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FRESHWATER MOLLUSCS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC – CURRENT
STATUS AND RED LIST

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The Czech Republic is situated in the upper parts of the large river basins therefore there are no large watercourses with extensive lowlands or natural lowland lakes rich in habitats suitable for diverse freshwater molluscan assemblages. Nevertheless, the mollusc research in the Czech Republic has a long (ca 150 years) tradition. Although a major part of historical data in publications, museum collections or databases is primarily focused on terrestrial molluscs, there are some freshwater mollusc data comparable with a recent situation. The intensive research of aquatic molluscs is under progress for last 25 years. Currently, the occurrence of 51 freshwater gastropods and 28 bivalves is known from the Czech Republic. The data amount allowed to assess a current species status and assembled Red Lists of threatened species. The first proposal of the mollusc Red List of the Czech Republic was created in 1995, while the last version of Red List processed by IUCN criteria was published in 2017. In this last version 24 freshwater gastropods and 15 bivalves are listed in six categories – Regionally Extinct (2), Critically Endangered (8), Endangered (12), Vulnerable (10), Near Threatened (5) and Data Deficient (2). The rest of the species is considered as of Least Concern or Not Evaluated in the case of non-native species (8). The reasons 49% of all Czech freshwater species being listed there are especially in lack of natural rivers and their floodplains in lower altitudes. Most of watercourses have undergone drastic regulations and were also markedly shortened. Afterwards, natural oxbows and pools of large river-floodplains have gradually disappeared. Streams are usually polluted. Slightly polluted waters remain only in higher altitudes, which are not suitable for most of freshwater molluscs. Most of wetlands were drained or destroyed during the last century and thousands of fishponds (ca 21,000) are still intensively exploited.