

50 years without records: *Neomys anomalus* still present in the province of Huelva

50 años sin registros: *Neomys anomalus* todavía está presente en la provincia de Huelva

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The Iberian water shrew, *Neomys anomalus* Cabrera, 1907 is an Iberian endemism that lives in riparian habitats. It is distributed mainly in the northern half of the Iberian peninsula, but in the south there are few data of its presence, all of them from pellet analysis, trapping or chance encounters. The records in the south of the peninsula are grouped in two areas: one in the southeast, between the Sierras of Cádiz and Málaga, Subbéticas, Sierra Nevada and Cazorla; and another in the southwest, in the western part of Sierra Morena (Ventura 2007). These populations seem to be the result of a historic regression in the distribution of the species in the southern peninsular, being relegated to mountainous areas, isolated from the rest of the distribution area (Hinckley & Leonard 2022).

In the latter area, only two records of the species are known. One in Badajoz, in the locality of Alconera where one specimen appeared among 251 prey determined in a pellet analysis (Malo de Molina & Solano 1987). The other refers the trapping of one individual on 06/11/1973 in the locality of El Mustio, in Sierra Pelada (Aroche, Huelva). The capture was made in an area of rockroses with

heather and pines (Amores 1975). This specimen is deposited at the Doñana Biological Station (EBD-CSIC, Seville).

The lack of recent observations in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula led us to ask the Junta de Andalucía for authorization to conduct surveys of the species in the province of Huelva. The survey is being carried out with photo-trapping cameras, adapted to focus at short distances.

In the first survey, performed in the Guijarra stream (Cortelazor, Huelva; 37.94N, 6.62W), with 5 cameras in 200 m of the riverbed, one specimen was recorded. This is the only record for the province of Huelva in the last 50 years. The video (<https://youtu.be/ak6vInuD2gg>) was recorded on 04/05/2023 at 04:21 h (official time).

The rapid detection of the species leads us to think that it may be more widely distributed, but due to the lack of specific surveys, it has gone unnoticed in the last half century. Once the species has been located, our next objective will be to delimit its distribution in this area.

Also, this record highlights the usefulness of photo-trapping as an inexpensive, simple and non-invasive technique for detecting this species.

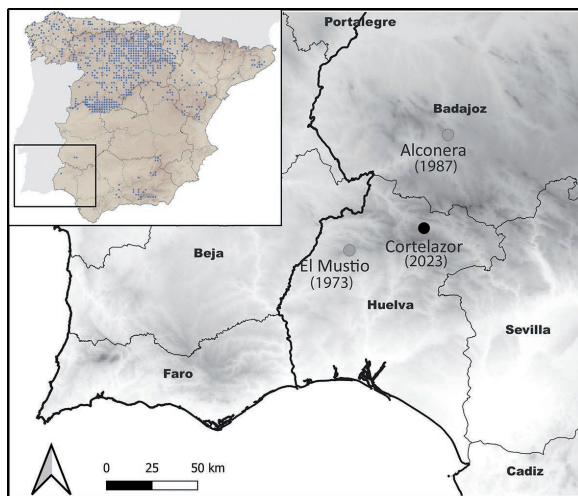


Figure 1. Locality and year of known records of *Neomys anomalus* in SW Spain.

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