The Swiss Reserve Banknotes

From the beginning of the first emission of banknotes in 1907, the Swiss National Bank had prepared eight series of banknotes. These series have only partly been released, however. Some bills of the 2nd and 3rd series have been printed, but never put into circulation, and the same applies for the complete 4th and 7th series. These bills were intended as so-called reserve banknotes.

Reserve banknotes were produced to enable the Swiss National Bank in case of emergency to replace all circulating bills within short notice. This would have been necessary, for example, if large numbers of high quality forgeries of one or several denominations would have surfaced. The National Bank would then have withdrawn these denominations from circulation, demonetized them and replaced them by the corresponding reserve bank notes.

The 7th series of banknotes was the last reserve series, though. The National Bank considers the security features of the 8th series – the bills currently circulating in Switzerland thus – as so highly developed that reserve notes seem no longer necessary.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Bank Note for the Fourth Banknote Series, 100 Franks 1942

Denomination:	**100 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1942**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

Already in 1938 the Swiss National Bank considered the issue of a new 100 francs bill. It took about three years, however, to put this plan into practice – and then, it was just a reserve banknote. It bears the name of the bank in the three official languages of Switzerland, and an unknown woman's head in an oval.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Second Banknote Series, 40 Francs 1914

Denomination:	**40 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1914**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

The bills of the 2nd series were issued between 1911 and 1914. At the same time, top-secret reserve banknotes at 40, 20, 10 and 5 francs were printed. The image on the obverse of the 40-francs-bill shows Winkelried, a legendary Swiss warrior, in a medallion.

The 5-franc note was intended to replace the silver 5-franc coin, which would be stockpiled during times of war or serious crisis, and thus would effectively be removed from payment transactions.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Third Banknote Series, 20 Francs 1923

Denomination:	**20 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1923**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

The third banknote series came out between 1918 and 1930. These bills were either designed and issued in intervals, or else they were printed as reserve notes. This 20 franc reserve note bears the head od a women from Fribourg in a medallion on the obverse. The reverse shows ornaments, rosettes, and the denomination.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Second Banknote Series, 10 Francs 1921

Denomination:	**10 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**London**
Year of Issue:	**1921**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

The banknotes of the 2nd series were first circulated between 1911 and 1914. These bills were replaced in 1956-1957. This represents an extraordinarily long life-span for paper money. The 10 franc bill was only printed as reserve note, however. In every-day-life, people then still used golden coins at 10 francs, the so-called "Vreneli."

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Fourth Banknote Series, 1000 Francs 1950

Denomination:	**1000 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1950**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

Originally, Hans Erni wanted to depict the Landsgemeinde – Swiss version of a provincial assembly – on the 1000 franc-bill. The National Bank did not like this idea, however. It wanted a turbine as illustration of the 1000 note.

This bill was never issued. Only a few exemplars exist today. The reserve banknotes are destroyed when they are outdated, save for some specimen copies.

Swiss Confederation, Proof Issue for a Reserve Banknote for the Fourth Banknote Series, 500 Francs 1949

Denomination:	**500 Franken Reserve Banknote (Pattern)**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1949**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

This bill was entirely engraved into a copper plate, but never printed! Only some press proofs were made; the exemplar shown here is one of them. The design of the note is by Hans Erni, who depicted the head of a young man on the obverse, and a chemist in his laboratory on the reverse.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Bank Note for the Third Banknote Series, 100 Franks 1918

Denomination:	**100 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1918**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

Between 1918 and 1930 the Swiss National Bank had so-called "war bills" designed. Some of them were printed and circulated, others were held back as reserve banknotes. The reserve note at 100 francs bore the same sujets as the official bill, an image of Wilhelm Tell on the obverse and a view of the Jungfrau massive on the reverse. The reserve note differed by significant details from the regular issue, however. Tell, for instance, looked further up on the reserve bill and carried his crossbow lower.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Fourth Banknote Series, 50 Francs 1945

Denomination:	**50 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1945**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

During the Second World War, the Swiss National Bank commissioned the two painters Victor Surbeck and Hans Erni to design new banknotes. While the 1000-franc, 100-franc and 50-franc notes went into print, the 500-franc note did not progress beyond the proof stage. None of the notes were ever put into circulation.

The denominations at 1000, 500 and 50 francs were designed by Hans Erni, while Victor Surbeck was responsible for the 100 francs-bill.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Seventh Banknote Series, 1000 Francs 1985

Denomination:	**1000 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1985**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

The banknotes of the 7th series were designed by Roger and Elisabeth Pfund. The couple had won the competition for the 6th series. However, the Swiss National Bank decided that the 6th series should be designed by the second best, Ernst and Ursula Hiestand. Roger and Elisabeth Pfund were instead charged with designing the reserve series.

The obverse of the 1000 franc-note depicts Louis Agassiz, one of the first internationally renowned scientists. Agassiz was famous especially for his studies of the glacial period and of ichthyology (the science of fish).

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Seventh Banknote Series, 500 Franken, 1985

Denomination:	**500 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1985**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

Reserve banknotes enable the Swiss National Bank to replace all circulating billes within short notice. This would be necessary, for example, if large numbers of high quality forgeries of one or several denominations surfaced. The National Bank would then withdraw these denominations from circulation, demonetize them and replace them by the corresponding reserve bank notes.

The 7th series of banknotes was a pure reserve series – these banknotes were never put into circulation. At the same time, it was the last reserve series. The security features of the 8th series have been continually improved, so that reserve notes seem not longer to be necessary.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Seventh Banknote Series, 100 Francs 1985

Denomination:	**100 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1985**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

From 1971 to 1986, the artists Elisabeth und Roger Pfund were busy with the realization of the reserve banknotes of the 7th series. The obverse of this note depicts the architect Francesco Borromeo, while the reverse represents one of his works, the church of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza in Rome.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Seventh Banknote Series, 50 Francs 1985

Denomination:	**50 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1985**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

The reverse of this reserve banknote shows Conrad Gessner. He is regarded as one of the most famous and influential natural scientists of Switzerland. The reverse depicts a golden eagle.

Roger Pfund, who made the designs for the bills of the 7th series, worked on these bills from 1971 to 1986. They never came into circulation.

Swiss Confederation, Reserve Banknote for the Seventh Banknote Series, 20 Francs 1985

Denomination:	**20 Franken Reserve Banknote**
Mint Authority:	**Swiss Confederation**
Mint:	**Zurich**
Year of Issue:	**1985**
Weight (g):	
Diameter (mm):	
Material:	**Paper**
Owner:	**andere**

The bust of Horace-Bénédict de Saussure on the obverse, and a hair-hygrometer on the reverse: These are the images on this 20-franc reserve banknote.

De Saussure made himself a name as geologist – he is considered as one of the founders of this subject. He explored the ice fields of Chamonix that are to be seen in the background on the reverse of this note. De Saussure also was the inventor of the hygrometer, to measure the atmospheric moisture, and of the electrometer, an apparatus to measure electric charge.