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## Alps turning green as snow melts on the peaks

James Beal Social Affairs Editor

Climate change is having a “particularly pronounced” effect on the Swiss Alps, say scientists, as its snow-capped peaks turn green.

Researchers from two universities in Switzerland used satellite data to show that vegetation above the tree line had increased on nearly 80 per cent of the mountain range, while the amount of snow cover had decreased.

Working with colleagues in Finland and the Netherlands, scientists studied high-quality images from 1984 to 2021. Plant biomass above the tree line increased in more than 77 per cent of the area observed.

“The scale of the change has turned out to be absolutely massive in the Alps,” Professor Sabine Rumpf of the University of Basel, the study’s lead author, said. “The Alps are becoming greener because plants are colonising new areas and the vegetation is generally becoming denser and taller.”

Previous studies on the effect of global warming on the Alps focused on biodiversity and plant species distribution. But until now, no one had conducted a comprehensive analysis of changes in vegetation productivity in the Alps.

The study, published in the journal

**Mane attraction** Photos of a lion that lived in a west London flat after being bought from Harrods in 1969 are up for auction through Sworders on June 21. Socialites John Rendall and Anthony Bourke, top left, treated the cub as a pet until it was taken to Kenya in 1970, where it was cared for by Tony Fitzjohn. Obituary, page 49