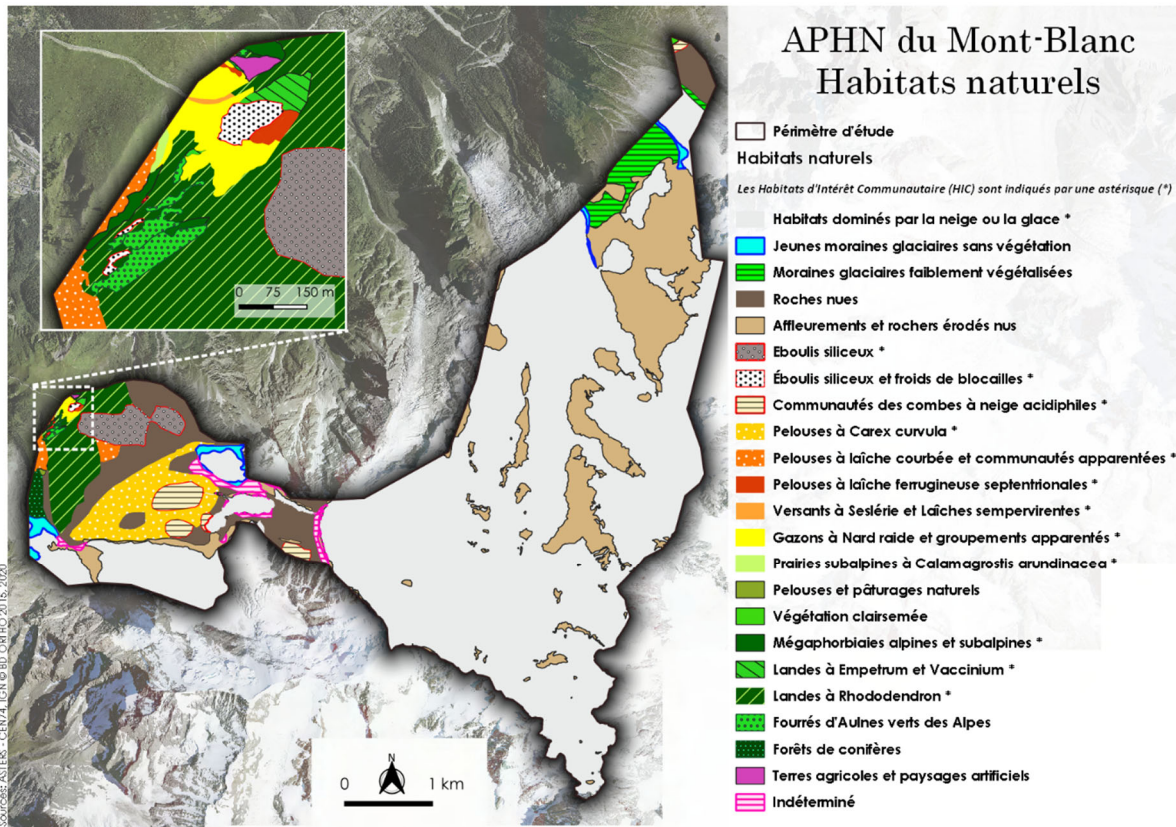
## Appendix 1: list and map of the natural habitats concerned by the protection order

N.B. the list and the map below indicate and locate the habitats eligible for an APHN, solely on the study zone initially envisaged. This study zone is fully included in the perimeter finally used for this APHN, as indicated in appendix 2

**1.1 List of the habitats** recorded on the site and appearing on the order of 18 December 2018, that may be the subject of a prefectural order for the protection of natural habitats in mainland France

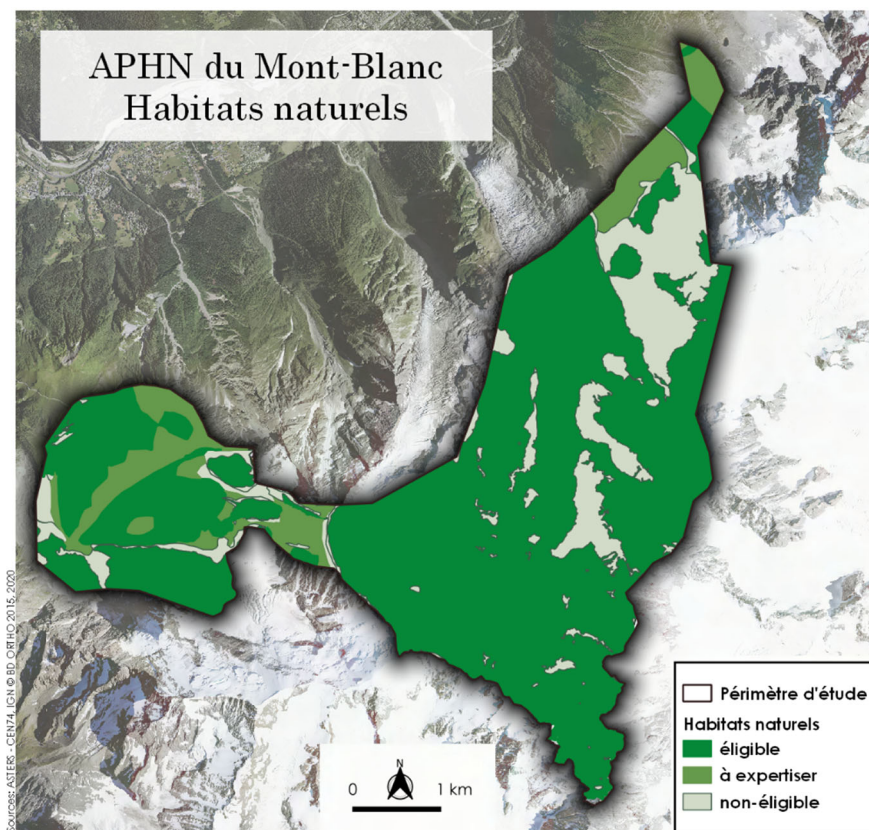
Known habitats	Corine	N2000
Rhododendron Territory	31.42	4060
Crowberry and Sparkleberry Territory	31.44	4060
Snow patches with vegetation	36.11	6150
Lawn with Nard and associated groups	36.31	6230
Lawn with incurved Sedge and associated groups	36.34	6150
Nordic lawns with feruginous Sedge	36.412	6170
Slopes with Sesleria and evergreen Sedge	36.431	6170
Megaphorbia from the hercynian mountains, the Jura and the Alps	37.81	6430
Prairie with <i>Calamagrostis arundinacea</i>	37.82	6430
Siliceous scree slope	61.11	8110
Permanent glaciers	63.3	8340
<b>Present or potential habitats (complementary analysis to be carried out)</b>	<b>Corine</b>	<b>N2000</b>
Thickets with <i>subarctic Salix</i> ssp.	31.6211	4080
Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	62.21	8220

**1.2 Map of the habitats** recorded on the site and figuring on the order of 18 December 2018, that may be the subject of a prefectural order for the protection of natural habitats in mainland France





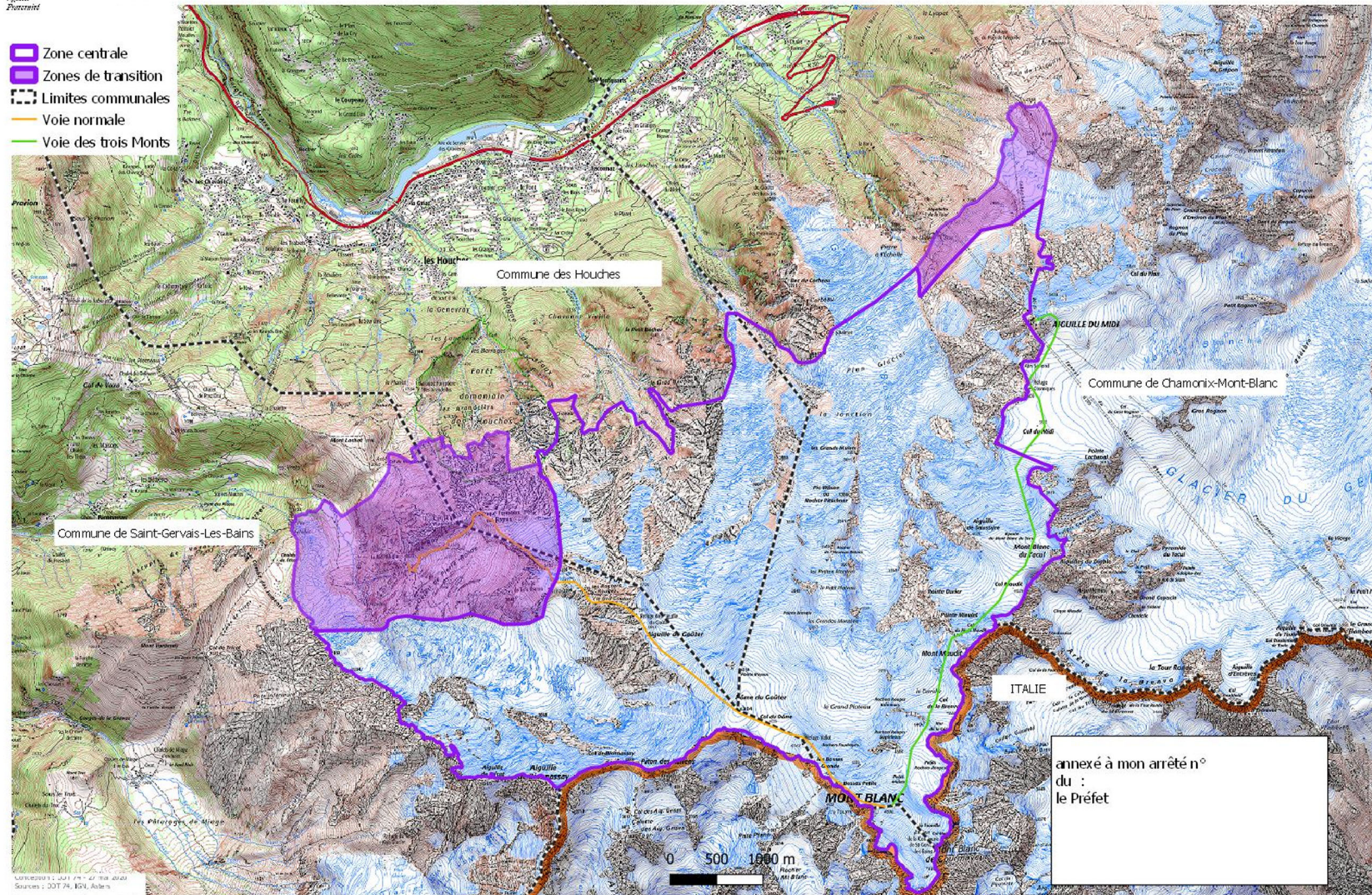
# APHN du Mont-Blanc Habitats naturels



## Appendix 2: maps defining the perimeters

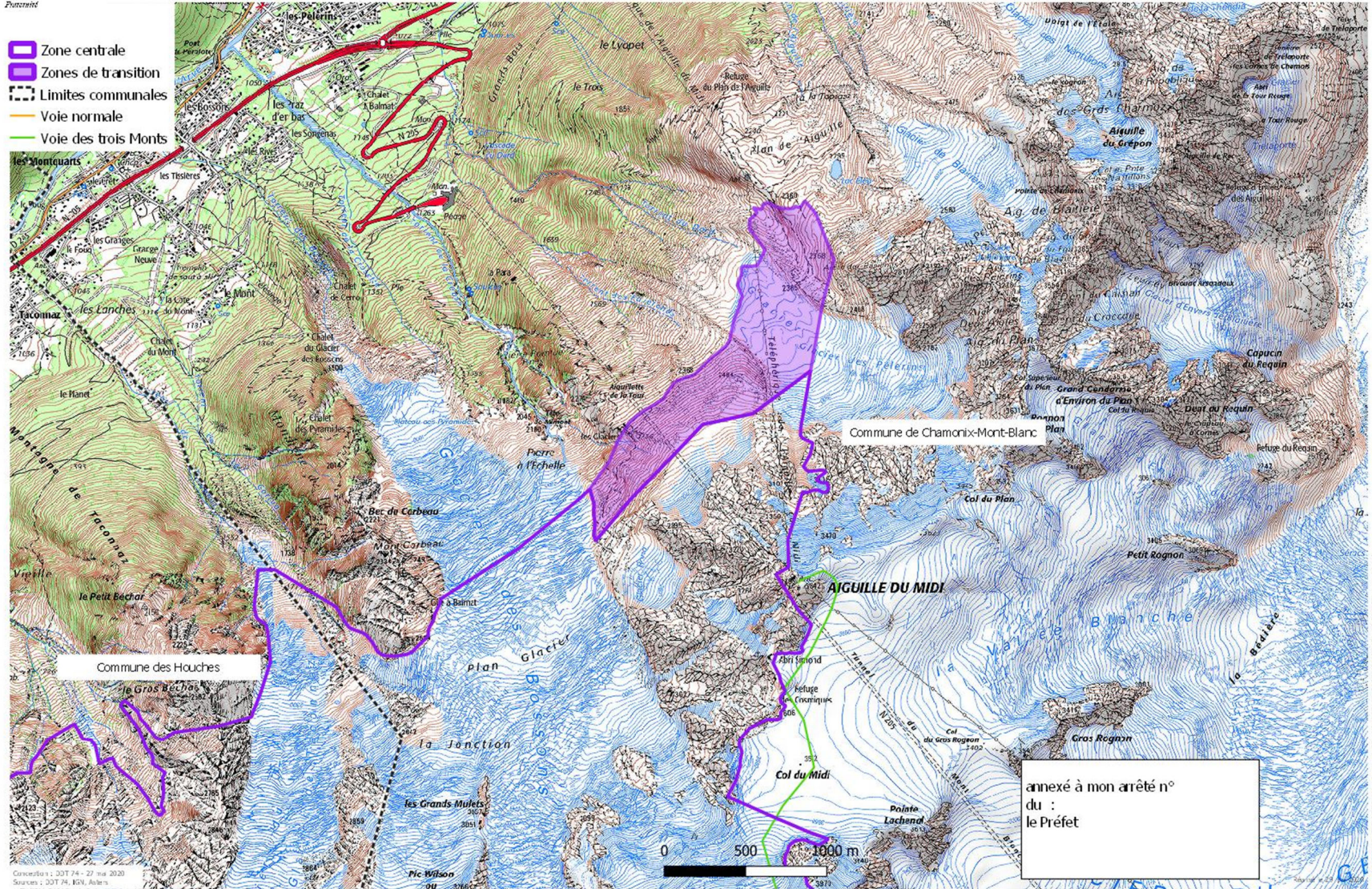
### 2.1 General map

## Mont-Blanc site d'exception périmètre d'APHN



## 2.2 Detail of northern section

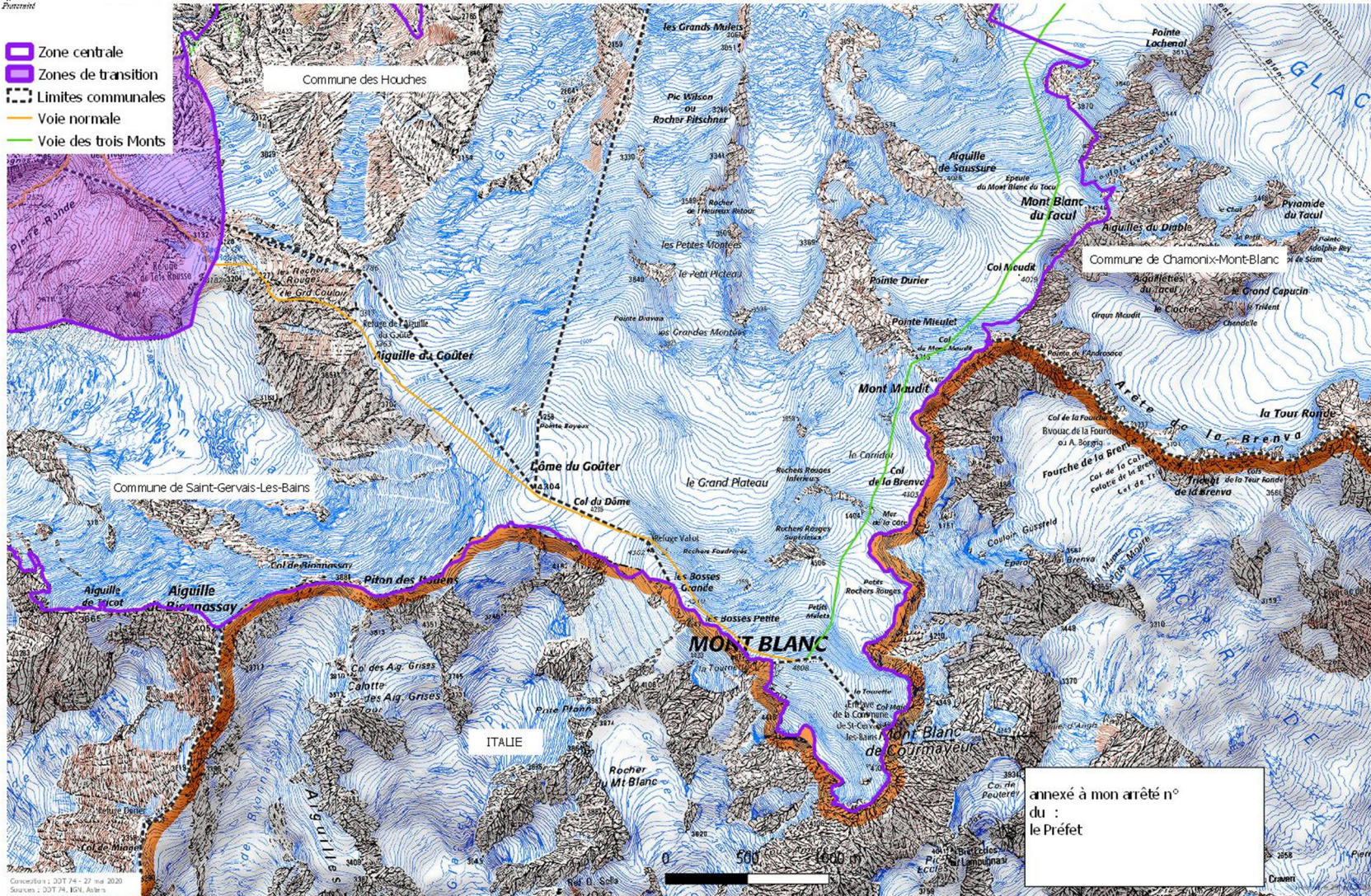
## Mont-Blanc site d'exception périmètre d'APHN



### **2.3 Detail of southern section**

## Mont-Blanc site d'exception périmètre d'APHN

-  Zone centrale
-  Zones de transition
-  Limites communales
-  Voie normale
-  Voie des trois Monts

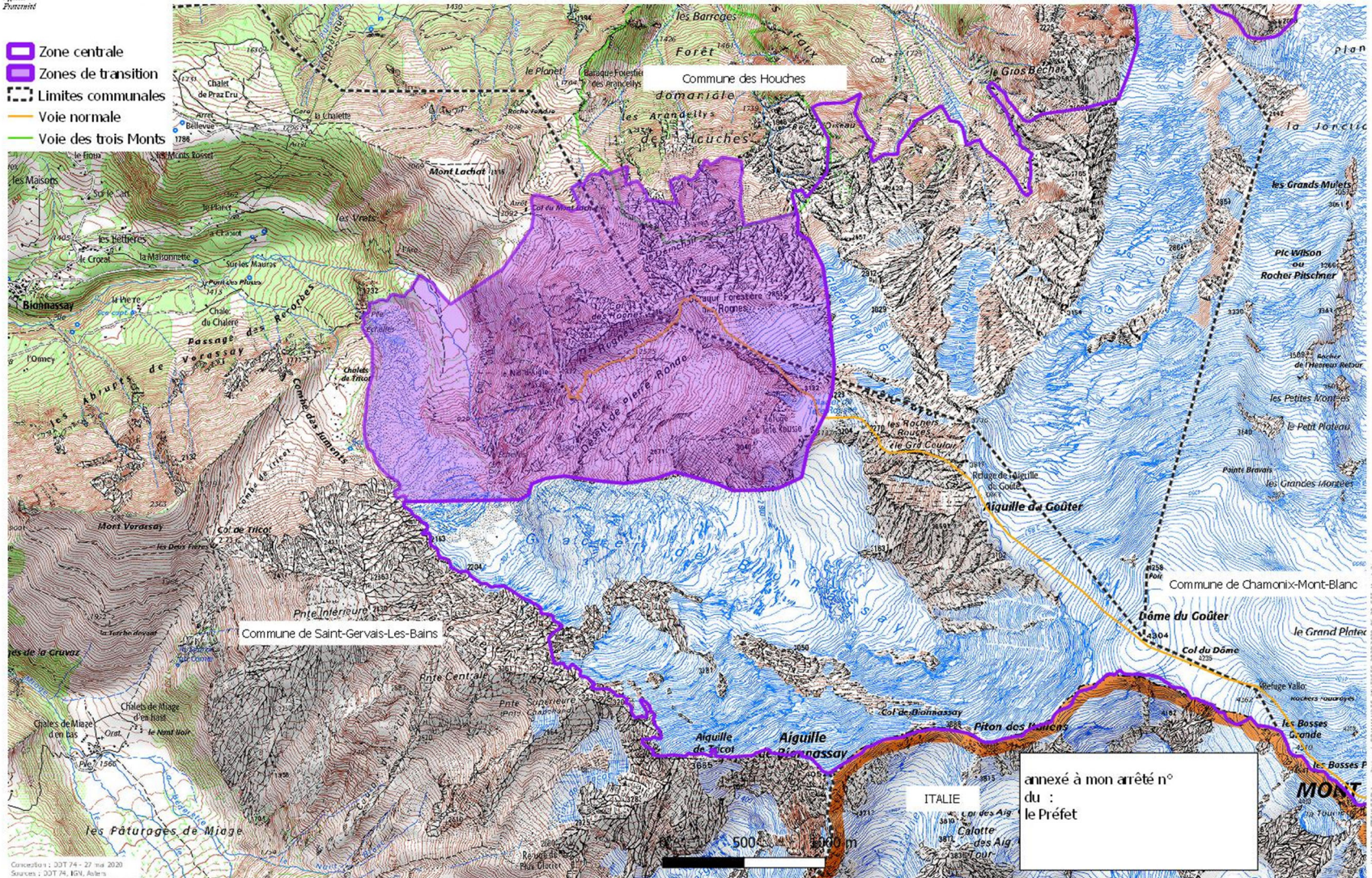


## 2.4 Detail of western section



## Mont-Blanc site d'exception périmètre d'APHN

-  Zone centrale
-  Zones de transition
-  Limites communales
-  Voie normale
-  Voie des trois Monts



**Appendix 3: List of the land registry plots**

