

## A beaver in the Tagus river: a new location in Spain

Un castor en el río Tajo: una nueva localidad en España

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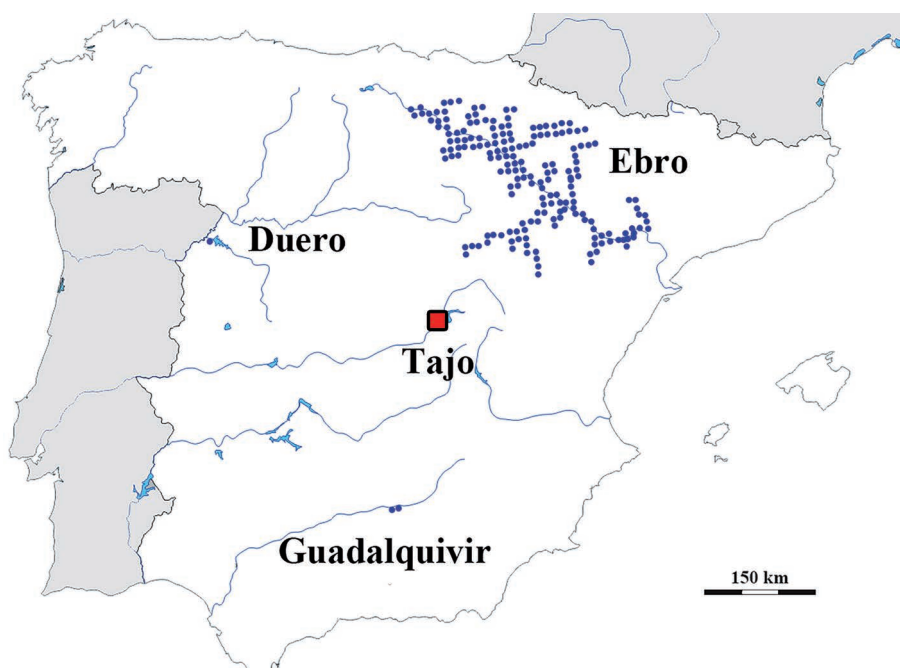
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The Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber* Linnaeus, 1758) is the largest rodent that has inhabited the Iberian Peninsula in historical times. Once widespread across Europe, it was hunted to near-extinction, disappearing from a large part of its distribution area. The latest beaver records found in the Iberian Peninsula comes from historical times (Román & Aguilar-Gómez 2023).

Centuries after being extirpated, the presence of beavers was reported within the Iberian Peninsula in 2003 (Ceña *et al.* 2004), when 18 individuals were unofficially released within the Ebro river basin. Attempts to remove the individuals failed. Nowadays, Eurasian beaver is considered in Spain a native species and receives protected status. In recent years, different authors have reported new locations for the species. Calderon *et al.* (2022) described

the presence of beaver at River Tormes (Duero river basin) and Burón *et al.* (2023) had reported beavers in the Guadalquivir river basin. Here we made the first report of the species in the Tagus river basin.

The first sighting occurred in June 2024 at dusk, in Zorita de los Canes, Guadalajara (coordinates 40°19'11.7"N, 2°54'21.1"W) (Fig. 1). After this visual contact, we decided to search for signs and new sightings with possible beavers in the river. We made line transects following the riverbanks and observation time points. The presence of beaver in this area was confirmed by visual contact and some signs on the river banks of the Tagus River. For over one kilometer, many signs in the vegetation were found indicating the presence of beavers in the area. We found tree branches gnawed and positioned in the riverbank and large



**Figure 1.** Known beaver populations in the Iberian Peninsula (UTM 10x10 km, blue dots) and new locality (red square) in the Tagus river basin.



**Figure 2.** Beaver photographed in the Tagus River and signs of its presence on the banks of the river branches with teeth marks and gnawed bark (photographs by the authors).

tree branches and trees gnawed bark (Fig. 2). Also, we have made some different sightings of a beaver and the animal was photographed and video recorded, but we have only seen one specimen at the time. The number of individuals and the viability of this beaver population are still unknown.

This new locality is more than 100 kilometers from the nearest beaver area reported previously. Due to the lack of reports in the area between them, we discard a natural dispersal event and we consider an unofficially release is more likely to explain the presence of the species in this new area.

## References

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