History of the Federal institute of aquatic ecology and fisheries management, Agency of water management Austria

Elisabeth Peham

Federal Agency for Watermanagement, Ecological Station Waldviertel

e-mail: elisabeth.peham@baw.at

The present-day Institute of Aquatic Ecology and Fisheries Management has a long history in Austrian fisheries research and aquatic resource management. Its origins date back to 1928, when the Fisheries Biological Station Weissenbach am Attersee was founded. In 1936 it was transferred to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. In 1953, it moved to Mondsee, and the Kreuzstein fish farm was affiliated with the institute. Following the Federal Institute Act of 1983, it became the Federal Institute of Fisheries Management and was incorporated into the Federal Agency of Water Management in 1995. A second important component is the Waldviertel Ecological Station. Established in 1972 through the efforts of Friederike Wawrik, it developed into a regional research and advisory center focused on the pond landscapes of the Waldviertel. The Waldviertel Biological Station Association was established in 1978 to support its research activities. In 2003, the Ecological Station was integrated into the Federal Office of Water Management and became part of the present institution. Although Austria has a relatively small aquaculture sector, producing approximately 5,000 tonnes of food fish in 2024, aquaculture remains important for regional food production. Professional training and sustainable production are therefore key priorities.

Production mainly consists of salmonid farming, carp pond farming, and recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS). The Institute offers training in sustainable and animal-friendly aquaculture, combining classroom teaching, practical work, online learning and self-study. Vocational fisheries education follows Austria's dual training system, with programmes covering aquaculture, fish biology, freshwater ecology, fish health, lake management and hydrology. Advanced training concludes with a dissertation and comprehensive examination. The Institute also supports implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, manages the Fish Database Austria, monitors fish stocks and aquatic ecosystems, and develops sustainable aquaculture methods. The Waldviertel Ecological Station contributes regional expertise in pond fish farming, linking research with practical application and supporting an ecologically and economically sustainable Austrian aquaculture sector.

Eco-Cultural Heritage: Research & Education
České Budějovice, Czech Republic, 2–6 November 2026.
https://www.jcu.cz/cz/univerzita/kreativeucz/conference