



Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 30 January 2026

Austria

Transboundary Ramsar Site Podyjí – Thayatal National Park, Part Austria



Designation date	6 May 2025
Site number	2590
Coordinates	48°50'29"N 15°52'52"E
Area	1 358,50 ha

Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a 'full' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

1 - Summary

Summary

The Thayatal National Park and its Czech counterpart, Podyjí National Park, together form one of the most biodiverse and ecologically valuable protected areas in Central Europe. The steep valley of the River Thaya, deeply incised into the Bohemian Massif, creates a remarkable variety of habitats ranging from near-natural riparian forests and wetlands to dry grasslands, meadows, and rocky slopes. The interaction of diverse geology, the meandering river morphology, and the location at the junction of Pannonian and Central European climatic influences has fostered extraordinary biological richness.

Within this landscape, rare and representative wetland types such as *Salicetum fragilis* willow floodplains and *Carici elongatae*–*Alnetum glutinosae* alder swamps can still be found. These habitats, now extremely scarce in Austria, are crucial for maintaining hydrological balance, supporting nutrient dynamics, and providing breeding and feeding sites for numerous plant and animal species. The Thaya River itself plays a defining role, offering important ecosystem services such as groundwater recharge, flood mitigation, and local climate regulation.

The area supports an exceptional diversity of flora and fauna, including many rare and threatened species such as *Iris sibirica*, *Carex bohemica*, *Stipa dasyphylla*, and *Dictamnus albus*, as well as protected vertebrates like the European otter (*Lutra lutra*), fire-bellied toads (*Bombina orientalis* and *B. orientalis*), and the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Almost half of all native Austrian vascular plant species occur within the Thayatal–Podyjí complex, including several endemics such as *Sorbus thuyensis* and *S. cucullifera*, which are restricted to the ridges of the valley.

The Thaya River also retains ecological significance as a refuge for fish species such as the Spined Loach (*Cobitis taenia*), whose population within the Thayatal represents up to 2 % of the Austrian total. This highlights the site's importance for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and the restoration of natural river dynamics in the Danube basin.

Despite its modest size, the transboundary Thayatal–Podyjí complex stands out as a rare stronghold of near-natural ecosystems in an otherwise intensively used landscape. It serves as a crucial stepping stone for migratory species and as an irreplaceable refuge for Central European biodiversity, combining outstanding scenic beauty with high ecological integrity and international conservation value.

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Responsible compiler

Institution/agency	Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH
Postal address	Merkersdorf 90, 2082 Hardegg, Austria

National Ramsar Administrative Authority

Institution/agency	Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt, Klima, Regionen und Wasserwirtschaft (BMLUK)
Postal address	Marxergasse 2, A-1030 Wien, Austria

2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year	2000
To year	2025

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)	Transboundary Ramsar Site Podyjí – Thayatal National Park, Part Austria
Unofficial name (optional)	Grenzüberschreitendes Ramsar Gebiet Nationalpark Thayatal

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps	0
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Boundaries description

The boundary of the proposed Ramsar Site corresponds exactly to the legally defined border of the Nationalpark Thayatal in Austria. It follows the Thaya River along the Austrian–Czech border, encompassing the deeply incised river valley and adjacent slopes with diverse forest, grassland, and rock habitats. The site includes both riverine and upland areas, covering the full altitudinal gradient characteristic of the Thaya valley landscape. Topographically, the boundary is defined by the steep valley slopes and surrounding plateaus. To the north, the Thaya River forms the natural border, which also represents the international boundary between Austria and the Czech Republic. The Czech counterpart, Podyjí National Park, lies directly across the river, together forming a transboundary protected area complex. The Ramsar Site lies entirely within the national park area, which is legally designated under Austrian nature conservation law. It is also fully included in the larger Natura 2000 site („Thayatal bei Hardegg“), which extends beyond the national park boundary and provides an additional layer of European-level protection.

Digital map: projection used: WGS84

2.2.2 - General location

a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?	Austria, Lower Austria, Hollabrunn
b) What is the nearest town or population centre?	Retz (4300 inhabitants)

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

- a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries? Yes ☒ No ☐
- b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party? Yes ☐ No ☒

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

Official area, in hectares (ha):	1358.5
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Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from
GIS boundaries

1358.476

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
EU biogeographic regionalization	Continental biogeographic regionalization

3 - Why is the Site important?

3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

☒ Criterion 1: Representative, rare or unique natural or near-natural wetland types

Hydrological services provided	The River Thaya and its floodplain play a key role in maintaining ecological integrity, hydrological balance, and human well-being in the surrounding landscape. The site provides important regulating services, including the maintenance of natural hydrological regimes through groundwater recharge, flood retention, and local microclimate regulation. The riparian forests and wetlands contribute to climate regulation by buffering temperature fluctuations and sequestering carbon in soils and vegetation. Vegetation cover along the river stabilizes slopes and banks, reduces erosion, and supports natural water purification and nutrient cycling processes (Spindler, 2000; Eberstaller, 2019, Leitfaden Natura 2000 NÖ, Lebensraumtypen nach Anhang I - Thayatal bei Hardegg).
Other ecosystem services provided	The Thayatal–Podyji wetland complex provides a wide range of ecosystem services of regional and international importance, further beyond the listed hydrological services provided as listed above. The site also delivers significant supporting services by sustaining high biological diversity. It provides habitats for numerous rare and threatened species, promotes pollination and genetic exchange, and acts as an essential stepping stone in the regional ecological network. The wide variety of wetland, forest, and grassland ecosystems maintains important genetic resources and enhances overall ecological resilience. Cultural and educational services are of outstanding importance. The Thayatal–Podyji area serves as a focal point for nature-based recreation, environmental education, and scientific research. It functions as a long-term monitoring and study site, contributing to a deeper understanding of Central European biodiversity and ecological processes. The landscape’s cultural heritage — including historic castles and traditional land-use features — further enriches its social and aesthetic value. In addition, the Thaya provides provisioning services, such as the conservation of genetic material and indirect contributions to local drinking water supply. An estimated 100,000 people within and 50,000 outside the site directly benefit from the ecosystem services provided, demonstrating its substantial importance for regional ecological stability, cultural identity, and human well-being.
Other reasons	Rare wetland types like <i>Salicetum fragilis</i> and <i>Carici elongatae-Alnetum glutinosae</i>. <i>Salicetum fragilis</i> can be described like: Fragment of a willow floodplain on the banks of the Thaya river, with open patches and pestle-root flora. Layer cover: tree layer: 60%, shrub layer 10%, herb layer 95%. The area is only characterised by small areas of stands dominated by willows, which can be found directly on the banks of the Thaya . The stands are frequently flooded, the herb layer is dominated by light-loving species, while more demanding riparian forest species are absent (Willner & Grabherr 2007). <i>Carici elongatae-Alnetum glutinosae</i> vegetation description: Black alder stand in a hollow with open water surface in the church forest, swampy, lush with sedges, etc. Layer cover: Tree layer 1: 60%, tree layer 2: 3%, shrub layer 7%, herb layer 90%, mosses 5%, deadwood: 1%, open ground 5%. Black alder forests are very rare in the area of the two national parks; evidence of this association is otherwise only found by Chytrý & Vicherek (1995) from the Klaperbach valley on the Czech side- In Willner & Grabherr (2007), <i>Carici elongatae-Alnetum glutinosae</i> is defined more broadly and is also synonymous with <i>Carici acutiformis-Alnetum glutinosae</i>, which is given in Chytrý (2013) for the quadrant of the Podyji National Park. The sites are relatively nutrient-rich, typical species of the herb layer are <i>Caltha palustris</i>, <i>Lysimachia vulgaris</i> and <i>Solanum dulcamara</i> (Willner & Grabherr 2007).

☒ Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

☒ Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification

The area is a hotspot for biodiversity. This is due, on the one hand, to the varied influences of the Pannonian climate from the east and the Atlantic climate from the west. On the other hand, the rock which makes the subsoil range from acidic to alkaline, also provides different conditions for life. But the Thaya itself has the most important say. A proud 1.5 to 5 million years ago, it cut to 150 metres deep into the hard granites and gneisses of the Bohemian Massif and has since shaped the valley with its many elongated meanders and loops. It forms one of the most beautiful, diverse and at the same time also one of the last near-natural ravines in Central Europe. The unique scenic charm of the Green Canyon can best be felt from the Umlaufberg, which is almost completely embraced by the Thaya. Almost half of all native plant species occur in the cross-border conservation area (1390 species). The spectrum ranges from such magnificent representatives as Turk's-cap lilies (*Lilium martagon*) which thrive in the cool penumbra of the forest under nutrient-rich conditions, to Jersey thrift (*Armeria arenaria*) which are among the fragile and beautiful specialists of the dry meadows and can only be found here in Austria. Other plant species like *Stipa dasyphylla*, *Melica altissima* and *Carex rhizina* are also only to be found in Thayatal National Park in Austria. Concerning tree species *Sorbus thayensis* and *Sorbus cucullifera* are two apomictic species with only a few individuals to be found along the ridges of Thayatal National Park. The undisputed star in the animal world of the Thayatal National Park is the European wildcat (*Felis silvestris*). The species, thought to be extinct in Austria, was rediscovered in 2007. But summer guests such as graceful black storks (*Ciconia nigra*), reptiles such as colourful emerald lizards (*Lacerta viridis*) or river dwellers which are rare elsewhere, such as the noble crayfish (*Astacus astacus*), also add a touch of wonder. There are about 40 hectares of meadows around the Thaya that were once created through grazing. Original dry grasslands with a wealth of botanical rarities have also been preserved on steep slopes and rocky plateaus. However, most of the National Park, over 90 percent, is characterised by primeval oak and beech forests and special forest communities.

☒ Criterion 7 : Significant and representative fish

Justification

Cobitis taenia (Spined Loach) is part of the original fish fauna of the Thaya River within the Thayatal National Park. Historically widespread in Austria, its current distribution has drastically declined, and it is now classified as highly endangered. In the Thayatal Natura 2000 site, the species' population represents up to 2% of the Austrian total, giving the area significant conservation value for this species. The Spined Loach inhabits calm, shallow river sections with fine substrates such as sand or silt, where it buries itself during the day and becomes active at dusk. In the Thaya, these habitats have been severely degraded over recent decades. The main threats stem from the ecological impacts of the Vranov hydropower plant. These include hydropeaking with sudden and frequent flow changes, sediment transport disruption, lack of structural diversity, turbidity, temperature shifts, and insufficient residual flow. The altered channel morphology with steep, trapezoidal banks offers few refugial habitats suitable for the species. Due to these pressures, the local population has declined significantly. Conservation goals for the Thayatal site therefore include restoring natural river dynamics and improving habitat quality. Specific objectives focus on ensuring longitudinal and lateral connectivity, preserving and developing shallow, slow-flowing sections with fine sediments, and enhancing the structural diversity of the river to support the species' needs. Efforts to increase the population size of *Cobitis taenia* in the area are a high-priority objective.

3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	Other status	Justification
Plantae								
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Aria cucullifera</i>	☐	☒	☐		☐	CR	endemic species of national park Thayatal / Podyji; national red list status: CR
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Aria thayensis</i>	☐	☒	☐		☐	CR	endemic species of national park Thayatal / Podyji; national red list status: CR
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Armeria arenaria arenaria</i>	☐	☒	☐		☐	VU	national red list status: VU
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Berula erecta</i>	☒	☐	☐	LC	☐	VU	national red list status: VU
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Carex bohemia</i>	☒	☐	☐		☐	EN	national red list status: EN
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Carex pediformis</i>	☐	☒	☐		☐		rare species that reach their south-western distribution limit in this area
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Dictamnus albus</i>	☒	☐	☐		☐	VU	national red list status: VU
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Iris sibirica</i>	☒	☐	☐		☐	VU	national red list status: VU
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Iris variegata</i>	☒	☐	☐		☐	VU	national red list status: VU; Iris variegata
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Lilium martagon</i>	☐	☒	☐		☐		rare but characteristic species at nationalpark thayatal
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Melica altissima</i>	☒	☐	☐		☐	CR	national red list status: CR; endemic species at nationalpark thayatal
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Populus nigra</i>	☒	☐	☐	DD	☐	EN	national red list status: EN
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Potamogeton lucens</i>	☒	☐	☐	LC	☐	VU	national red list status: VU
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>	☒	☐	☐	LC	☐	CR	national red list status: CR
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Ranunculus fluitans</i>	☒	☐	☐	LC	☐	EN	national red list status: EN
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Salix triandra</i>	☒	☐	☐	LC	☐	VU	national red list status: VU
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>	☐	☒	☐	LC	☐		for central importance for the rare Maculinea teleius (FFH Annex II & IV), as it is the only foodplant for their caterpillars
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Stipa dasyphylla</i>	☒	☐	☐		☐	CR	national red list status: CR
TRACHEOPHYTA/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	☒	☐	☐		☐	VU	national red list status: VU

3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
Others																	
CHORDATA / AMPHIBIA	<i>Bombina bombina</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐	VU	national red list species status: VU
CHORDATA / AMPHIBIA	<i>Bombina variegata</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐	VU	national red list species status: VU
CHORDATA / ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Cobitis taenia</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐				LC	☐	☐	VU	national red list species status: VU Criterion 7: Regionally threatened; see justification in 3.1.
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		was stated as RE - regionally extinct in the national red list species list, re-found at national park Thayatal - characteristic flagship species
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	<i>Lacerta viridis</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐	EN	national red list species status: EN
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐				NT	☒	☐		FFH Appendix II & IV; CITES Appendix I
CHORDATA / AMPHIBIA	<i>Triturus carnifex</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐				VU	☐	☐	VU	national red list species status: VU
CHORDATA / AMPHIBIA	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐	EN	national red list species status: EN
Fish, Mollusc and Crustacea																	
ARTHROPODA / MALACOSTRACA	<i>Astacus astacus</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐				VU	☐	☐	EN	national red list species status: EN
Birds																	
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐	Annex I	Annex I of DIRECTIVE 2009/147/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Name of ecological community	Community qualifies under Criterion 2?	Description	Justification
6430 - Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels	☒	Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities	Priority habitat type according to EU Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
510 Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)	☒	Lowland hay meadows	Priority habitat type according to EU Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
3260 - Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation	☒	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation	Priority habitat type according to EU Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
6410 - <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>)	☒	<i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils	Priority habitat type according to EU Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
91E0* Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, <i>Salix alba</i>)	☒	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Priority habitat type according to EU Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
3150 - Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> — type vegetation	☒	Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>	Priority habitat type according to EU Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoetes-Nanojuncetea</i>	☒	Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i>	Priority habitat type according to EU Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

4.1 - Ecological character

The steep valley of the National park Thayatal, carved 150 meters deep into the Bohemian Massif by the River Thaya, features a mosaic of habitats, including natural forests, dry grasslands, meadows, cliffs, and rock faces. This diverse landscape supports rare species such as the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*, the European Wildcat *Felis silvestris*, and the Siberian Melic Grass *Melica altissima*. The park's ecological integrity is shaped by its geology, river morphology, and location at the intersection of two climate zones. The meandering river and its surroundings provide crucial habitats and could act as an essential corridor for migrating species like the Lynx and Wolf. Despite its relatively small size (7,660 ha in total, with 1,360 ha in Thayatal NP and 6,300 ha in Podyjí NP), the area plays a significant role in maintaining ecological connectivity in the intensively used landscapes of the Waldviertel, Weinviertel, and South Moravia. Key ecological processes include natural forest succession, habitat interconnectivity, and the hydrological dynamics of the Thaya, influencing sediment transport, erosion, and the development of floodplain habitats. The valley's forests, primarily composed of oak and beech, are among the oldest and most pristine woodlands in Austria. These ecosystems provide essential services such as biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, and water filtration. In Podyjí National Park, the Dyje (Thaya) River extends over 40 km, carving a canyon up to 220 meters deep. The Czech side features additional unique landscapes, including extensive heathlands and steppe heaths, originating from medieval deforestation and grazing. The river remains the lifeline of both parks, shaping habitats, sustaining biodiversity, and linking Austria and the Czech Republic in a transboundary conservation effort.

4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

Inland wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
Fresh water > Flowing water >> M: Permanent rivers/ streams/ creeks	Thaya	1	65	Representative
Fresh water > Lakes and pools >> P: Seasonal/ intermittent freshwater lakes	Fugnitzsee	4	0.5	Representative
Fresh water > Marshes on inorganic soils >> Xf: Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands	Floodplain forest and marsh forest	3	6.5	Rare

Other non-wetland habitat

Other non-wetland habitats within the site	Area (ha) if known
Aceri-Tilietum platiphylli	205
Galio odorati-Fagetum	468

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Other noteworthy plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Position in range / endemism / other
TRACHEOPHYTA/PINOPSIDA	<i>Abies alba</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/LILIOPSIDA	<i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Dianthus superbus</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/PINOPSIDA	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/PINOPSIDA	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Salix viminalis</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Selinum carvifolia</i>	
TRACHEOPHYTA/PINOPSIDA	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	

Invasive alien plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Impacts
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Actual (major impacts)
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Reynoutria bohemica</i>	Actual (minor impacts)
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Actual (major impacts)
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	Actual (minor impacts)
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Solidago gigantea</i>	Actual (minor impacts)

4.3.2 - Animal species

Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	% occurrence	Position in range /endemism/other
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Castor fiber</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>				
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Cottus gobio</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Cygnus olor</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla albicilla</i>				
CHORDATA/AMPHIBIA	<i>Hyla arborea</i>				
ARTHROPODA/INSECTA	<i>Mantis religiosa</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Mergus merganser</i>				
CHORDATA/REPTILIA	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>				
CHORDATA/AMPHIBIA	<i>Salamandra salamandra</i>				
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Salmo trutta</i>				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Sus scrofa</i>				
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Thymallus thymallus</i>				

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
D: Moist Mid-Latitude climate with cold winters	Dfb: Humid continental (Humid with severe winter, no dry season, warm summer)

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres)

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres)

Entire river basin ☐

Upper part of river basin ☐

Middle part of river basin ☐

Lower part of river basin ☒

More than one river basin ☐

Not in river basin ☐

Coastal ☐

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.

Thaya / Dyje

4.4.3 - Soil

Mineral ☐

Organic ☐

No available information ☐

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes ☐ No ☒

4.4.4 - Water regime

Source of water that maintains character of the site		
Presence?	Predominant water source	
Water inputs from groundwater	☐	No change
Water inputs from surface water	☒	No change
Water inputs from precipitation	☐	No change

Water destination	
Presence?	
To downstream catchment	No change

Stability of water regime	
Presence?	
Water levels fluctuating (including tidal)	No change

Please add any comments on the water regime and its determinants (if relevant). Use this box to explain sites with complex hydrology:

The Thaya River is the defining natural feature of Thayatal National Park and plays a central role in shaping the park’s unique landscape and ecological processes. Its water regime is characterized by moderate base flow conditions with marked seasonal and short-term fluctuations. At Hardegg, near the park, the average discharge of the river is approximately 9.74 m³/s. During spring, the river experiences significant flood events due to snowmelt and heavy rainfall, with discharge peaks reaching up to 60 m³/s and water level increases of over 2 meters. In contrast, winter flow is more stable and typically ice-free, as regulated water releases from upstream reservoirs prevent freezing — a condition that benefits overwintering bird species.

The hydrology of the Thaya is strongly influenced by upstream hydropower infrastructure. Notably, the Vranov nad Dyjí reservoir operates under a hydropeaking regime, causing daily fluctuations in discharge ranging from 1 m³/s to as much as 40 m³/s. These artificial variations impact sediment transport, aquatic habitats, and flow-dependent species. In addition, the Znojmo hydropower plant, located within the park boundaries, further regulates discharge and sediment dynamics.

Geologically, the Thaya has incised deep meanders into the crystalline rocks of the Bohemian Massif. This contributes to a highly diverse river morphology, with narrow gorges and wide floodplains coexisting within a small area. The regional climate is temperate, with mean annual temperatures around 8°C and precipitation ranging from 500–600 mm, influencing seasonal flow patterns.

Sediment input from tributaries such as the Kajabach plays a further role in shaping river morphology. Sediment deposition, particularly after extreme events or dam failures, can significantly alter channel structures and influence ecological connectivity within the river system.

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

- Significant erosion of sediments occurs on the site ☐
- Significant accretion or deposition of sediments occurs on the site ☐
- Significant transportation of sediments occurs on or through the site ☐
- Sediment regime is highly variable, either seasonally or inter-annually ☒
- Sediment regime unknown ☐

Please provide further information on sediment (optional):

The sediment dynamics of the Thaya and Fugnitz rivers are fundamental to the ecological function and landscape development within Thayatal National Park. These processes are shaped by a combination of geological settings, hydrological patterns, and human influences both within and beyond the park boundaries.

The Thaya River, which forms the central natural axis of the national park, exhibits a complex sediment regime influenced primarily by upstream hydropower operations and local geomorphological conditions. The Vranov nad Dyjí dam, located upstream in the Czech Republic, causes daily flow fluctuations due to hydropeaking, which significantly alters natural sediment transport processes. This artificial regulation reduces the supply of coarse sediment downstream, leading to sediment retention upstream and sediment-starved conditions within the park. As a result, riverbed structure and habitat diversity are impacted, with consequences for aquatic species that depend on varied substrate.

4.4.6 - Water pH

- Acid (pH<5.5) ☐
- Circumneutral (pH: 5.5-7.4) ☐
- Alkaline (pH>7.4) ☒
- Unknown ☐

Please provide further information on pH (optional):

The pH value of the Thaya in the Thayatal National Park is typically in the neutral to slightly alkaline range, approximately between 7.0 and 8.0. This value is influenced by various factors, including the geological conditions of the river bed, the water flow and the inputs from the catchment area.

4.4.7 - Water salinity

- Fresh (<0.5 g/l) ☒

- Mixohaline (brackish)/Mixosaline (0.5-30 g/l) ☐
- Euhaline/Eusaline (30-40 g/l) ☐
- Hyperhaline/Hypersaline (>40 g/l) ☐
- Unknown ☐

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

- Eutrophic ☐
- Mesotrophic ☒
- Oligotrophic ☐
- Dystrophic ☐
- Unknown ☐

Please provide further information on dissolved or suspended nutrients (optional):

The Thaya River within Thayatal National Park exhibits a relatively good water quality status; however, it is subject to various influences that affect nutrient concentrations, particularly dissolved and suspended nutrients. While specific, up-to-date measurements of dissolved nutrients (such as nitrates and phosphates) within the Thaya River in the national park are limited, historical data and studies indicate that nutrient levels are influenced by upstream activities. Agricultural practices in the catchment area contribute to nutrient runoff, leading to elevated concentrations of dissolved nutrients in the river system. These nutrients can promote eutrophication, affecting aquatic ecosystems by encouraging excessive algal growth and reducing oxygen levels. Suspended nutrients in the Thaya River are closely linked to sediment transport processes. Soil erosion from agricultural lands introduces fine sediments into the river, which often carry attached nutrients like phosphorus.

4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the site itself: i) broadly similar ☐ ii) significantly different ☒

- Surrounding area has greater urbanisation or development ☒
- Surrounding area has higher human population density ☒
- Surrounding area has more intensive agricultural use ☒
- Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types ☒

Please describe other ways in which the surrounding area is different:

The surrounding area of river Thaya is quite different than the river itself and presents a range in various other habitats. Dry grasslands develop on steep, rocky slopes and plateaus, largely untouched by human activity. Factors such as bedrock composition, exposure, slope, and soil depth contribute to the formation of various plant communities, from rock-dwelling species to grass steppes and forest-steppe complexes. Some open areas, originally created by grazing, are now maintained through mowing. Forests dominate over 90% of the park. The eastern areas are covered by dry oak forests on acidic granite, while beech forests thrive in the western part on both calcareous and granitic soils. Conifers play only a minor role, with Scots pine, fir, yew, and juniper as the few native species. Past forestry practices have transformed natural deciduous forests into commercial forests, with approximately 20% of the area now consisting of non-native tree species. Meadows also contribute significantly to the park's biodiversity, covering about 63 hectares. These include traditional fertile meadows as well as species-rich, nutrient-poor grasslands.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Provisioning Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Genetic materials	Genes for tolerance to certain conditions (e.g., salinity)	Medium

Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Maintenance of hydrological regimes	Groundwater recharge and discharge	High
Climate regulation	Local climate regulation/buffering of change	Medium

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Recreation and tourism	Nature observation and nature-based tourism	High
Scientific and educational	Educational activities and opportunities	High
Scientific and educational	Important knowledge systems, importance for research (scientific reference area or site)	High
Scientific and educational	Long-term monitoring site	High
Scientific and educational	Major scientific study site	High
Scientific and educational	Type location for a taxon	High

Supporting Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Biodiversity	Supports a variety of all life forms including plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part	High
Pollination	Support for pollinators	Medium

Within the site: 100000

Outside the site: 50000

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site?
 Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown ☒

4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

i) the site provides a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland ☐

ii) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland ☒

Description if applicable

Hardegg is the smallest town of Austria. The area has a rich history beeing a border beetween cultures and languages. Old castles can be found along the river indicating the importance of the area in former times concerning travel, business and ruling

iii) the ecological character of the wetland depends on its interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples ☐

iv) relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland ☐

4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
National/Federal government	☒	☐

Private ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Other types of private/individual owner(s)	☒	☐

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site:

Administration of Thayatal National Park

Provide the name and/or title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland:

Christian Übl

Postal address:

Merkersdorf 90, 2082 Hardegg, Austria

E-mail address:

office@np-thayatal.at

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site's ecological character

Water regulation

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Water releases	Medium impact		☒	☐

Agriculture and aquaculture

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Annual and perennial non-timber crops	Low impact		☒	☐

Biological resource use

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Hunting and collecting terrestrial animals	Low impact		☒	☐
Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	Low impact		☒	☐

Natural system modifications

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Dams and water management/use	Medium impact		☒	☐

Invasive and other problematic species and genes

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Invasive non-native/ alien species	Low impact		☒	☒

Climate change and severe weather

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Droughts	Low impact		☒	☒

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

Regional (international) legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
EU Natura 2000	Thayatal bei Hardegg	https://www.naturland-noe.at/eur-opaschutzgebiet-thayatal-bei-har-degg	partly

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
National Park	Thayatal National Park	https://www.np-thayatal.at/de/pages/start-63.aspx	whole

5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

- Ia Strict Nature Reserve ☐
- Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection ☐
- II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation ☒
- III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features ☐
- IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention ☐
- V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation ☐
- VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems ☐

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Habitat

Measures	Status
Catchment management initiatives/controls	Implemented

Species

Measures	Status
Threatened/rare species management programmes	Implemented
Control of invasive alien plants	Implemented
Control of invasive alien animals	Implemented

Human Activities

Measures	Status
Fisheries management/regulation	Implemented
Regulation/management of recreational activities	Implemented
Communication, education, and participation and awareness activities	Implemented
Research	Implemented

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? Yes

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes ☒ No ☐

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes ☒ No ☐

Please indicate if a Ramsar centre, other educational or visitor facility, or an educational or visitor programme is associated with the site:

Another facility is located in the area, namely the visitor center of the National Park Thayatal

URL of site-related webpage (if relevant): www.np-thayatal.at

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? Yes, there is a plan

Further information

https://www.parcs.at/npt/pdf_public/2014/30072_20140728_151924_RienerW.2010-ZurckzurWildnis-WaldumwandlungimNationalparkThayatal2000-2010.pdf

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Water regime monitoring	Implemented
Plant community	Implemented
Plant species	Implemented
Animal community	Implemented
Animal species (please specify)	Implemented
Birds	Implemented

Permanent monitoring of Noble Crayfish, White tailed eagle, European Wildcat

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

- ARGE Natura 2000 Weinviertel, 2003. Natura 2000-Managementplan "Thayatal bei Hardegg"
- Bassler-Binder, 2023. Handlungsleitfaden Europaschutzgebiet Thayatal.
- Chytrý & Vicherek, 1995. Thayatal - die Waldvegetation des Nationalparks.
- Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of birds. (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147>)
- Eberstaller, 2019. ETZ Projekt „Gemeinsame Maßnahmen im Bereich des Wasserschutzes im Grenzbereich der Thaya“.
- Grulich, Vít, 1993. Carex pediformes - nun doch in Österreich. (https://www.zobodat.at/pdf/VZBG_130_0127-0133.pdf)
- Leitfaden Natura 2000 NÖ - Lebensraumtypen nach Anhang I - "Thayatal bei Hardegg"
- Leitfaden Natura 2000 NÖ - Tier- und Pflanzenarten nach Anhang II - "Thayatal bei Hardegg"
- Nationalpark Thayatal: Managementplan 2021-2030
- Nationalpark Thayatal: Pflanzen (Rote Liste und FFH-RL/Anhang II)
- Nationalpark Thayatal: Tiere (Rote Liste und FFH-Richtlinie/Anhang II)
- Schmitzberger, Ingrid, 2021. Monitoring sorbus thayensis und cucullifera. (https://www.parcs.at/npt/pdf_public/2022/50817_20220620_085649_Sorbus_Bericht_2021.pdf)
- Schratl-Ehrendorfer, Niklfeld, Schröck, Stöhr, 2022. Rote Liste der Farn- und Blütenpflanzen Österreichs. Dritte, völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage – Stapfia – 0114: 1 - 357. (https://www.zobodat.at/publikation_volumes.php?id=69999)
- Spindler, 2000. Nationalpark Thayatal - Fischökologische Untersuchung.
- Umweltbundesamt Arten der Anhänge II, IV und V der FFH-Richtlinie in Österreich (https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/fileadmin/site/themen/naturschutz/arten_der_anhaenge_ii_iv_v_oesterr_eich.pdf)
- Umweltbundesamt Rote Liste Österreich Amphibien & Reptilien (<https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/umweltthemen/naturschutz/rotenlisten/rotenlisten-gefaehrder-tierarten/amphibien-und-reptilien>)
- Umweltbundesamt Rote Liste Österreich Säugetiere (<https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/umweltthemen/naturschutz/rotenlisten/rotenlisten-gefaehrder-tierarten/saeugetiere>)
- Umweltbundesamt Rote Liste Österreich Flusskrebse (<https://www.umweltbundesamt.at/umweltthemen/naturschutz/rotenlisten/rotenlisten-gefaehrder-tierarten/flusskrebse>)
- WISA - Wasser Informationssystem Austria, 3. Nationale Gewässerbewirtschaftungsplan, Oberflächenwasserkörper-Datenblatt 2021
- Willner & Grabherr, 2007. Die Wälder und Gebüsche Österreichs. Ein Bestimmungswerk mit Tabellen. (physical book - not listed in 6.1.2 Additional reports and documents)

6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)

<3 file(s) uploaded>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)

<2 file(s) uploaded>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory

<1 file(s) uploaded>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports

<no file available>

v. site management plan

<1 file(s) uploaded>

vi. other published literature

<4 file(s) uploaded>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:



Thaya mit Totholz (Teresa Nunner , 15-08-2023)



Thaya mit Blick auf Neuhäusl (Teresa Nunner, 15-08-2023)



Wildkatze (Teresa Nunner, 15-08-2023)



Umlaufberg mit Blick auf Tschechien (Teresa Nunner, 15-08-2023)



Umlaufberg (Teresa Nunner, 15-08-2023)



Thaya mit Licht (Teresa Nunner, 15-08-2023)



Thaya mit Spiegelung (Teresa Nunner, 16-08-2023)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation 2025-05-06