

Fishing advisory office under new directorship

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The Swiss fishing advisory office, FIBER, run jointly by Eawag, the Federal Office for the Environment and the Swiss Fishing Association has been secured for a further three years. The office is designed to promote sustainable fishing, as well as an understanding of healthy water bodies, and the preservation of spawning grounds. The new director of FIBER is fish biologist Bänz Lundsgaard-Hansen.

Since the middle of 2004, the joint fishing advisory office FIBER has been managed by Eawag – the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, together with the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and the Swiss Fishing Association (SFA). The main remit of FIBER is to build bridges between research, administration and fishing practice. At the heart of this work is the cooperation with fishermen and women, and keeping them abreast of the latest scientific knowledge in the fields of aquatic ecology, fish biology and the sustainable management of water bodies. There is also new emphasis on the protection and revitalisation of fishing waters as well as the preservation and promotion of spawning grounds. These topics are closely linked to the tasks which have been devolved by the Swiss federal government to the Cantons since 2011, with the revision of the Water Conservation Act. Included in these responsibilities is the strategic planning of revitalisation programmes and rejuvenation of stretches of water that have been affected by unnatural discharge fluctuations, migration barriers or disturbed bed load balance – particularly as a result of hydro-electric power installations.

“Well-educated fishermen and women can help to implement the law by contributing their local and regional knowledge”, says the new director of FIBER, Bänz Lundsgaard-Hansen. Lundsgaard-Hansen has just completed a dissertation at Eawag on whitefish in Switzerland, for which he investigated how various food sources influence the growth and demise of whitefish species and how the whitefish for their part can contribute to an ecosystem. The fisherman-academic now hopes that his scientific work will bring practical results: “We do not know everything by any means, but we certainly know enough to be able to act”, he says – himself a passionate recreational angler and diver.

FIBER grew out of the “Fish net” research project of 1998-2004, which examined the causes of fish stock depletion in Switzerland and proposed a number of counter measures. Alongside Eawag, FOEN and SFA, the cantonal hunting and fishing offices and the Swiss Association of Fishing Wardens are also represented on the steering committee of the advisory office. FIBER will be working closely with Eawag’s newly inaugurated programme “Water Courses - Switzerland”.

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Further Information

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