



Füreder, L.

## Nationalpark Hohe Tauern: Gewässer

2007, Tyrolia, 248 pages

ISBN 978-3-7022-2808-8

The present 248 page volume is dedicated to the freshwater systems of the Austrian “Hohe Tauern National Park”, with a size of 1836 km<sup>2</sup> the largest protected area in the European Alps. The waters of this part of the Alps have long been a source of conflict between those interested in water use (especially for hydropower) and those wanting to protect water/landscape and were no doubt critical for the creation of a national park.

The author, a well-known limnologist and freshwater ecologist, clearly aimed to gather available ecological knowledge about the mountain waters of the Hohe Tauern National Park and to prepare it in such a way that park visitors can easily learn about the richness and function of these waters and gain a comprehensive understanding of these fascinating aquatic ecosystems. Given the enormous number of waters in the park (342 glaciers, 551 mountain lakes, 279 streams and rivers) and their high morphological diversity, the author accomplished this ambitious task in an admirable manner. Not only does this book provide an overview of the different types of waters in the National Park, it also presents detailed information on the structure and function of these freshwaters ecosystems. The author succeeds in showing the complexity of aquatic ecosystems in mountain areas and the interaction therein as well as the sensitivity of ecosystem function to environmental changes.

This comprehensive book covers all aspects of the waters and their ecosystems in the park in reasonable depth and yet easily understandable for non-scientists, too. In several chapters it presents topical themes such as biodiversity, climate change, reconstruction of past climates, flood protection and the effects of hydro-electric power stations on aquatic habitats and freshwater biota from different angles. In addition, it provides information about water education activities in the park, an inventory of the lakes and a glossary to help non-scientists understand the scientific terms in the book. Last but not least, an identification key

for the most important aquatic invertebrate animals enables both visitors and non-limnologists to explore the biodiversity of the freshwater habitats in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The book is illustrated with a large number of very informative photos presenting all the different types of waters and freshwater habitats. Furthermore, many macro-photographs of freshwater invertebrates give an insight into the aquatic biota, making them easier to identify for visitors and non-limnologists.

To summarize, the book is of great value not only for visitors and people living within the parks borders but also for specialists and scientists of different disciplines. Recent scientific findings and activities (e.g. documentation and mapping of most lakes and running waters in the park; identification and restoration of autochthonous trout species in the park) are incorporated, making it a very up-to-date guidebook to the waters of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

A final personal remark: because of the focus on an Austrian national park, and most likely due to financial constraints, the book is only available in German. I would assume that the increasing number of non-German speaking visitors would welcome an English version of this very helpful and beautiful book. Even more so as most parts of the book could easily be used in other mountain areas of the world.

Günter Köck