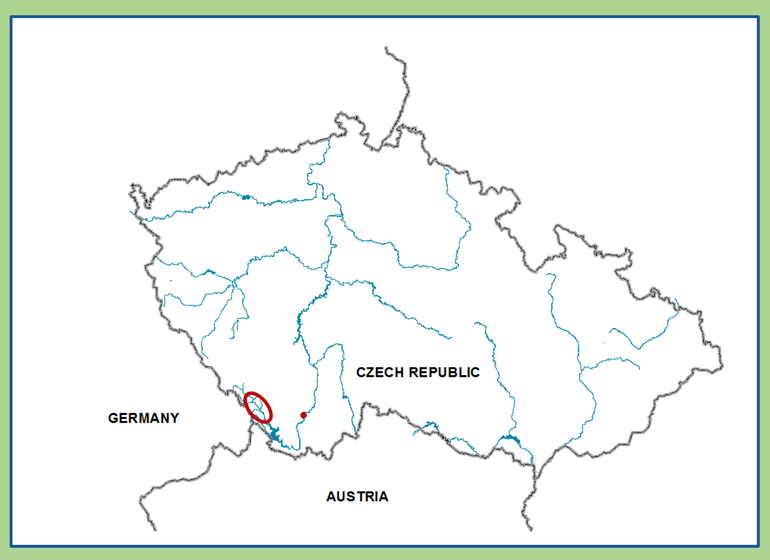
EU project

Strengthening and protection of the freshwater pearl mussel population in the Šumava National Park (Bohemia, Czech Republic)

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The area of the upper Moldau River (above the Lipno reservoir) with the recent occurrence of the freshwater pearl musel. • – the town of České Budějovice.

Big Czech rivers, the Vltava River (in German: Moldau) and its tributaries the Malše (G.: Maltsch) and the Otava (G.: Wottawa), used to be very rich in the freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*). Since cca 1850, their numbers decreased dramatically due to the water pollution and land use changes in the catchment area. In **the Moldau**, the species inhabited the river as far as below the town of České Budějovice in the past but now, it occurs strictly in the upper parts of the Moldau River basin on the Šumava National Park territory.

The Šumava National Park authorities coordinate a project funded by the European Union, to enhance a chance to maintain this population and to restore the species' natural reproduction.

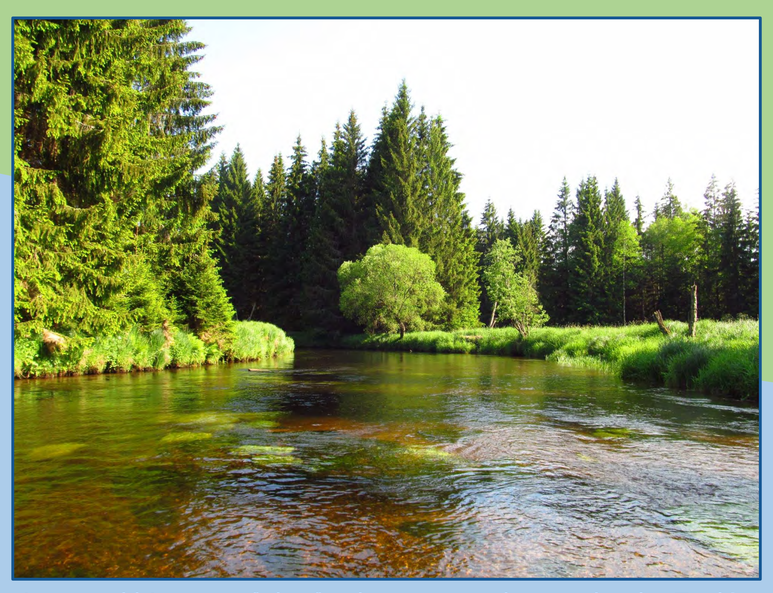
The **main purpose** of the project (2017–2022) is **to strengthen and stabilize the existing overaged population, which does not reproduce despite a very well preserved biotope**.

Main goals:

- to increase the number of genetically indigenous pearl mussels in the river by semi-natural rearing and releasing the juveniles into the best possible river transects (tested beforehand)
- to monitore the current population and to ensure rescue transfers or biotope improvements, if needed
- to consider a possibility of a rearing river branch construction, to support natural reproduction
- to minimize the risk of a die-back due to the water pollution and erosion
- to create environmental education activities focused on the freshwater pearl mussel conservation



Meanders of the Moldau on the territory of the Mrtvý luh (Tote Au / Filzau) peatbog in the Šumava Mountains: one of the remaining homes of *Margaritifera margaritifera* in central Europe...



A natural biotope of the freshwater pearl mussel – the Teplá Vltava (Warme Moldau) River.

The project follows long-term activities in the area (mainly monitoring of the water chemistry), and might continue as a **cooperation with the Bavarian Forest National Park** – some tributaries flow from the Bavarian side, and there is no or very limited information about their water quality.

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