

Martes foina (ERXLEBEN, 1777)



D. Roth

Because of the similar size and great variation in colour and shape of the throat bib of the pine marten *Martes martes* it is sometimes difficult to separate the two species in the field.

Distribution

World: Palaearctic, roughly in the European broad-leaved forest zone and the south Asian steppe zone. The connection goes through the north side of the Caucasus, the Elburz Mountains south of the Caspian Sea and the mountains of Afghanistan to the mountains of Tien Shan and the Altai Mountains in the north and Tibet and probably the mountains of the Chinese provinces of Shensi and Shansi in the south. In the Middle East the beech marten is absent from southern Iran and the Arabian peninsula.

Europe: missing from the British Isles, Norway, Sweden, Finland and northern Russia. The north-eastern border goes roughly from Tallin via Moscow to Rostow. In the Mediterranean, missing from the islands of Mallorca, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, some of the smaller Aegean islands and Cyprus.

Geographic variation

Several subspecies are described from the Asian distribution areas as well as from the Balkans and Mediterranean islands. Currently only six subspecies are recognized.

Beech marten; Stone marten

AL	Kunadhja gushebardhe; Shqarthi	LT	Akmeninė kiaunė
BG	Белка	LU	Steemarder
CZ	Kuna skalní	LV	Akmeņu cauna
DE	Steinmarder	MK	Куна белка
DK	Husmår	MT	-
EE	Kivinugis	NL	Steenmarter; Fluwijn
ES	Garduña	NO	Steinmår
FI	Kivinäättä	PL	Kuna domowa
FO	Márur	PT	Fuinha
FR	Fouine	RO	Jderul-de-piatră
GR	Κουβάβι	RU	Каменная куница
HR	Kuna bjelica	SE	Stenmård
HU	Nyest	SI	Kuna belica
IS	-	SK	Kuna skalná
IT	Faina	TR	Kaya sansarı
		YU	Куна белица

Habitat

Mountains, agricultural landscapes with hedgerows, woodlots, suburban areas and towns. The presence of cavities, such as rock fissures, hollow trees, spaces between hay and straw bales, cavity walls, crawl spaces, cavities under roofs or even burrows or animal dens is essential. Rivers which do not freeze over are natural barriers.

Population status

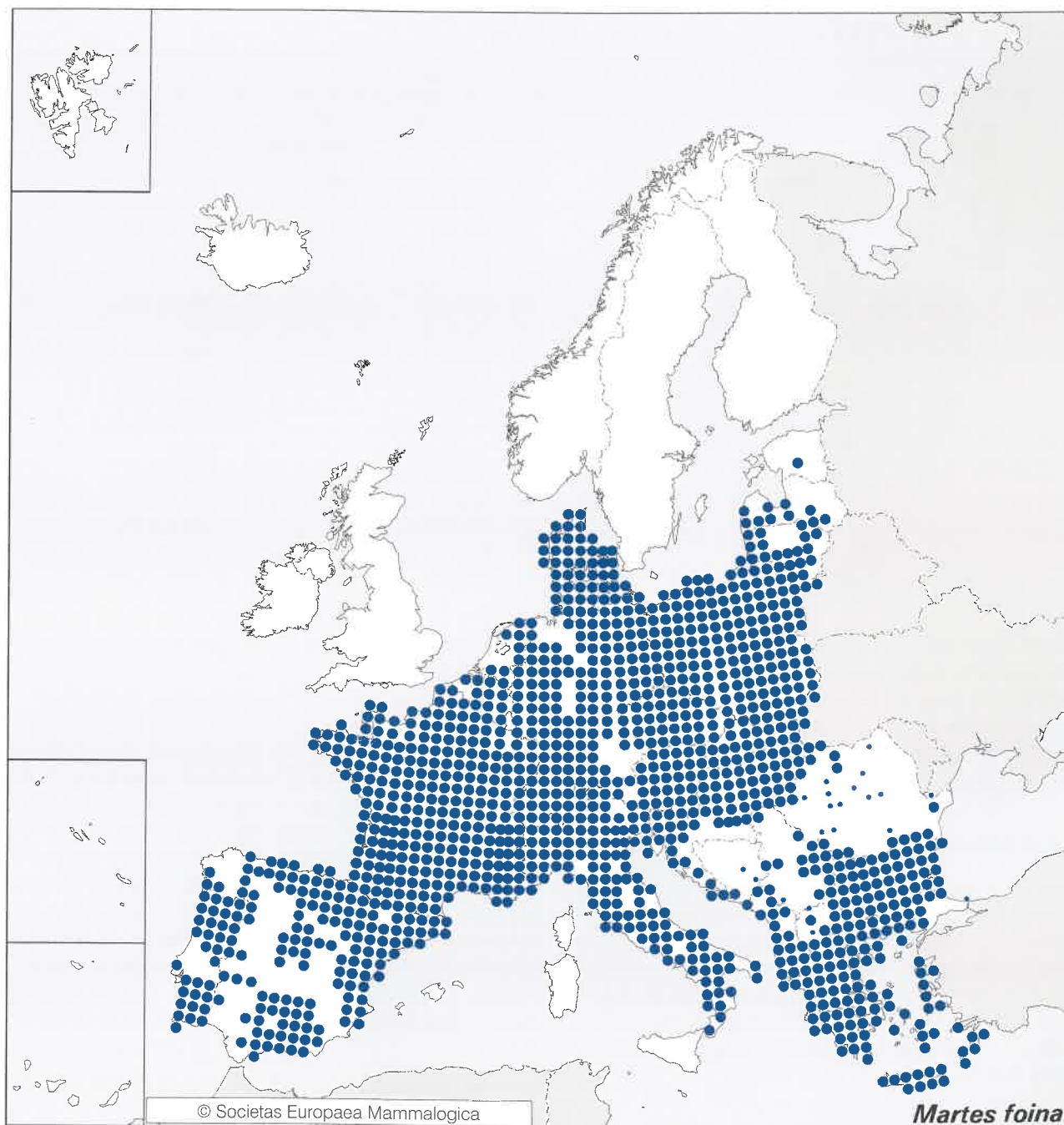
From the 1960s and 1970s in central and western Europe numbers have increased and habitats have been (re)colonized, including suburban and urban areas. Clearly this phenomenon started in central Europe, where numbers had stabilized by the 1980s. In the north of The Netherlands recolonization is still progressing to the west at about 5 km per year on average.

International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix III.

Other information

Beech martens invading suburban habitats sometimes cause inconvenience from the smell of droppings and rotting prey, leaking urine, noise and damage to roofs and insulation materials. A new and spreading phenomenon since the second half of the 1980s is frequent damage to cars caused by biting electrical cables, hoses and insulating materials. This probably



started in northern Switzerland and has spread or jumped to parts of Germany, Austria and Hungary and the south of The Netherlands.

Literature

- Corbet (1978)
- Douma-Petridou (1984)
- Heptner *et al.* (1974)
- Kugelschafter *et al.* (1984/85)
- Stubbe (1989a)

S. Broekhuizen