

Meles meles (LINNAEUS, 1758)



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Distribution

World: Palaearctic with a part of the Oriental region (south-eastern China); absent from North Africa. West to east from Ireland to Japan, North to south from arctic Finland to Israel, Iran, Afghanistan, Tibet and China.

Europe: widespread and common throughout mainland Europe and the British Isles. On Mediterranean islands present on Tinos and probably Siphnos and Andros (Aegean islands), Crete and Rhodes; not on Balearic archipelago.

Geographic variation

Several subspecies described for Europe but poorly defined. Nowadays the Asiatic badgers are separated by some authorities as *Meles anakuma* (Temminck, 1884).

Habitat

Deciduous and mixed woods, coniferous woods, hedges, scrub; riverine habitat, prevailing agricultural land, suburban areas and urban parks. In alpine or mountainous areas the species occasionally occurs at 1600–1700 m. Set systems are complex and generally covered by fairly thick vegetation; their distribution varies in relation to soils and landscape.

Population status

Population is probably stable over much of the range. A decrease in numbers has occurred on agricultural land

Badger

AL	Baldosa; Vjedulla	LT	Barsukas
BG	Язобен	LU	Duess
CZ	Jezevec lesní	LV	Āpsis
DE	Dachs	MK	Јазовец
DK	Grævling	MT	-
EE	Mäger	NL	Das
ES	Tejón	NO	Grevling
FI	Mäyrä	PL	Borsuk
FO	Grevlingur	PT	Texugo
FR	Blaireau européen	RO	Bursuc
GR	Ασβός	RU	Барсук
HR	Jazavac	SE	Grävling
HU	Eurázsiai borz	SI	Jazbec
IR	Broc	SK	Jazvec lesný
IS	Greifingi	TR	Porsuk
IT	Tasso	YU	Jazavac

because of the destruction of suitable habitats. Population density (adults/km²): former Czechoslovakia 0.1–0.6; Poland 0.7; The Netherlands 1.0; Sweden 2.4–3.2; East Germany 2.0–4.0; Scotland 1.1–6.2; England 4.7–19.7; France 0.5–1.6. In riverine habitat of northern Italy the density is 0.9 adults/km² and 0.05–0.47 sets/km².

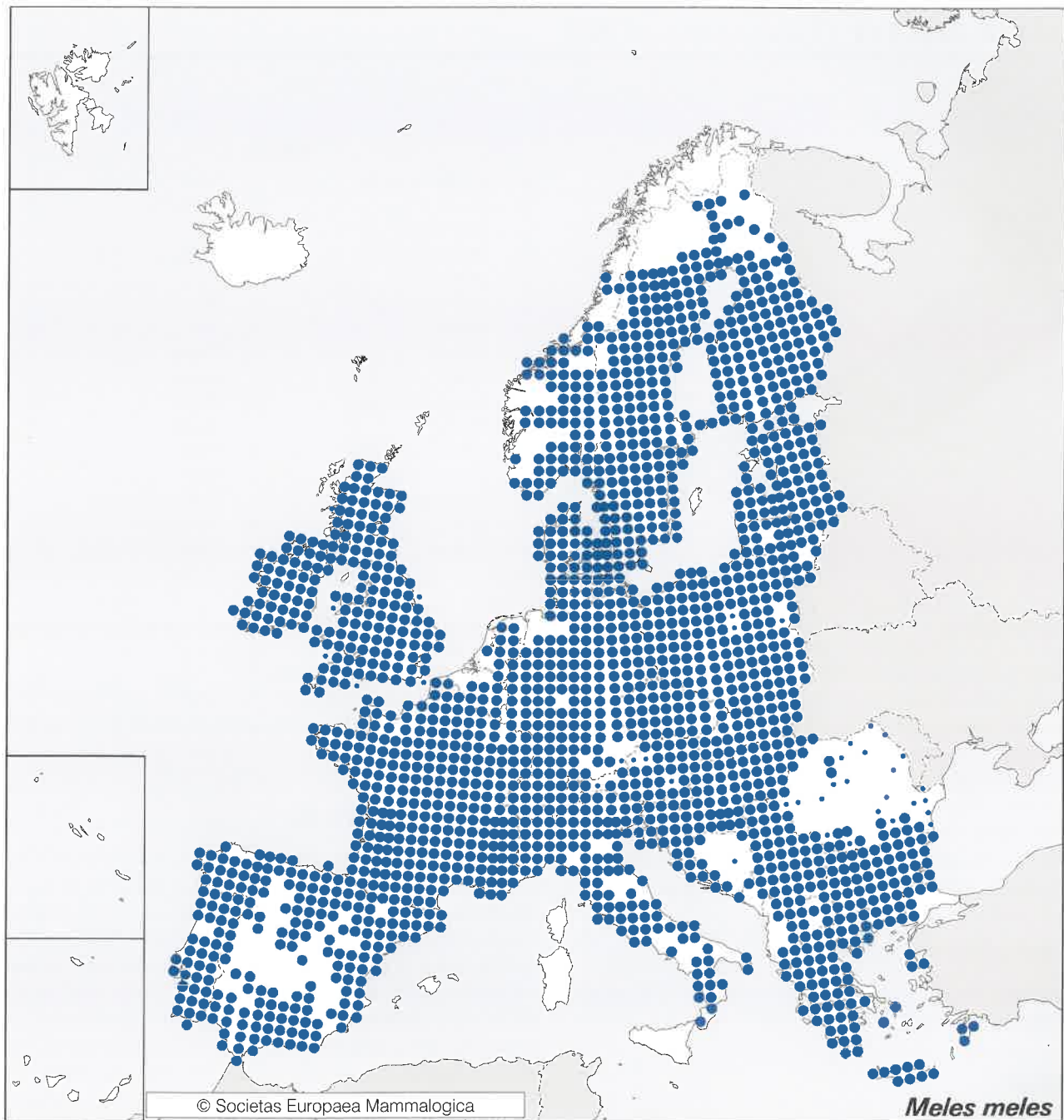
International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix III.

Other information

Some damage is caused to cereal crops (e.g., maize in northern Italy and in some areas of France) generally when a high population density exists. Sometimes sets with connecting tunnels in open fields can be a hazard for tractors or heavy machinery; in addition, sets located on the banks of irrigated canals can compromise their stability.

The badger is a vector of bovine tuberculosis, but the incidence of this disease has become very low today (e.g., 0.02% in Britain). It is an indirect target in campaigns to control rabies by killing foxes. In some European countries road traffic is an important mortality factor.



Literature

- Henry *et al.* (1988)
Long & Killingley (1983)
Lüps & Wandeler (1993) – review
Masseti (1995)
Stubbe *et al.* (1998)

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