

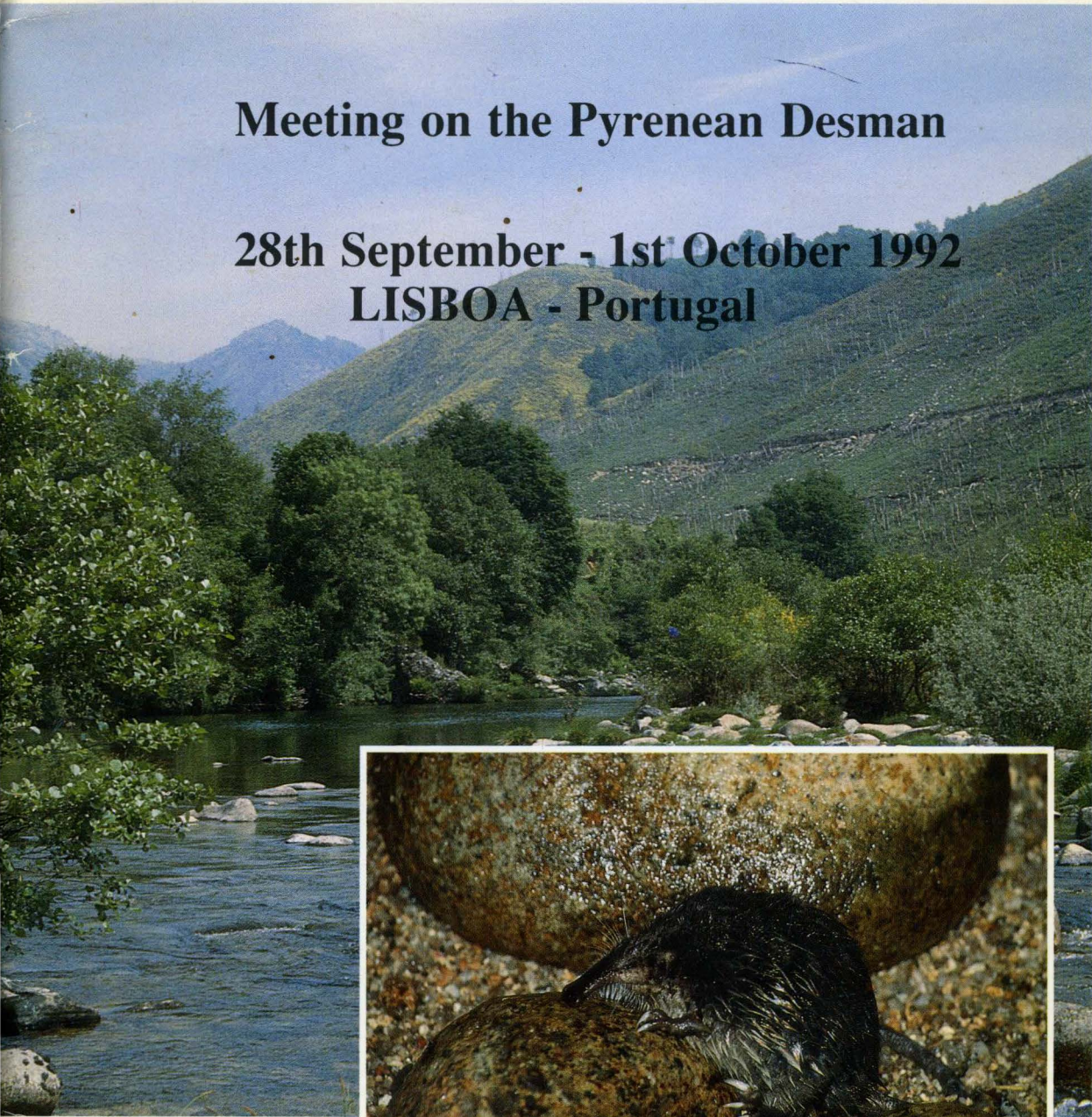
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PROCEEDINGS OF THE

Meeting on the Pyrenean Desman

28th September - 1st October 1992

LISBOA - Portugal



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Meeting on the Pyrenean desman

28th September - 1st October 1992

Auditorium of Direcção Geral dos Recursos Naturais
Av. Alm.Gago Coutinho, 30
1000 LISBOA - Portugal

Programme

Monday, 28 September 1992

A.M. 9.30 - Opening session

9.30 - 10.15 - Plenary lecture (Carlos Abadía)

10.15 - 11.00 - Coffee break & poster session

Posters

- Trophic ecology of the desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*) in the Basque Country

(Castles, E. & J. Gosálbez)

- Trophic resources of the desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*) and water quality

(Santamarina, J.)

- Some observations on the desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*) in the Pyrenees

(Geoffroy) in short time

(11.00 - 11.45) Scientific lecture

(Chaurmat, C.)

Communications

- Age determination in Desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*) (Ray, J.)

- Stratégie d'implantation du Desman des Pyrénées dans un cours d'eau des Pyrénées françaises (Bertrand, A.)

- Some observations of Pyrenean desman specimens (*Galemys pyrenaicus*, Geoffroy) in short time

(14.00 - 14.45) Plenary lecture (Walter Poduzhka)

14.45 - 15.45 - Distribution, ecology, methodology and study areas

(Chairman: Walter Poduzhka)

Communications

- Survey on the Desman in Northern Iberia 1989 (Poduzhka, W.)

- Répartition géographique du desman des Pyrénées en France (Bertrand, A.)

- Pyrenean desman survey of Spain: first results (Nolas, C.; A. Ruano; F. Ojeda; I. Vilate)

Serviço Nacional de Parques, Reservas e Conservação da Natureza

Museu Nacional de História Natural - Museu Bocage



Meeting on the Pyrenean desman

Programme

Monday, 28 September 1992

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9.30 - 10.15 - Plenary lecture (Carlos Almaça)

10.15 - 11.00 - Coffee break & poster session

Posters:

- Trophic ecology of *Galemys pyrenaicus* (Geoffroy, 1811) in the Basque Country (Castien, E. & J. Gosalbez)

- Trophic resources of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in relation with water quality (Santamarina, J.)

- Some observations of Pyrenean desman specimens (*Galemys pyrenaicus*, Geoffroy) in short time captivity (Queiroz, A.I. & V. Almada)

11.00 - 12.30 - Scientific knowledge on the desman

Chairman: Carlos Almaça

Communications:

- Age determination in Desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*) (Rey, I.)

- Stratégies alimentaires du Desman des Pyrénées dans un cours d'eau des Pyrénées françaises (Bertrand, A.)

- Some observations of Pyrenean desman specimens (*Galemys pyrenaicus*, Geoffroy) in short time captivity (Queiroz, A.I. & V. Almada) (video)

P.M. 14.00 - 14.45 - Plenary lecture (Walter Poduschka)

14.45 - 15.45 - Distribution and ecology: methodology and study areas

Chairman: Walter Poduschka

Communications:

- Survey on the Desman in Northern Iberia 1989 (Poduschka, W.)

- Repartition géographique du desman des Pyrénées en France (Bertrand, A.)

- Pyrenean desman survey of Spain: first results (Nores, C.; A. Ruano; F. Ojeda; I. Villate, J. Gozalez; E. Garcia & J. Cano)

15.45 - 16.15 - Coffee break & poster session

Posters:

- **Distribution and management of *Galemys pyrenaicus* (Geoffroy, 1811) in the Basque Country (Castien, E. & J. Gosalbez)**
- **Restored reservoirs as habitats for russian desmans (Onufrienja, A. & M. Onufrienja)**

16.15 - 17.00 - Distribution and ecology : methodology and study areas
Chairman: Walter Poduschka

Communications:

- **Status of the Russian Desman *Desmana moschata* (Poduschka, W.)**
- **Strategy of Russian Desman conservation (Khakhin, G.V.) (video)**
- **Russian Desman in Oka State Reserve (Onufrienja, A. & M. Onufrienja) (video)**

Tuesday, 29 September 1992

A.M. 9.00 - 10.45 - Conservation strategies
Chairman: Carlos Nores

Communications:

- **Pyrenean desman survey of Spain: the causes of distribution. A proposal. (Nores, C.)**
- **Habitat of the Pyrenean desman: assessment of running water quality. Monitoring pollution. (Ramalhinho, G. & M.J. Boavida)**
- **The small hydroplants: predicted impacts on the Pyrenean desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*, Geoffroy) populations (Queiroz, A.I. & H. Alves & V. Almada) ***
- **Pyrenean desman predators (Nores, C.)**

10.45 - 11.00 - Coffee break
11.00 - 12.30 - Final discussion

P.M. 14.00 - Conclusions and closing session
14.30 - Departure to Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês (400 Km north of Lisbon, near Braga)

Wednesday, 30 September 1992

A.M. 8.30 - Wellcome to the P.N.P.G. - introduction to the excursion
9.00 - Excursion and visit to the principal points of desman in the P.N.P.G.

Thursday, 1 October 1992

A.M. 9.00 - Departure to Lisbon

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Problems of conservation of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in Portugal

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Known since the Miocene of Europe, the Desmaninae have shown a progressive reduction of their area of distribution. Both recent species, *Desmana moschata* and *Galemys pyrenaicus*, are true relicts, living far away from one another (in Russia and Pyrenees and Iberian Peninsula, respectively) and exhibiting distinct specialisations as regards their aquatic life history.

Introduction

The "Meeting on the Pyrenean Desman" was held in Lisbon, between 28th September and 1st October 1992. It was attended by 40 persons from 4 countries (Portugal, Spain, France and Austria), 19 of them registered in the list of participants. The communications of Russian investigators were shown in a video-film of their talks.

The "Serviço Nacional de Parques, Reservas e Conservação da Natureza" and the "Museu Nacional de História Natural" were the organising institutions.

We should like to thank the "Direcção Geral dos Recursos Naturais" that kindly lent its splendid Auditorium.

The proceedings that follow are the abstracts of the talks and posters presented at the conference. The contributions have been edited only to improve clarity and maintain a uniformity of presentation. No external refereeing has taken place and much of the material presented here I hope will eventually be formally published in greater detail in scientific journals.

complete extinction of *Desmaninae*.

Recent causes for decline of *Galemys pyrenaicus* have been summarized by RICHARD (1976): increasing pollution of the biotope, affecting the aquatic insects on which the water mole depends, deforestation of watersheds, changing drastically river regimes and causing summer dryness and sudden floods in winter, and animal collectors. PHYL (1965) refers to another factor eventually responsible for *Galemys variegatus* female

that the presence of food competitors, like *Neomys*, or even *Arvicola*, could be limiting to the water mole.

Ana Isabel Queiroz
(Editor)
30 de Junho de 1993



Problems of conservation of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in Portugal

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Known since the Miocene of Europe, the Desmaninae have shown a progressive reduction of their area of distribution. Both recent species, *Desmana moschata* and *Galemys pyrenaicus*, are true relicts, living far away from one another (in Russia and Pyrenees and Iberian Peninsula, respectively) and exhibiting distinct specialisations as regards their aquatic life history.

Galemys must have split off in early Tertiary times from the evolutive line of *Desmana* (de BEAUFORT, 1951). The older known fossil of Desmaninae, *Mygalea antiqua*, which is also the closest to *Galemys* (RICHARD, 1976), has been found in the Upper Miocene of Sansan (Gers, Southwestern France). This made SCHARFF (1899) to suggest a Lusitanian (West European) origin to Desmaninae.

During the Pliocene and Pleistocene, Desmaninae were widespread in Eastern and Western Europe. The significant reduction of their geographic area has been explained as a result of the Ice Age, but fossil finds prove that water moles lived close to the border of the ice sheet. Therefore, according to de BEAUFORT (1951), is clear that some other causes than the glaciations must explain the almost

complete extinction of Desmaninae.

Recent causes for decline of *Galemys pyrenaicus* have been summarized by RICHARD (1976): increasing pollution of the biotope, affecting the aquatic insects on which the water mole depends, deforestation of watersheds, changing drastically river regimes and causing summer dryness and sudden floods in winter, and animal collectors. PEYRE (1968) refers to another factor eventually responsible for *Galemys* vanishing: female sterility due to endocrine dysfunction.

Competition with other aquatic mammals, insect-feeders like *Neomys*, could be another limiting factor to the water mole (PEYRE, 1956). In fact, *Neomys* is anatomically and ecologically less specialized than *Galemys* and produces, annually, more offspring than the water mole. Energy consumption by *Galemys* is very high (more than 2/3 of its own weight daily) (RICHARD & VIALARD, 1969) and so it is possible that the presence of food competitors like *Neomys*, or even *Arvicola*, could be limiting to the water mole.

To these can be joined, at least in Portugal, two other possible declining factors: the island pattern of water mole

biotopes and the peripheral situation of its populations relatively to the main geographic area of the species. In islands, oceanic or terrestrial, there is an equilibrium between extinction and colonization. Is it possible that the sudden drastic reduction of *Galemys* in 1970-71 reported by RICHARD (1976), followed by population increasing in 1976, could be due to an extinction-recolonization effect ?

The peripheral situation of Portuguese populations of the water mole is also to be considered. Gene flow between peripheral populations is restricted relatively to central ones. Therefore, genetic variability is lowered and inbreeding depression occurs very often. The result can be heterosis decreasing, loss of fertility, and high mortality of offspring.

These and possibly other causes seem significant to the conservation of the water mole in Portugal. *Galemys pyrenaicus* has always been a rarely collected species, since BOCAGE (1863) recorded it for the first time in Portugal (River Tâmega, Province Minho). I have some field experience in Northern Portugal for more than thirty years and just once, in Gerês, I saw one dead specimen of the water mole. I hope this meeting will help Portuguese conservationists to preserve the interesting and unique species *Galemys pyrenaicus* is.

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Age determination in desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*)

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Summary: The age of *Galemys pyrenaicus* was determined by examining incremental lines in the tooth cementum using stained histological section of lower left canine tooth. Incremental lines are formed during late winter and spring, and the first dark line appears at the end of the animal's first year of life.

The specimens were obtained from the scientific collections in Spain (Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Madrid y Estacion Biológica de Donana, Sevilla).

Various parameters such as cranial measures, and the wear-pattern of the teeth were examined with reference to a possible relative age determination of the specimens in a specific population. It is possible to distinguish, with reasonable certainty, between the different age classes.



Stratégies alimentaires du Desman des Pyrénées *Galemys pyrenaicus* dans un cours d'eau des Pyrénées Française

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Résumé : Les stratégies alimentaire du desman des Pyrénées ont été étudiées au cours d'un cycle annuel dans un cours d'eau des Pyrénées centrales.

Le régime alimentaire du desman apparaît très spécialisé. Ce sont les larves d'invertébrés benthiques rhéophiles, en particulier les trichoptères Hydropsychidae et Rhyacophilidae, qui tout au long du cycle annuel constituent la base du régime alimentaire.

La sélection des proies s'exerce à la fois sur les groupes taxonomique à forte valeur énergétique et les proies de grandes tailles.

Les proies du desman apparaissent très sensibles à la pollution et aux fluctuations artificielles du débit des cours d'eau peuplés ; la spécialisation alimentaire de l'espèce permet dans une large mesure d'expliquer la discontinuité spatio-temporelle de sa répartition géographique à l'échelle de bassins versants.

Mots clés : Desman des Pyrénées ; Régime alimentaire ; sélection des proies ; Pyrénées françaises ; Ariège.

Introduction

Jusqu'à très récemment, la grande majorité des données disponibles pour le desman provenaient de l'examen sommaire de contenus stomacaux d'animaux morts et d'observations réalisées avec des animaux captifs (TRUTAT, 1896 ; PUYSEGUR, 1935 ; PEYRE, 1956 ; NIETHAMMER, 1970 ; RICHARD & VALLETTE VIALARD, 1969). Puis SANTAMARINA & GUITAN (1988), BERTRAND (1987, 1988 et 1992) et BERTRAND & CLERGUE (1992) ont apporté des précisions à partir de l'étude de contenus stomacaux pour les premiers auteurs et du contenu des fèces pour le second.

L'ensemble de ces travaux montrent que la base du régime alimentaire du desman est constituée d'invertébrés aquatiques ; toutefois, les résultats restent trop fragmentaires pour disposer d'informations suffisantes et il importait de les préciser.

Pour notre part, depuis 1986, nous avons réalisé un ensemble de recherches sur cet aspect de l'écologie du desman.

Nous présentons dans cette note les résultats de l'analyse de 521 fèces collectées mensuellement et durant une année sur un cours d'eau des Pyrénées centrale (la Bouigane, Ariège).

DEBUT NOTE: Dans notre communication, nous avons présenté les résultats obtenus sur deux cours d'eau ; les données concernant le second seront publié ultérieurement.FIN NOTE

Site d'étude : La Bouigane (Ariège)

Localisation, Description

La Bouigane est un torrent typique du versant nord des Pyrénées formé par plusieurs ruisseaux prenant leurs sources vers 2000 m au pied du Pic de la Calabasse (Ariège). Elle draine un bassin versant de 110 km². La largeur du lit varie de 5 m en amont à 10-12 m en aval à sa confluence avec le Lez. La profondeur est faible (0,30 à 0,80m) et son lit est localement encombré de blocs rocheux, mais ce sont essentiellement des graviers et du sable qui constituent le substrat.

Hydrologie

Le débit moyen est de 3,95 m³/s. (1,41 m³/s. en septembre durant l'étiage et 8,21 m³/s en mai, période de la fonte de la neige). La pluviométrie sur le bassin versant est de type centro-oriental et elle est annuellement partout supérieure à 1000 mm dans la partie aval et dépasse 2000 mm en amont.

Les données concernant les propriétés physico-chimiques ont été étudiées sur l'ensemble du bassin du Lez en amont de la confluence Lez/Bouigane. Vingt quatre stations ont été suivies ; les résultats de ces analyses sont publiés par ailleurs (BERTRAND, sous presse).

Le pH varie peu autour de 8. La dureté totale est faible comme c'est le cas pour la plupart des eaux de surface ; elle augmente sensiblement en été lorsque le cours d'eau est essentiellement alimenté par des eaux d'origine karstique. La température de l'eau varie de 2,3°C en hiver à 19,3°C en été (d'après des mesures hebdomadaires réalisées de février 1987 à janvier 1988). La teneur en

Hydrobiologie

Les peuplements d'invertébrés benthiques ont été étudiés sur le site à raison de quatre séries d'échantillons pour les quatre saisons. Les résultats des échantillons d'invertébrés benthiques réalisés sur la Bouigane sont présentés au tableau 1. Nous signalerons ici seulement que les indices biotiques calculés à partir de nos échantillons par la méthode de TUFFERY & VERNAUX (1968) sont toujours maximums (égaux à 10) ; les IBG (VERNAUX et al., 1982) sont toujours supérieurs à 15.

Méthodes d'études des stratégies alimentaires

Composition du régime alimentaire

La mise en évidence des fèces et la facilité de leur identification, nous a permis d'envisager l'étude par l'analyse de leur contenu. Cette méthode présente, en outre, l'énorme avantage de pouvoir permettre de disposer de grands échantillons au cours de tout le cycle annuel et sur de nombreux secteurs.

Les fèces ont été collectées deux fois par mois sur la Bouigane, ceci afin de limiter les incidences des brusques variations des niveaux d'eau qui éliminent les fèces.

Les fèces sont stockées à sec et séparément dans des tubes ; puis au laboratoire, elles sont immergées dans un produit détergent dilué afin de séparer les différents constituants.

L'identification des restes de proies est réalisée sous loupe binoculaire à divers grossissements. Pour les invertébrés, la constitution d'une collection de référence, ainsi que divers ouvrages (TACHET et

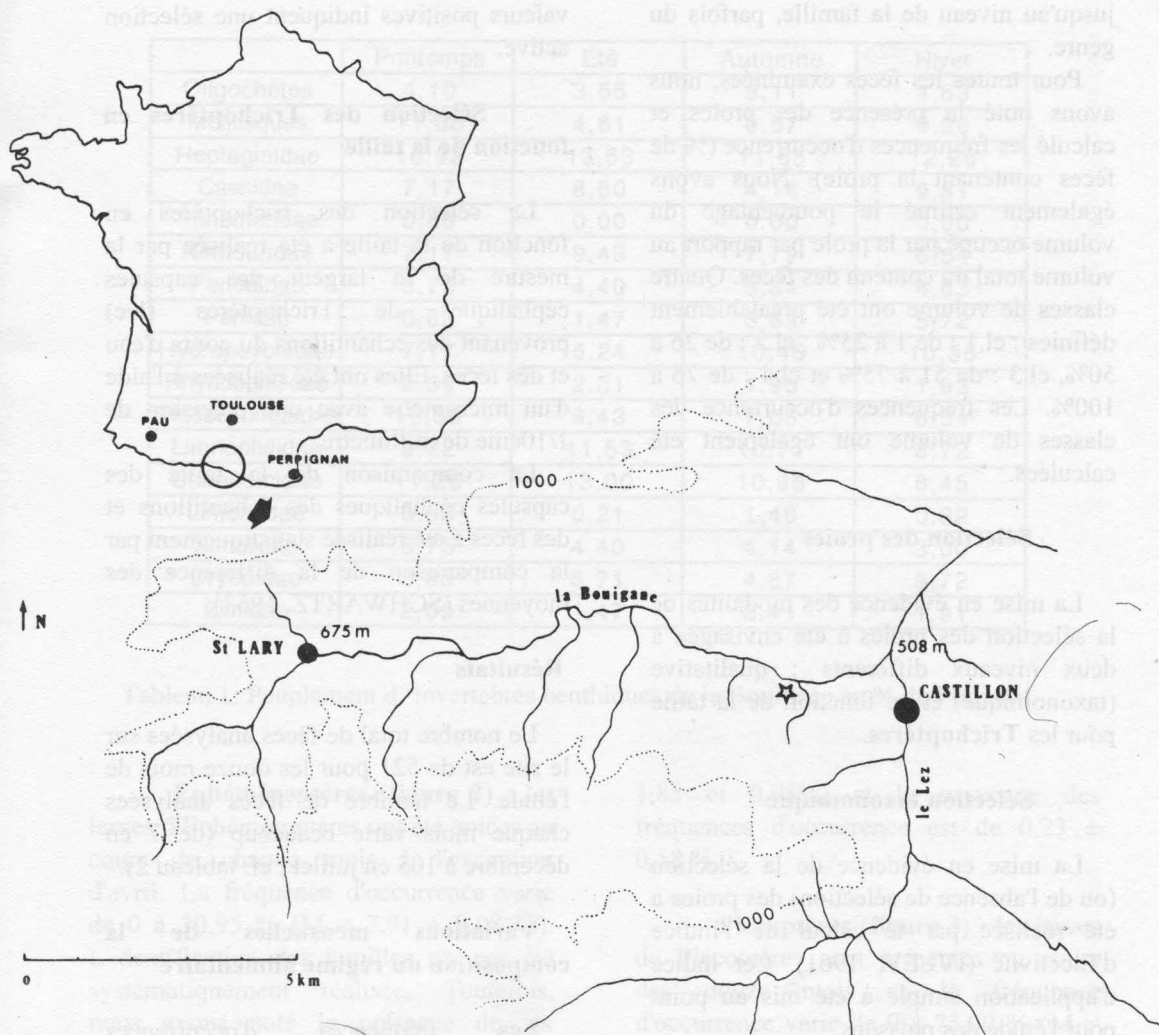


Fig.1 - Localisation du site d'étude (étoile)

al., 1984 et CROFT, 1986 notamment) ont permis l'identification des proies jusqu'au niveau de la famille, parfois du genre.

Pour toutes les fèces examinées, nous avons noté la présence des proies et calculé les fréquences d'occurrence (% de fèces contenant la proie). Nous avons également estimé le pourcentage du volume occupé par la proie par rapport au volume total du contenu des fèces. Quatre classes de volume ont été préalablement définies : cl.1 : de 1 à 25% ; cl.2 : de 26 à 50%, cl.3 : de 51 à 75% et cl.4 : de 76 à 100%. Les fréquences d'occurrence des classes de volume ont également été calculées.

Sélection des proies

La mise en évidence des modalités de la sélection des proies a été envisagée à deux niveaux différents : qualitative (taxonomique) et en fonction de la taille pour les **Trichoptères**.

Sélection taxonomique

La mise en évidence de la sélection (ou de l'absence de sélection) des proies a été réalisée par le calcul de l'Indice d'Électivité (IVLEV, 1961). Cet indice d'application simple à été mis au point pour l'étude des poissons.

L'indice d'électivité est donné par la formule suivante :

$$E = \frac{ri - pi}{ri + pi}$$

où ri est le pourcentage de la proie i dans le régime alimentaire et pi le pourcentage de la même proie dans le milieu.

L'indice d'électivité E varie de - 1 à + 1. Les valeurs négatives signifient que la

proie n'est pas l'objet d'une sélection active (ou bien n'est pas accessible) et les valeurs positives indiquent une sélection active.

Sélection des Trichoptères en fonction de la taille

La sélection des trichoptères en fonction de la taille a été réalisée par la mesure de la largeur des capsules céphaliques de Trichoptères (lcc) provenant des échantillons du cours d'eau et des fèces. Elles ont été réalisées à l'aide d'un micromètre avec une précision de 1/10^{ème} de millimètre.

La comparaison de la taille des capsules céphaliques des échantillons et des fèces a été réalisée statistiquement par la comparaison de la différence des moyennes (SCHWARTZ, 1963).

Résultats

Le nombre total de fèces analysées sur le site est de 521 pour les douze mois de l'étude. Le nombre de fèces analysées chaque mois varie beaucoup (de 7 en décembre à 105 en juillet ; cf. tableau 2).

Variations mensuelles de la composition du régime alimentaire

Les fréquences d'occurrences mensuelles des proies identifiées dans les fèces de Desman sont présentées au tableau 2.

Amphipodes : ils sont présents en mai, juin, août, septembre et octobre. La fréquence d'occurrence varie de 1,92 à 8,33 % ($M = 2,22 \pm 3,14$ %). Tous les Amphipodes notés appartiennent au genre Gammarus. Pour cette proie, on notera qu'elle est absente du cours de la Bouigane (voir tableau 1), mais qu'elle est présente dans un petit affluent de la rive droite, où elle est abondante. Seule la classe de volume 1 est représentée.

	Printemps	Eté	Automne	Hiver
Oligochètes	4,10	3,56	5,11	4,63
Mollusques	11,60	4,61	6,57	9,26
Heptagyniidae	10,92	13,63	11,68	12,26
Caenidae	7,17	8,60	4,14	9,81
Epheméridae	0,68	0,00	0,00	0,00
Nemouridae	7,17	9,43	7,79	6,54
Perlodidae	3,75	4,40	5,84	4,63
Perlidae	0,68	1,47	3,89	5,72
Hydropsychidae	7,17	5,24	10,46	10,35
Rhyacophilidae	2,39	2,31	1,95	1,63
Glossosomatidae	10,58	9,43	7,06	6,54
Limnephilidae	9,22	11,53	10,71	8,72
Chironomidae	11,26	13,00	10,95	8,45
Limoniidae	0,68	0,21	1,46	0,82
Simuliidae	3,75	4,40	4,14	3,00
Dryopidae	6,83	6,71	4,87	5,72
Elmidae	2,05	1,47	3,41	1,91

Tableau 1: Peuplement d' invertébrés benthiques de la Bouigane en % de l' effectif

Ephéméroptères (figure 2) : les larves d'Ephéméroptères ont été notées au cours de chaque mois à l'exception d'avril. La fréquence d'occurrence varie de 0 à 30,95 % ($M = 7,91 \pm 8,08$ %). L'identification des familles n'a pas été systématiquement réalisée. Toutefois, nous avons noté la présence de six familles dont 3 dominant largement : Heptagyniidae, Baetidae et Ephemerellidae.

Les classes 1 et 2 sont représentées. La fréquence d'occurrence de la classe 1 varie de 0 à 30,95% ; la moyenne des fréquences est de $7,67 \pm 8,31$ % ; la classe 2 n'est représentée que pour les mois de février et juin (respectivement

1,85 et 0,95%) et la moyenne des fréquences d'occurrence est de $0,23 \pm 0,58$ %.

Plécoptères (figure 3) : les larves de Plécoptères sont présentes au cours des douze mois et la fréquence d'occurrence varie de 0 à 75,00 % ($M = 39,31 \pm 22,08$ %). Trois familles au moins ont été notées, les Nemouridae, les Perlodidae et les Perlidae. Au mois de mai, nous avons observé l'émergence massive d'une grande espèce du genre *Perla* ; espèce qui apparaît également dans le régime alimentaire du Desman.

Pour cette proie, la classe 1 est présente tous les mois ; sa fréquence

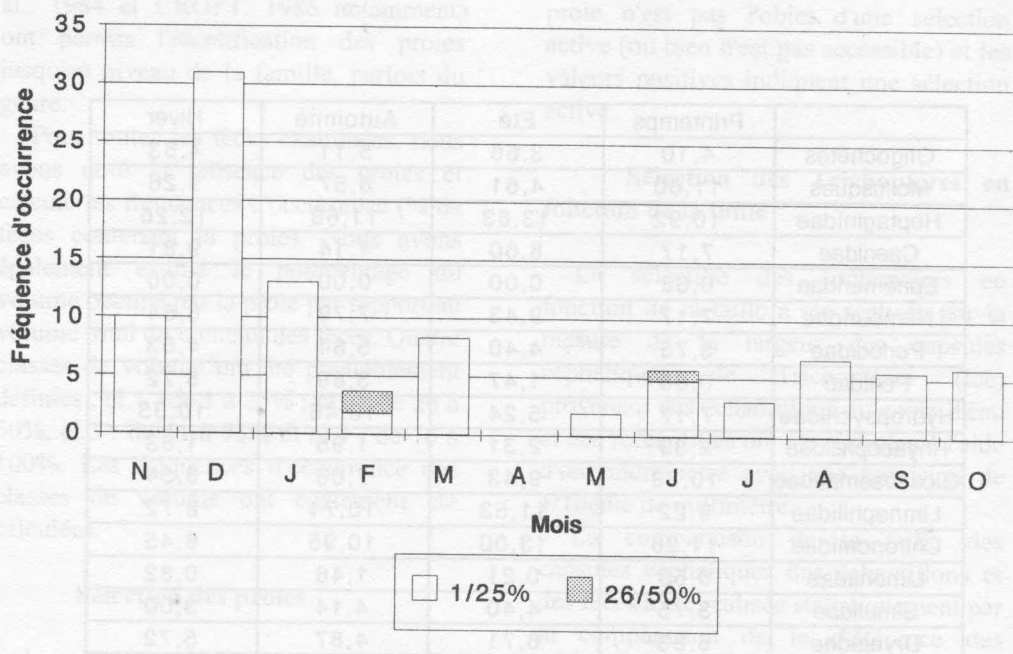


Fig.2 - Variations mensuelles de la fréquence d'occurrence des Ephéméroptères dans les fèces de desman.

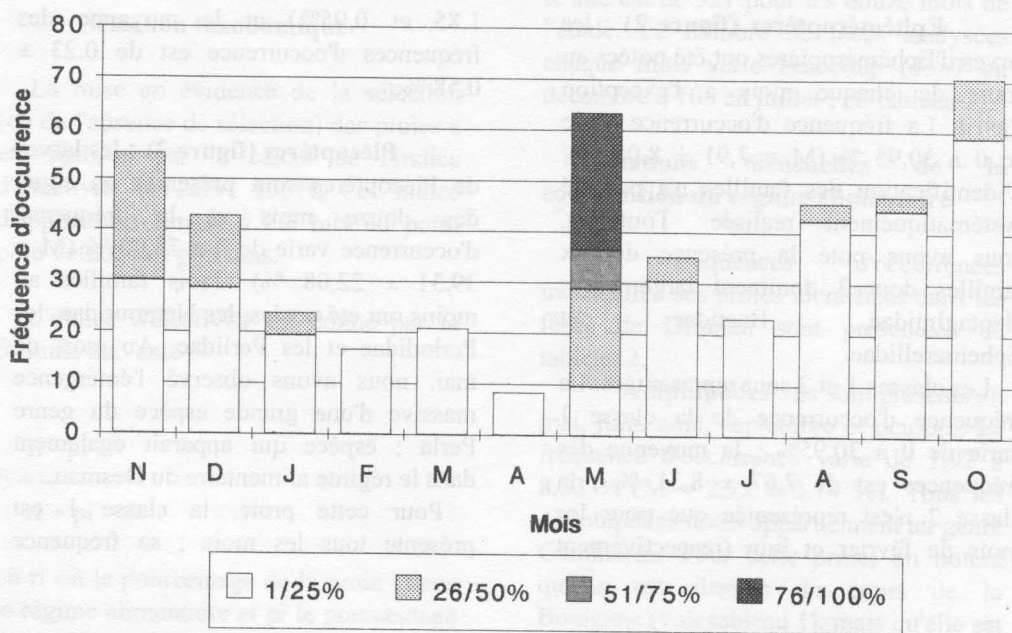


Fig.3 - Variations mensuelles de la fréquence d'occurrence des Plécoptères dans les fèces de desman.

d'occurrence varie de 9,00 à 58,82 % (M = 27,71 ± 14,89 %). La classe 2 est présente au cours de 7 des 12 mois ; sa fréquence d'occurrence varie de 0 à 25,00 % (M = 7,13 ± 8,47 %). En mai les classes 3 et 4 sont représentées et elles sont observées dans 7,69 et 26,92 % des fèces (moyennes respectives 0,64 ± 2,22 et 2,24 ± 7,77 %).

Trichoptères (figures 4 et 5) :

pour ce groupe, outre la fréquence d'occurrence globale, nous avons noté celle des quatre familles représentées : Rhyacophilidae, Hydropsychidae, Limnephilidae et Philopotamidae. Les Trichoptères sont notés tous les mois ; la fréquence d'occurrence varie de 69,13 à 100 % (M = 94,20 ± 9,73 %). Au cours de 7 des 12 mois elle est de 100 %.

Pour les Trichoptères, la classe 4 domine très largement ; elle est représentée tous les mois et sa fréquence d'occurrence varie de 20,45 à 93,83 % (M = 63,63 ± 21,60 %). La classe 3 est également présente tous les mois (M =

15,91 ± 8,22 %). La classe 2 n'est absente qu'en juillet (M = 12,31 ± 14,80 %). Enfin, la classe 1 n'est représentée qu'au cours de 6 mois (M = 2,59 ± 3,36 %).

* **Hydropsychidae** : cette famille est présente tous les mois. La fréquence d'apparition varie de 9,20 à 100 % (M = 66,80 ± 29,10 %). Elle est maximale de novembre à janvier puis en septembre octobre et elle est minimale en février.

* **Rhyacophilidae** : également représentée tous les mois, la fréquence d'occurrence de cette famille est plus faible que la précédente, de 3,80 à 76,90 % (M = 34,46 ± 21,72 %).

* **Limnephilidae** : la fréquence d'occurrence de cette famille est faible (3,11 ± 4,08 %), mais elle est absente au cours de 4 des 12 mois.

* **Philopotamidae** : cette famille est présente 6 mois. La fréquence

Mois	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	Moyenne	Variance	Ecart type
N. fèces	20	7	23	54	25	49	52	105	65	59	36	17			
Mollusques	0,00	2,38	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	2,77	0,43	1,01	1,01
Amphipodes	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	1,92	3,80	0,00	6,77	8,33	5,88	2,23	9,87	3,14
Ephéméroptères	10,00	30,95	13,04	3,70	8,33	0,00	1,92	5,66	3,07	6,77	5,55	5,88	7,91	65,21	8,08
Plécoptères	75,00	42,95	21,73	16,66	20,83	8,33	63,48	35,92	23,07	45,76	47,22	70,78	39,31	487,67	22,08
Cléoptères	0,00	16,66	13,04	7,40	0,00	0,00	5,76	2,91	0,00	6,77	0,00	0,00	4,38	32,71	5,72
Trichoptères total	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	83,33	69,13	98,09	100,00	88,13	91,66	100,00	94,20	94,60	9,73
Hydropsychidae	78,20	89,40	91,30	9,20	33,30	75,00	57,70	94,20	30,70	59,30	83,30	100,00	66,80	846,89	29,10
Rhyacophilidae	47,80	26,30	39,10	9,20	62,50	20,00	3,80	20,00	76,90	50,80	27,70	29,40	34,46	471,64	21,72
Limnephilidae	0,00	5,26	13,00	1,80	0,00	0,00	1,90	0,20	7,70	1,70	0,00	5,80	3,11	16,64	4,08
Philopotamidae	0,00	0,00	26,00	94,40	0,00	0,00	1,90	4,70	4,60	8,40	0,00	0,00	11,67	733,77	27,09
Diptères	0,00	4,76	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	3,80	0,00	1,69	5,55	0,00	1,32	4,54	2,13
Indéterminés	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	20,83	0,00	0,00	0,00	3,38	5,55	0,00	2,48	36,57	6,05

Tableau 2 : Nombre de fèces analysées et fréquences d'occurrence mensuelles des proies du Desman à Argein.

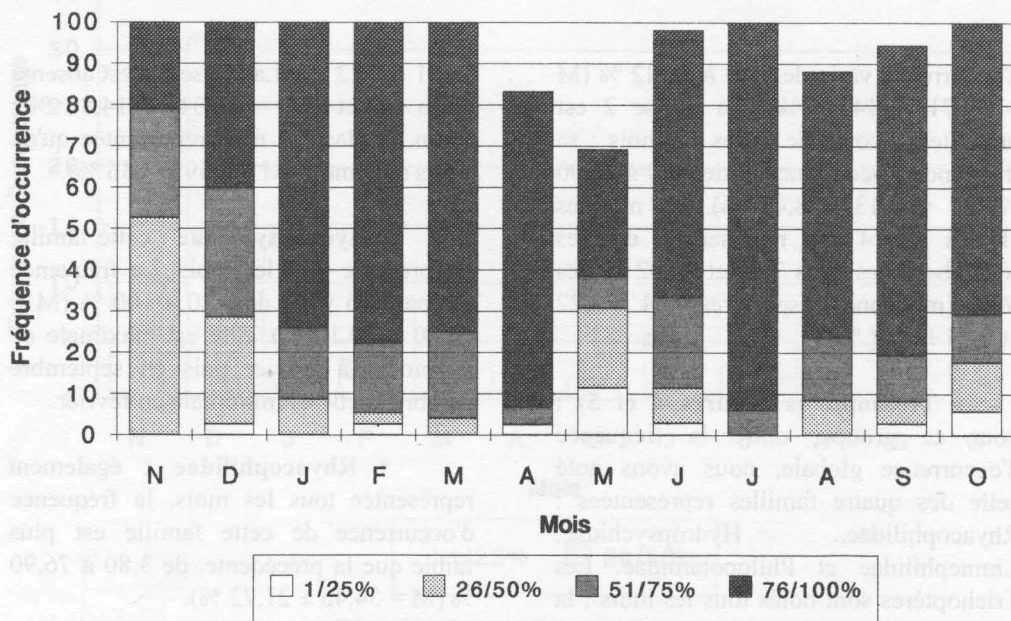


Fig.4 - Variations mensuelles de la fréquence d'occurrence des Trichoptères dans les fèces de desman.

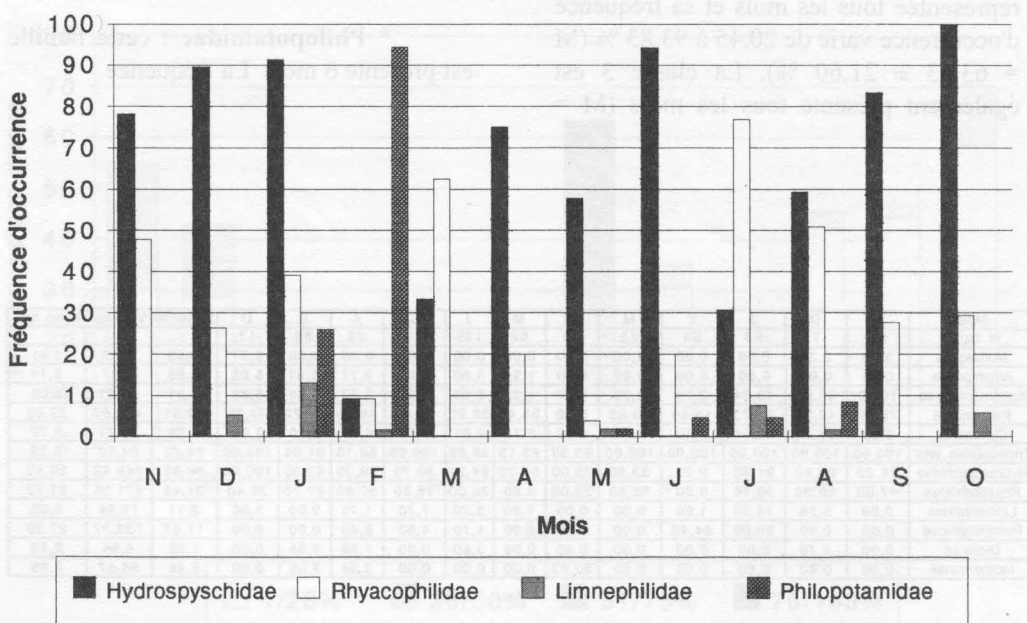


Fig.5- Variations mensuelles de la fréquence d'occurrence des quatre familles de Trichoptères dans les fèces de Desman

d'occurrence varie de 1,9% au mois de mai à 94,4% en février ($M = 11,67 \pm 27,09 \%$).

DEBUT NOTE: Les Philopotamidae n'apparaissent pas dans les échantillons d'invertébrés de la Bouigane et il est possible que nous ayons commis une erreur d'identification lors de l'analyse des fèces que nous n'avons pas conservées. FIN NOTE

Autres proies

- **Coléoptères** : Les larves de Coléoptères n'apparaissent que pour 6 des douze mois de l'étude. La fréquence d'occurrence moyenne est de $4,38 \pm 5,72\%$; elle est maximale de décembre à février. Les Coléoptères notés sont des Elmidae et des Dryopidae.

- **Diptères** : Les larves de Diptères ne sont notés qu'au cours de 4 des 12 mois et la fréquence d'occurrence moyenne est de $1,32 \pm 2,13\%$. Nous n'avons noté que des Chironomidae.

- **Gastéropodes** : La présence de coquilles de trois familles de Gastéropodes, Ancyliidae, Limnaeidae et Bythinellidae a été notée dans les échantillons étudiés. La fréquence d'occurrence moyenne est de $0,43 \pm$

1,01%. Si on ne peut pas exclure la capture de ces proies par le Desman, il convient toutefois de garder à l'esprit que les coquilles entrent pour une part importante dans la composition des fourreaux des Trichoptères et qu'elles ont pu être ingérées accidentellement.

- **Proies indéterminées** : La fréquence d'occurrence des proies non identifiées est faible ($2,48 \pm 6,05\%$) ; toutefois, elle atteint 20,83 % en avril.

Pour ces quatre dernières proies, seule la classe de volume 1 est représentée.

Sélection des proies

Ne disposant que de quatre séries d'échantillons d'invertébrés benthiques (voir tableau 1), pour l'établissement de l'indice d'Ivlev, nous avons calculé les moyennes saisonnières des fréquences d'occurrence des proies.

Pour les Amphipodes et les Philopotamidae absents des échantillons, l'indice n'a pas pu être calculé.

Pour les Mollusques, les Ephéméroptères et les Diptères, E est toujours négatif.

Pour les Coléoptères, E est négatif pour le printemps, l'été et l'automne ; E est positif (0.24) pour l'hiver.

Pour les Plécoptères, E est toujours positif ; E est maximum au printemps et en automne et minimum en été et en hiver.

Valeurs de l'indice d'Ivlev (E)

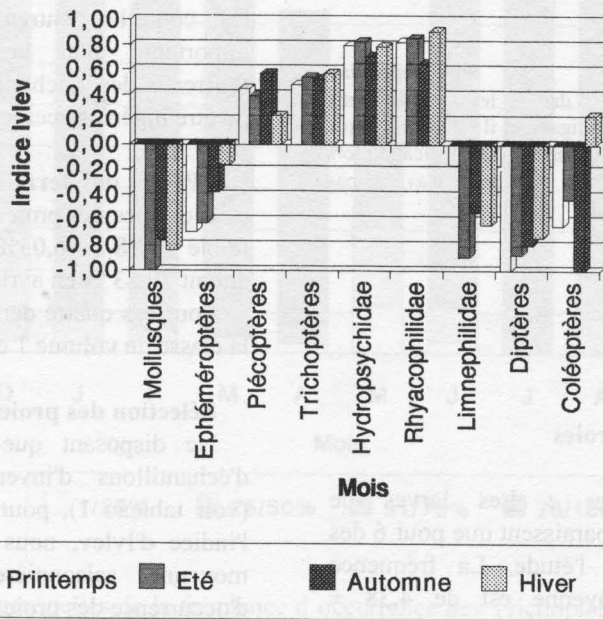


Figure 6 : Valeurs de l'indice d'Ivlev pour les proies du Desman

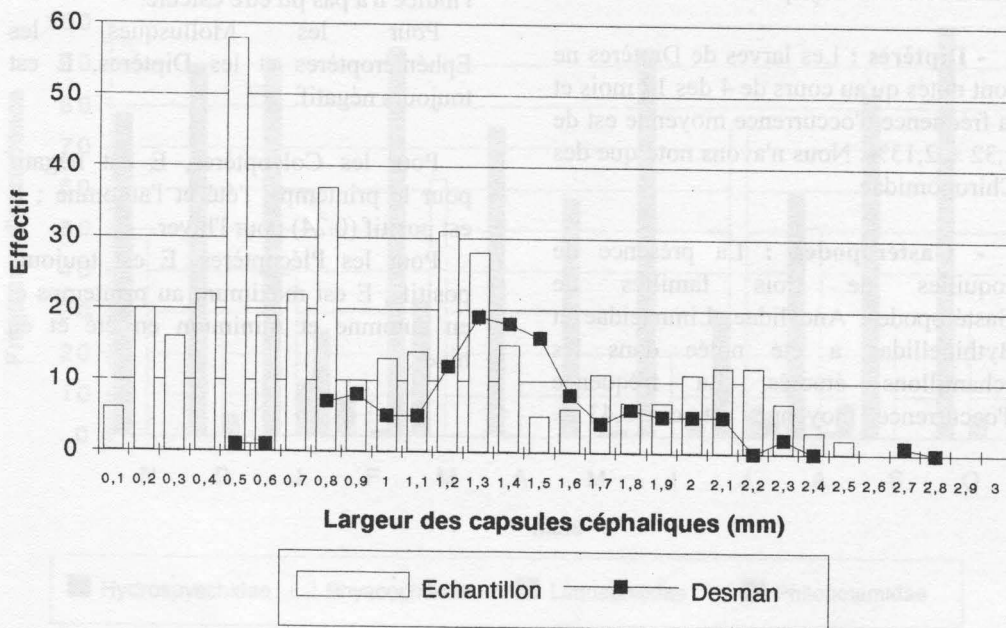


Figure 7: Variations de la largeur des capsules céphaliques des Trichoptères provenant des échantillons de l'invertébrés benthiques de la Bouigane et des fèces du Desman

Pour les Trichoptères, E est toujours positif et varie peu autour de 0,50 ; mais pour les trois familles présentes dans les échantillons, on note une grande variation de l'indice :

- E est toujours positif et élevé pour les Hydropsychidae (de 0,71 à 0,8 et les Rhyacophilidae (de 0,65 à 0,91) ;

- E est toujours négatif pour les Limnephilidae.

Sélection des Trichoptères en fonction de la taille

La figure 7 reprend les données obtenues et montre que les individus de petites tailles ($lcc < 0,8$ mm) sont peu ou pas capturés alors qu'ils représentent une part importante dans les échantillons.

La lcc moyenne des Trichoptères provenant des échantillons est de $1,013 \pm 0,603$ mm ($N = 393$). Celle des Trichoptères capturés par le Desman est de $1,403 \pm 0,377$ mm ($N = 126$). La différence des moyennes est hautement significative au seuil de 5%.

Nous avons souligné ci-dessus que tous les Trichoptères n'étaient pas capturés systématiquement, les Hydropsychidae et les Rhyacophilidae faisant l'objet d'une sélection active. La comparaison des lcc moyennes de toutes les familles notées dans les échantillons, montrent que ce sont ces deux familles qui représentent la très grande majorité des individus de taille moyenne à grande.

Discussion - Conclusion

Les résultats présentés ici montrent que le desman est une espèce à régime alimentaire hautement spécialisé.

La sélection des proies par le Desman s'effectue sur plusieurs critères:

- proies appartenant à des groupes d'invertébrés benthiques et rhéophiles ;

- proies à valeur énergétique intrinsèque élevée : les Trichoptères (cf. par exemple CASPER, 1975), les espèces ne construisant pas de fourreaux étant largement dominantes;

- proies de taille moyenne à grande et peu sclérifiées.

Tous ces éléments de la sélection des proies correspondent à priori à une acquisition maximale d'énergie. Toutefois, les proies dominantes sont "rares" dans le milieu étudié et leur capture nécessite une sélection très active.

Ce sont les Trichoptères Rhyacophilidae et Hydropsychidae qui constituent la base du régime alimentaire du Desman. Tous les autres groupes d'invertébrés benthiques sont également consommés.

On notera que les poissons n'ont jamais été rencontrés dans les fèces analysés que ce soit dans le présent travail ou bien pour les autres échantillons analysés. Nous avons également analysé le contenu de 25 fèces provenant d'un ruisseau pépinière d'Ariège (inédit) sans y rencontrer de poissons. Toutefois, la capture de truitelles notamment a été observées à plusieurs reprises (P. CADIRAN, com. pers.) En tout état de cause, la consommation de poissons reste un phénomène anecdotique en milieu naturel. Il n'en est peut-être pas de même dans les piscicultures; toutefois, il conviendrait d'étudier en détail ce point.

Cette spécialisation trophique extrême est, dans une certaine mesure, en contradiction avec les observations réalisées par plusieurs auteurs (voir introduction), mais il convient de rappeler qu'elles reposent essentiellement sur des observations d'animaux captifs.

Par contre, elle est confortée par les données de SANTAMARINA & GUITAN (1988) et nos données (BERTRAND, 1987, 1988, 1992 et BERTRAND & CLERGUE, 1992).

La comparaison des stratégies alimentaires du desman avec celles du cincle plongeur *Cinclus cinclus* a été réalisée sur le même cours d'eau (BERTRAND, 1993) et a par ailleurs fait l'objet de nombreuses études (voir par exemple BERTRAND, 1988 ; BERTRAND & CLERGUE, 1992 ; ORMEROD, 1985 a et b ; ORMEROD & TYLER, 1986 et 1991 ; SANTAMARINA, 1990 ; SPITZNAGEL, 1985). Cette espèce possède des stratégies alimentaires très proches ; toutefois, dans notre cas nous avons montré que :

- durant la période de reproduction, les stratégies alimentaires du cincle sont les mêmes que celle du desman ; toutefois, il est capable de présenter des réponses à des variations importantes du milieu. C'est le cas notamment pendant la crue de fonte des neiges où les trichoptères rhéophiles sont remplacés par des espèces plus limnophiles ;

- en dehors de la période de reproduction, le cincle devient opportuniste.

La méthodologie employée pour l'étude du régime alimentaire qui repose sur l'analyse du contenu des fèces pourrait ici intervenir. Toutefois, son principal inconvénient est le risque de surestimation de l'importance des proies très sclérifiées qui, dans le cas du Desman, sont peu consommées. En fait, leur importance réelle dans la composition du régime alimentaire est probablement plus importante encore.

Cette spécialisation alimentaire permet dans une large mesure d'apporter des éléments de compréhension de la discontinuité spatiale et temporelle de la répartition du Desman telle que nous l'avons souligné dans notre communication consacrée la répartition de l'espèce ; discontinuité que nous avons mise en relation avec les perturbations de débits naturelles et/ou artificielles des cours d'eau.

Dans le cas des cours d'eau à débit perturbés, les conséquences des fluctuations de débit ont fait l'objet de très nombreuses études et il est possible de les résumer très schématiquement à deux points essentiels (voir par exemple : CHAUVET, 1983 ; CLERGUE-GAZEAU & GAZAGNES, 1986 ; CLERGUE-GAZEAU et al. 1987 ; COWX et al., 1984 ; GAZAGNES, 1983 ; MINSHALL & WINGER, 1968):

- modification profonde de la composition des peuplements avec diminution ou disparition notamment de plusieurs familles de Trichoptères, dont les Rhyacophilidae et les Hydropsychidae, base du régime alimentaire du Desman;

- augmentation du phénomène de dérivation des invertébrés, qui deviennent difficilement accessibles au Desman.

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Trophic resources of *Galemys pyrenaicus* (Geoffroy, 1811) in relation with water quality

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Summary: The trophic resources of the Pyrenean desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus* G.) were studied in a stream of NW Spain. A biotic score index was used to determine the tolerance of desman food to pollution. Data on seasonal diets and stream benthos prey were used to determine prey selection patterns.

Diverse caddisfly larvae are the main resource for *Galemys*, but this predator also consumes other prey, specially soft bodied benthic larvae. Biotic scores reveal that most prey consumed by *Galemys* are little or moderately tolerant to pollution. Data from other streams of NW Spain reveal similar feeding patterns.

Introduction

The Pyrenean desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*) was generally cited as an mammal highly dependent on running water quality, and the pollution was mentioned as one of the main reasons for its regression. This hypothesis is basically supported by the fact that this species needs high and diverse amounts of benthic macroinvertebrate fauna for its feeding.

This led me to compare the sensibility to pollution of prey available on stream benthos with those of prey consumed by the desman.

Study site and Methods

The Riobo is a small tributary (5-7 m wide) of the river Ulla, a major river in NW Spain flowing into the Atlantic Ocean. Altitude ranges from 150 to 20 m above sea-level.

I captured the desman using two different techniques: funnel traps and electro-fishing.

I based dietary analyses on stomach and intestinal contents.

Two specimens per season were captured during the summer, autumn, and winter of 1988. The sample was low because this species is protected by Spanish law (specimens captured under permit).

I sampled the availability of prey in the river benthos using a Surber sampler (0.1 m²). I collected 13-15 samples during each season studied. riffles and pools were sampled separately.

For availability samples, I identified invertebrates to family and calculated the volume of each family by immersion in water using a 5 cc graduated cylinder.

I placed dietary samples in a Petri disk and examined them microscopically at between 10-40 power. I identified most prey by counting the number of mandibles,

or other hard body parts, in a dietary sample.

To provide a measure of the energetic importance of prey I reconstructed prey volumes from body part size-prey size regressions.

The sensibility of each prey type to pollution was quantified according the BMWP' biotic score of families (ALBA-TERCEDOR & SANCHEZ-ORTEGA, 1988), which ranges from 1 (the most tolerant taxa to pollution) to 10 (the most sensible to pollution).

Results

I will describe seasonal changes in prey availability and diet based on volumetric data because they are more representative of the energy.

Prey selection by number and volume were assessed by direct comparison of percentages in the diet and in the benthos.

Surber samples (Benthos)

In riffles, the hydrobiid snails (*Potamopyrgus jenkinsi*) were specially abundant. Gammarid amphipods reached importance in autumn. Concerning mayflies, baetids (*Baetis*), ephemereids (*Ephemerella*) and heptageniids, these were abundant or common. So were hydropsyche (*Hydropsyche*) or rhyacophilids (*Rhyacophila*) caddisflies.

In pools, hydrobiids and gammarids were of minor importance, whereas Oligochaeta were sometimes abundant. During summer ephemereid mayflies dominated benthic samples. Dragonflies were always abundant. The caddisflies present in pools differed from those in riffles; sericostomatids, lepidostomatids and limnephilids were the most abundant.

Dietary data

Caddisfly larvae, mainly Sericostomatidae, Limnephilidae, Lepidostomatidae and Hydropsychidae, were the main food resource all along the studied seasons, and the desman always showed positive selection for this prey type.

Other prey were consumed with more seasonal variability, specially ephemereids (Ephemeroptera), gammarids (Crustacea), lumbricids (Annelida), and tipulids (Diptera). The selection pattern for these prey types was also variable.

The importance of dragonflies on the desman's diet was generally lower than in the stream. Desman exhibited strong negative selection for molluscs (Hydrobiidae), beetles (Elmidae) and Chironomid dipterans in all seasons examined. These prey were never abundant in the diet of the desman, although some were abundant on stream benthos.

Prey of the desman in relation with water quality

In a general way, the desman consumed macroinvertebrate families (Sericostomatidae, Lepidostomatidae, Ephemeridae), which have been classified by the BMWP' as highly (8-10 score), and moderately sensible (5-7) to the pollution.

Generally, prey very resistant to contamination (BMWP' score < 5) were not significantly present in the desman diet, although these had moderate relative importance (mainly by number) on the benthos. The reason is that chironomid dipterans and molluscs are not consumed by the desman, being these among the most pollution tolerant prey.

	B.S.	SUMMER						AUTUMN						WINTER					
		Benthos lotic		Benthos lentic		<i>C. pyrenaicus</i>		Benthos lotic		Benthos lentic		<i>C. pyrenaicus</i>		Benthos lotic		Benthos lentic		<i>C. pyrenaicus</i>	
		%N	%V	%N	%V	%N	%V	%N	%V	%N	%V	%N	%V	%N	%V	%N	%V	%N	%V
MOLLUSCA																			
Hydrobiidae	3	9	5	32	9	-	-	17	20	33	15	-	-	26	28	16	9	-	-
OLIGOCHAETA	1	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	3	15	1	19	1	2	4	2	0	4
CRUSTACEA																			
Gammaridae	6	13	5	3	0	2	0	34	42	3	1	32	21	4	6	3	3	4	2
EPHEMEROPTERA (I)																			
Ephemeridae	10	0	2	7	43	35	29	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	5
Heptageniidae	10	1	1	-	-	4	2	5	7	-	-	4	3	7	12	-	-	8	7
Baetidae	4	13	4	2	0	2	0	13	6	-	-	11	3	14	10	-	-	10	3
Ephemerellidae	7	8	5	4	1	2	0	7	2	2	0	-	-	9	2	-	-	-	-
PLECOPTERA																			
Nemouridae/Leuctridae	8	2	1	1	0	-	-	9	5	3	2	6	4	5	7	1	1	3	1
ODONATA (I)																			
Aeschnidae	8	0	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cordulegastridae	8	0	17	1	19	3	11	-	-	1	37	-	-	-	-	0	15	-	-
Gomphidae	8	0	3	0	4	1	3	0	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COLEOPTERA																			
Elmidae (L+I)	5	18	5	19	1	-	-	7	3	3	0	-	-	12	2	1	0	-	-
TRICHOPTERA (P)																			
Rhyacophilidae	7	2	10	-	-	2	2	1	1	-	-	1	3	1	2	0	2	2	4
Glossosomatidae	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-
Hydropsychidae	5	7	10	-	-	10	4	1	5	-	-	2	2	4	16	-	-	10	7
Philopotamidae	8	1	2	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	18	17	1	2	-	-	5	3
Limnephilidae	7	-	-	0	1	-	-	-	-	3	8	1	3	0	1	2	8	5	16
Lepidostomatidae	10	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	8	5	-	-	-	-	17	25	18	13
Leptoceridae	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	17	6	-	-
Sericostomatidae	10	1	3	3	7	30	45	-	-	6	5	2	2	1	1	7	17	11	17
DIPTERA																			
Tipulidae	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dixidae	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Simuliidae	5	14	4	1	0	-	-	2	1	1	0	14	2	4	1	-	-	12	2
Chironomidae	2	9	1	15	1	-	-	1	1	23	4	2	0	5	1	24	2	-	-

Table 1- Relative composition of the diet of the desman in Riobo and availability in benthos: (%N) number, (%V) volume, (B.S.) biotic score.

For insects I: imago, P: pupae, L: larvae, no indication refers to larval stages.

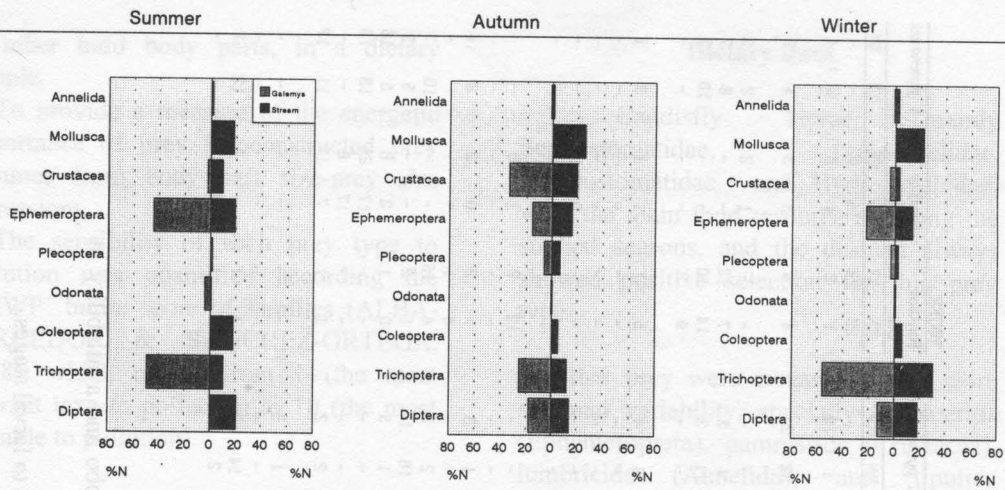


Figure 1- Relative numeric and volumetric composition of main prey taxa in the desman diet and stream benthos.

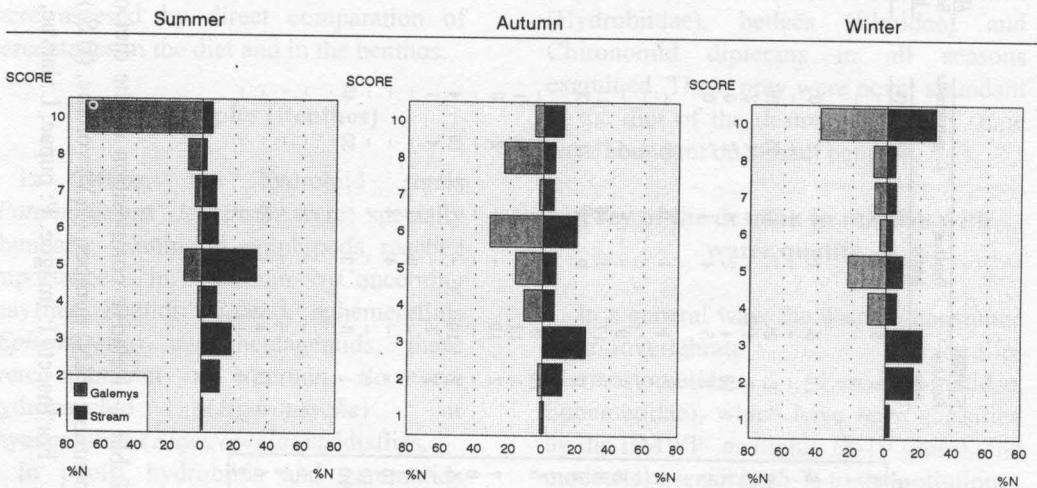


Figure 2- numeric and volumetric percentage supplied for each macroinvertebrate biotic score (from 1=pollution tolerant taxa to 10=pollution sensible) to the desman diet and stream benthos.

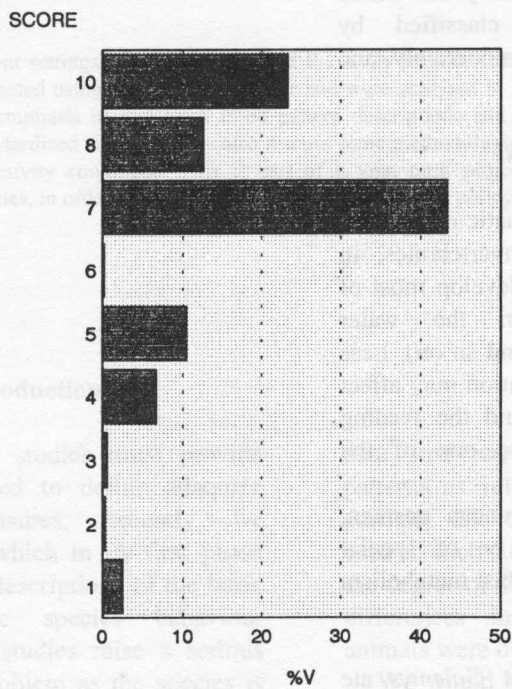
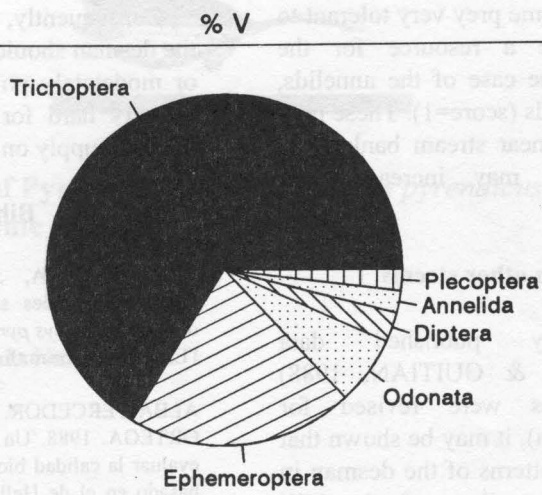


Figure 3- Relative composition by volume of the diet of the desman in a sample of the streams of NW Spain (8 individuals from different streams and dates). Relative volumetric contribution of biotic scores in these dietary sample is showed.

Nevertheless, some prey very tolerant to pollution may be a resource for the desman. This is the case of the annelids, specially Lumbricids (score=1). These prey may be abundant near stream banks, and organic pollution may increase their ammounts.

Data from other streams

Using already published data (SANTAMARINA & GUITIAN, 1988) (intestinal samples were revised for oligochata detection), it may be shown that the main dietary patterns of the desman in Riobo are common to those of other NW Spain streams. *Galemys* prey basically on soft bodied benthic macroinvertebrates, particularly caddisflies and mayflies. These families are generally classified by BMWP' biotic score as moderately and low tolerant to pollution.

Conclusions

Pollution may affect aquatic organisms, such as fish and macroinvertebrates, in several ways, since these develop most of their vital activities in the water (respiration, reproduction and so on). Less are the ways in which pollution may affect a semiacuatic organism, and the feeding dependence appears to be one of the principal ways.

In the case of the Pyrenean desman, feeding dependence may be of special importance due to the very fast metabolism of this mammal.

My results showed that *Galemys* ate basically soft bodied benthic invertebrates of certain size, specially caddisflies. These prey types are generally classified by BMWP' as moderately and low tolerant to pollution. Annelids become one of the few resources that the desman might use in very polluted waters.

Consequently, it may be expected that the desman should find enough food in low or modetately polluted waters, but it will be very hard for it to find a continuous feeding supply on highly polluted waters.

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Some observations of Pyrenean desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus* Geoffroy) specimens in short time captivity

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Summary: Two different settings of captivity allowed the study of some behaviour patterns of the pyrenean desman. Data were collected using a video-tap recorder and were analysed in slow motion and frame-by-frame (25 frames/sec). The emphasis of this work is on pattern descriptions and naming, in order to get a more comprehensive and standardized ethogram. We also discuss some methodological problems concerning handling of the animals and captivity conditions. This is part of a long term project whose aim is to identify the requirements of the species, in order to develop an adequate conservation policy.

Introduction

Eco-ethological studies must provide data deeply needed to define adequate conservation measures. Recently, we started a project which in its first phase aimed to provide descriptions of the basic elements of the species behaviour repertoire. These studies raise a serious methodological problem as the species is difficult to detect in the field and very sensitive to handling and captivity conditions.

The descriptions presented in this study confirm in many respects those of previous workers but there are several details that differ from other published

data and we found some behaviour patterns as yet undescribed. This can be partially due to the scarcity of animals used in each study and to the variations in the degree of detail in the descriptions and differences in settings in which the animals were observed.

We would be glad if our contribution, whose emphasis is on pattern descriptions and naming, could be the starting point for an exchange of views with other researchers on the ethology of this animal, in order to get a more comprehensive and standardized ethogram.

	N°1	n°2	N°3	N°4
CAPTURE	Rib. Gramelas	Rio Homem	Rib. Rio Mau	Rio Adrão
DATE	26.5.89	26.9.89	22/3/90	6/7/90
WEIGHT(g)	71	42	56	49
SEX	male	female	female pregnant	female
DAYS OF CAPTIVITY	1	1	7	1

Table 1 - Subjects data

Material and Methods

Data were collected using two individuals accidentally caught during electric fishing at National Park of Peneda-Gerês.

Representative samples of video films of specific behavioural patterns were selected for slow motion and frame-by-frame analyses (25 frames/sec). A total of 132 minutes of video film was analysed.

Behaviour Patterns

Resting (out of water)

Our data confirm the existence of two types of resting as defined by RICHARD (1986) that fall in the two categories described by EISENBERG (1981) for mammals in general.

a) Sitting: Short term resting; the animal rests on the abdomen; forepaws under the body; proboscis projects forward.

b) Sleeping: Prolonged resting; body coiled lies partially on one side; proboscis under the head; tail coiled around the body.

In the aquaterrarium and during transportation in a small box, subject n°1 wrapped itself in pieces of toilet paper suggesting a similar behaviour in natural nest using small twigs, leaves and grasses (as described by STONE, 1987).

Yawning: In a sitting posture; head maximally raised; mouth open and

proboscis stretched over the back of the animal (also mentioned by NIETHAMER, 1970).

Movements and postures out of water

Walking: Metatarsus and toes touch the ground; the hindpaws propel the body; forepaws move contralaterally in a synchronized manner and help to support the body (as is mentioned by RICHARD & VIALARD, 1969).

Jumping: The animal starts a jump in a bipedal posture, with a strong impulse of the hindpaws.

Climbing: The animal uses the fore and hindpaws to climb; the strong claws of both hands and feet allow the animal to use minimal substratum irregularities to climb; the tail also supports the body (as is mentioned by NIETHAMER, 1970).

The animals are able to climb on the glass walls of the aquaterrarium. In this situation, we suppose that the large interdigital membrane of the hindpaws, being wet, helps the animal to adhere to the glass. The great flexibility of the ankle joint, seem to help the animal to climb in a variety of situations.

Hanging: The strong claws also allow the animal to hang for some time. The animals were able to hang from the horizontal metal net that cover the containers. In this situation the animal could move suspended only on forepaws (as is mentioned by PEYRE, 1956)

Movements and postures in the water

Floating: The animal keeps still at water surface. Approximately one third of the body is under water, hindpaws stretched laterally under the body plane, forepaws projecting downward; proboscis out of water, stretched at an angle of 45 with the water surface; the first third of the tail close to the water surface and the last rest loosely flexed downward.

Locomotion at the water surface

The locomotion at water surface was done usually near the walls of the aquaterrarium.

Swimming afloat: as in floating; but the hindpaws move alternately under the body plane, propelling the body; with the movement the whole tail is at the surface aligned with the body axis.

Superficial dive swimming: quick progress with a succession of superficial dives; hindpaws move laterally and alternately under the body plane, strong flexions of the body in the sagittal plane also propel the animal; tail passively follows body movement; proboscis alternately in and out of the water, moving independently of the head with lateral flexions and curling in many directions.

In several instances prey items were capture at the surface in that way.

Splash swimming: similar to RICHARD's (1973) description for French term "tamborinage". Hindpaws and body movement similar to those in the previous pattern but the body flexions are less pronounced; the head is always out of the water with raised proboscis; forepaws vigorously strike the water surface with alternate vertical movements.

Diving

Descending: Submersion starts with a vigorous downward flexion of the body; only after the submersion the hindpaws start to move latterly and alternately;

forepaws perform downward oblique weak movements contralaterally synchronized with those of the hindpaws.

The animal can keep near the bottom, countering the tendency to float, in two ways (as mentioned by RICHARD & VIALARD, 1969):

a) Anchoring: The claws of one or both hindpaws attach the body to the irregularities of the substratum.

b) Swimming at the bottom: hindpaws move continuously; forepaws apparently do not help in this action. It can keep stationary, change place and perform a variety of activities namely food search; the animal rarely swims horizontally, commonly it moves in an oblique stand head down, at an angle varying from 45 to 90 degrees

Ascending: Hindpaws cease to move, the body arises passively in a horizontal position.

Diving patterns

Dives occur in long sequences. In each sequence, dives alternate with activities at surfaces. These periods at the surface were called interdives.

From a total time of 34'14" sequences of dives, observed data were collected from 80 dives, dive duration varies from : min. = 0.96"; max = 15.2"; avg. = 7.48"; std = 3.38"

For the same sequence samples, interdiver duration varies from: min. = 0.08"; max = 21.44"; avg. = 4.45"; std = 3.12".

No significant correlation was found between dive's time and precedent interdiver time ($R. \text{ Squared} = 0.011$, 79 degrees of freedom) or between dive time and consequent interdiver time ($R. \text{ Squared} = 0.041$, 78 degrees of freedom).

Feeding

In captivity the animals successfully preyed on frog tadpoles, freshwater invertebrates, terrestrial insects and

spiders, blowfly larvae both alive and dead and also took small pieces of liver. The animals took prey at the bottom, at the surface and quickly learned to feed from a dish placed out of water with blowfly larvae. Most of the food search is performed at the bottom.

Food searching: in anchoring or swimming at the bottom the animal scans and stirs the gravel with the forepaws and proboscis. As mentioned, in superficial dive swimming the proboscis performs numerous turns and curls in many directions. This means that, as the animal moves on the bottom, the scanned area is much wider than the body.

Probably the prey is detected by the proboscis that in general moves ahead of the mouth.

Prey catching: when a prey is detected the proboscis drags it to the mouth.

Prey handling: when a prey is caught the animal ascends holding it in the mouth. Prey items are handled and eaten at the water surface while the animal floats; forepaws and proboscis help in prey handling; large prey like tadpoles were handled near the aquarium corner or out of water (as mentioned by PUISSEUR, 1935). Vigorous head shaking movements, body flexions and

hindpaw movements were then observed.

Grooming

Grooming may be performed both with fore or hindpaws.

Forepaws grooming: contrarily to RICHARD (1986), we observed forepaw grooming that is used to groom the head region. Although head grooming by hindpaws was common, head grooming with forepaws was more frequently observed (see Table 2). Both unilateral and bilateral movements were observed with variations of amplitude allowing grooming of specific areas: proboscis, mouth, eyes, face and top of the head.

Hindpaws grooming: elliptical or pendular unilateral movements that are used to groom the whole body (heads, flank, belly, hind part, forepaws)

Shaking: During grooming sessions the animal may shake vigorously the head and the body. RICHARD (1986) considered that shaking precedes the grooming and helps to dry fur. However, we observed it also during grooming sequences. From 16 shaking acts observed only in 8 cases, shaking was the first act of a grooming bout. We also observed shaking with the animal partially submerged.

Grooming Patterns

	n	FREQ.(Hz)		DURATION(")	
		AVG	STD	AVG	STD
S	6	12.25	3.88	0.28	0.10
F	51	9.63	3.12	0.43	0.22
Hhe	44	9.13	1.78	3.12	1.71
Hfl	42	8.21	1.54	1.06	0.48
Hbe	7	8.71	1.80	2.41	1.46
Hhp	74	8.98	2.21	2.80	2.09
Hf	5	8.58	1.75	1.99	3.69

Table 2 - Data on the frequency (Hz) and duration (") of grooming acts (avg=mean; std=standart deviation)

Apart from helping to dry the fur, grooming may eventually be important in helping to give the hairs an arrangement that favours the retention of hair during under water activities.

As is shown in Table 2, all the duration of hindpaws grooming acts are larger than that of forepaws grooming. This suggests those hindpaws are used to perform more intensive grooming of the fur and also probably that larger areas are groomed by the hindpaws in each act.

Water surface-touching with proboscis and vibrissa

Subject nr 1 rested partially submerged at the edge of a small horizontal platform. The head faced to the opposite corner. This act can be divided in 3 phases:

- a) The animal touches lightly the water surface with the mentum vibrissa; the proboscis was raised.
- b) The proboscis is slowly lowered until it lies on the water surface, without breaking the superficial tension layer; when the tip of the proboscis touches the water a series of small waves could be observed.

c) The proboscis is swiftly raised again, generating a new set of small waves. During the entire movement the mentum vibrissa stayed in contact with the water surface. This movement was usually performed in bouts of 3 acts.

It was alternated with changing position (rotation), grooming acts and splashing.

Splashing

As mentioned above, this pattern was observed in alternation with water surface-touching. At the edge of the same platform the animal turned 90° from the position described in the preceding section.

The animal struck the water surface with simultaneous vigorous movements of the forepaws. Two bouts of this action were observed with 4 and 6 acts, respectively. After splashing the animal turned again and resumed the water surface-touching.

It would be interesting to get more data on splashing and water surface-touching. They could be effective in low frequency vibration production and detection by the vibrissa and Eimer organs, that RICHARD (1981a) proposed as an important mean of object detection in this species.

Handling and captivity conditions

FOOD ITEMS	nr 1	nr 2	nr 3	nr.4
macroinvertebrates	A	A	A	A
trouts	R	NG	R	NG
tadpoles	NG	NG	A	A
terrestrial arthropods	A	A	A	A
bluffy larvae	NG	NG	NG	A
liver	A	A	R	NG

Table 3 - Acceptance of food items

NG - not given;

A - accepted;

R - rejected

Till now, we only tried to keep four animals in captivity, three of which survived less than 24 hours.

Thus, we have too few data to attempt any quantitative evaluation of the causes of mortality and the effects of different handling procedures.

Food

After electrofishing, all four animals accepted food even in plastic containers where they were placed.

All accepted macroinvertebrates collected from the same river which were voraciously consumed as well as a wide variety of unfamiliar food items (see table nr 3)

Stress of captivity

As mentioned before, three of the animals died in the first 24 hours of captivity. After a period of intense activity during which the animals fed intensely and tried to escape, they ceased to go to the water, became increasingly inactive, refuse to eat and died in a few hours.

One of the animals some minutes before dying became suddenly convulsive producing distinct vocalizations and died almost suddenly.

The relative importance of stress, side effects of electrofishing and lack of adequate quantities of food as cause of this short term mortality is in urgent need of clarification.

Water quality

In one case we had the impression that deterioration of water quality could have been an important cause of death. This animal was feeding so actively from the container that this caused the release of much organic matter and prey debris into the water.

It was noticed that the fur of animal did not dry when it came out of the water and we suspect that this could cool the body due to evaporation possibly accelerating

nutrient depression.

Successful procedures

The animal that was successfully transported to the laboratory survived more than 24 hours in small containers. The procedures used during this phase was as follows:

a. The animal was caught in a dry container

b. When he became active it was allowed to feed from a dish where it readily took food. The food is slightly moist.

c. Each two or three hours the animal was placed in a small bucket with clean water where it was allowed to bath for a few minutes. After this bath the animal was placed in its dry container again, upon which he groomed and shook, removing water from the fur.

The droplets of water that remained in the bottom of the container where the animal groomed were carefully removed to be sure that the animal would stay perfectly dry.

d. It was found that this animal and another animal that was also placed for a dry container wrapped themselves in toilet paper, which perhaps allows the animal to feel more protected.

e. When transferred to an aquaterrarium, it appeared to be in a good condition, diving and exploring the bottom of the aquaterrarium for food, and readily accepted blowfly larvae, both alive and dead from an out-of-water dish and from the bottom of the tank. It made several escape attempts. Apparently die from a broken leg (as revealed by dissection) when it fell into an adjacent compartment of the tank, containing the filter system.

Discussion

The data presented in this paper emphasized the potential of the use of video-recording in studying the behaviour

of such an active animal like *Galemys*. However, little progress will be possible until adequate captivity conditions are found that simulate as much as possible the habitat where the animals live.

This is specially true in what regards social behaviour in general, and reproductive behaviour in particular. RICHARD (1986) who tried to put two animals in contact, had to abandon these attempts due to the very strong aggressive interactions in which the animals quickly engaged.

The same author was not able to put in contact males and receptive females. It is known that in nature *Galemys* tend to be solitary animals and STONE (1987) found that a section of 350 m of river is only occupied by a male and a female that have their nests in opposite river banks and whose patterns of movements tend to minimize contacts between the pair.

Thus, the available evidence strongly suggests that each individual has a very large home-range and any attempt to study social behaviour and reproduction is likely to require enclosures with large areas and plenty of shelters and nests sites.

We suggest the adaptation of natural stream sections as one of the most promising ways to study social behaviour in *Galemys* together with an increased effort to get more data in the wild.

We emphasized the urgent need to get more data on social and reproductive behaviour because they are essential to define adequate conservation programs to preserve this species.

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Répartition géographique du Desman des Pyrénées *Galemys pyrenaicus* dans les Pyrénées françaises

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Résumé : L'aire de répartition du desman des Pyrénées a été étudiée de 1985 à 1990 dans les Pyrénées françaises. Plusieurs méthodes ont été employées, mais c'est essentiellement à l'aide de la recherche des fèces que les données ont été recueillies. La carte de répartition établie sur la base de maille de 0,1 x 0,1 grade de coté permet de disposer d'un outil. A l'échelle des Pyrénées, l'aire de répartition du desman apparaît très homogène ; par contre à l'échelle de bassins versants ou de cours d'eau une discontinuité spatiale et temporelle apparaît. Ces discontinuités sont mises en relation avec les aménagements qui perturbent le débit des cours d'eau, en particulier les aménagements hydro-électriques.

Mots clés : Desman des Pyrénées ; répartition géographique ; Pyrénées ; France.

Introduction

L'état des connaissances sur l'aire de répartition du Desman de Pyrénées, tant en France que dans la Péninsule Ibérique est restée pendant un siècle et demi très fragmentaire. Cette méconnaissance tient à la fois aux difficultés liées à l'espèce et aux milieux qu'elle peuple qui rendent difficiles les recherches et à l'absence d'une réelle préoccupation de cet aspect de l'Histoire Naturelle du Desman.

En France, RICHARD (1976) fait état de la présence de l'espèce sur environ 80 sites (données échelonnées sur plus d'un siècle et faisant la synthèse des données antérieures). Dans l'Atlas des Mammifères Sauvages de France (S.F.E.P.M., 1984), sa présence n'est notée que sur 36 mailles de 0,2 x 0,2 grade de côté.

Au cours des 20 dernières années la plupart des auteurs s'accordent pour parler d'une régression de l'aire de répartition du desman depuis sa découverte. Toutefois, en l'absence de données précises sur la répartition de l'espèce au siècle dernier, comme au cours de ce siècle, il apparaît bien difficile de se prononcer.

Pourtant, il importe de disposer d'informations précises si l'on souhaite mettre en oeuvre une politique efficace de protection de l'espèce et de conservation de son milieu.

Les données présentées ici proviennent d'une prospection systématique des cours d'eau du versant français des Pyrénées effectuée, sur la base des connaissances antérieures, entre 1985 et 1990.

Cette prospection globale des Pyrénées a été complétée par deux approches complémentaires à des échelles plus

	Pyr.Ouest	Pyr.Centr	Pyr.Est	Total
Total sites	373	229	116	718
Sites présence	171	84	86	341
Sites absence	202	145	30	377

Tableau 1 : répartition géographiques des sites prospectés (Pyr.Ouest = Pyrénées-Atlantiques et Hautes-Pyrénées; Pyr.Centre = Haute-Garonne et Arière; Pyr.Est.=Aude et Pyrénées-Orientales. Absence = absence de l'espèce et/ou d'information.

réduites, celle d'un département, l'Ariège et celle d'un bassin versant, le haut Salat (Ariège) plus à même d'apporter des éléments pour une espèce dont le milieu est essentiellement linéaire.

Méthodologie

La prospection de l'ensemble du versant nord des Pyrénées a été réalisée entre août 1985 et avril 1990.

Pour la recherche de l'espèce, nous avons mis en oeuvre plusieurs méthodes. Dans un premier temps, le piégeage ; puis, au vue du très faible rendement (1 capture pour 25 nuits / piège ; $N = 120 \text{ nuits} \times 5 \text{ pièges}$!) nous avons été amené à rechercher une autre méthodologie plus à même d'apporter des données.

C'est l'identification d'indices de présence et en particulier des fèces qui nous a permis de réaliser l'essentiel de notre prospection (BERTRAND, 1992).

Sur la base de mailles de $0,02 \times 0,01$ grade de coté, nous avons prospecté 4 sites. Pour chaque site, les fèces ont été recherchées sur des secteurs de 500 m de cours d'eau.

A ces données, sont venues s'ajouter celles obtenues par enquêtes auprès des naturalistes et autres utilisateurs du milieu aquatique ; dans ce cas, nous avons tenté, le plus souvent possible, de contrôler les informations recueillies. Enfin, nous avons entrepris ponctuellement l'analyse des

fèces ou pelotes de rejection de prédateurs potentiels du desman (carnivores et rapaces nocturnes)

Résultats

Au total, dans le cadre de l'aire de répartition pyrénéenne, 718 sites ont été prospectés une fois. La répartition géographiques des sites, est présentée au tableau 1.

L'ensemble des données sur la répartition du Desman est présenté tout d'abord sous la forme d'une carte de synthèse. La présence de l'espèce est notée au niveau des mailles de $0,1 \times 0,1$ grade de côté (figure 1).

Cette carte permet de mettre en évidence l'importance de l'accroissement des connaissances (voir par exemple pour comparaison la dernière carte publiée, S.F.E.P.M., 1984). Toutefois, ce type de cartographie ne rend que partiellement compte de la répartition de l'espèce qui est étroitement liée aux cours d'eau et aux lacs.

L'analyse détaillée est envisagée au niveau de chacun des grands bassins versants (fleuves) et sous bassins dans le cas du vaste bassin de la Garonne. Pour chacun d'eux, les grandes lignes de l'aire de répartition sont esquissées et la limite inférieure de répartition telle que nous la connaissons est précisée.

Répartition par bassin hydrographique

* Bassin de la Nivelle

La présence du Desman sur ce petit bassin est connue depuis le début des années soixante dix, époque à laquelle plusieurs individus ont été capturés au cours de pêches électriques (RICHARD, 1976).

Dans le cadre de nos prospections, nous avons noté la présence de l'espèce sur plusieurs sites, le plus bas est situé en aval de St Pé sur Nivelle à une altitude de 15 m. N.G.F.

Au Pays Basque, d'autres petits bassins de fleuves, Bidassoa, Urumea, etc... ont été prospectés. Nous n'avons pas pu obtenir d'informations sur la présence du Desman ni réaliser d'observations.

* Bassin de l'Adour

Le bassin de l'Adour draine la presque totalité des Pyrénées comprises dans les départements des Pyrénées-Atlantiques et des Hautes-Pyrénées.

Le Desman est présent sur la grande majorité des affluents de ce fleuve; pour chacun des ces affluents sont précisés ci-dessous les limites inférieures actuellement connues (entre parenthèses, l'altitude du site le plus bas):

- **La Nive**, Itxassou (40 m);
- **La Bidouze**, amont de St-Palais (50 m);
- **Le Saison**, Rivehaute (100 m);
- **Le Gave d'Oloron**, Dogne (140 m);
- **Le Gave de Pau**, Ignon (250 m);
- **L'Echez**, Barry (350 m);
- **L'Adour**, Salles sur Adour (360 m);
- **L'Arros**, Ricaud (280 m).

Sur le bas bassin de l'Adour, DUBALEN (1894) a signalé la présence du Desman dans la région de Saint-Sever en

Chalosse (Sud du département des Landes).

Nous avons effectué des recherches approfondies dans différents secteurs de ce fleuve, plus particulièrement en Chalosse, sans pouvoir obtenir le moindre indice de la présence du Desman. De plus toutes les recherches d'informations auprès de riverains sont restées vaines.

* Bassin de la Garonne

Sur le cours de la Garonne la présence du Desman est régulière jusqu'au confluent de la Neste; plus en aval, le cours devient trop large et trop profond pour permettre une prospection efficace.

La présence de l'espèce sur la Pique et le Ger (en aval de Saint-Gaudens) à leur confluence avec la Garonne laisse à penser qu'il y est également présent. Quelques informations provenant de la région de Montrejeau (canaux et biefs) sont disponibles (divers courriers) mais n'ont pas pu être confirmées par nos prospections.

- Affluents de la rive gauche

+ **La Neste**, tout le bassin jusqu'à la confluence avec la Garonne;

+ **La Pique**, tout le bassin jusqu'à la confluence avec la Garonne.

Sur les cours d'eau du plateau de Lannemezan, RICHARD (1976) signale des observations sur le bassin de la Baïse. Nous n'avons pas réalisé de prospections systématiques de tous les cours d'eau de cette région. Toutefois, la présence régulière du Desman sur des cours d'eau comme la Baïse, le Gers ou la Louge apparaît peu probable, car leurs caractéristiques apparaissent trop éloignées de celles des cours d'eau pyrénéens. En outre, dans bien des cas ils nous sont apparus dans un état de dégradation avancée!

- Affluents de la rive droite

+ **Le Ger**, présent sur tout le bassin jusqu'au confluent avec la Garonne.

+ **Le Salat**, présent partout en amont de Saint-Girons. En aval, il est présent sur tous les cours d'eau de la rive gauche jusqu'au bassin du ruisseau d'Arbas à sa confluence avec le Salat à Mane. Par contre, nous n'avons pu obtenir aucune donnée sur les affluents de la rive droite, où RICHARD avait piégé en vain (com. pers.). Sur le cours du Salat lui-même, très peu de données ont pu être regroupées en aval de Lacourt (5 km au Sud de Saint-Girons).

+ **L'Arize**, tout le bassin jusqu'en aval du Mas d'Azil.

+ **La Lèze et le Volp**: ces deux petits cours d'eau possèdent des bassins versants réduits en Ariège et en Haute-Garonne. Aucun indice de présence ni aucune information n'ont pu être obtenus quant à l'existence de population de Desman sur leur cours.

+ **L'Ariège**: présent sur tout le bassin en amont de Foix. Sur l'Hers, affluent de la rive droite de l'Ariège, la présence du Desman n'a été notée que sur les hauts bassins de la rivière, en amont de Bélesta et de ses deux principaux affluents, la Douctouyre et la Touyre, respectivement jusqu'à Nalzen et Montferrier. Ces trois "populations" possèdent une répartition très restreinte et semblent totalement isolées de celles des bassins limitrophes de l'Ariège et de l'Aude. Ces cours d'eau n'ont pas été vus en 1989 et 1990, années qui ont vu le débit des cours d'eau se réduire très fortement, allant parfois jusqu'à l'assèchement de secteurs importants du lit des rivières.

* Bassin de l'Aude

L'aire de répartition du Desman sur le bassin de l'Aude est continue en amont de Quillan sur la totalité des affluents des deux rives. Sur l'Aude, nous n'avons aucune donnée en aval d'Axat, mais comme pour le Salat ou la Garonne, la présence de l'espèce y est très probable.

Plus en aval, aucune information ou donnée n'ont pu être recueillies, à l'exception du cours de l'Orbieu qui conflue avec l'Aude très en aval de Carcassonne. Sur ce cours d'eau, la découverte d'un cadavre en 1988 par B. D'HULST & A. BOUCHALLA (com. pers.), nous a amené à le prospecter et à mettre en évidence la présence du Desman sur tout le haut bassin en amont de LANET (350 m). La limite inférieure n'est pas connue avec précision, car nous n'avons effectué qu'une seule visite de ces sites.

* Bassin de l'Agly

Tout le bassin en amont d'Ansignan, incluant le sous bassin du Desix.

* Bassin de la Têt

Tout le cours du fleuve et le bassin en amont de Villefranche de Conflent; en aval, deux affluents de la rive gauche, La Castellane et le Caillan sont également peuplés.

* Bassin du Tech

Tout le bassin en amont de Arles-sur-Tech.

* Bassin de la Massane

Bien que le Desman n'ait jamais été signalé avec certitude sur les cours d'eau de ce petit bassin versant de l'extrême Est de la chaîne pyrénéenne (massif des Albères),

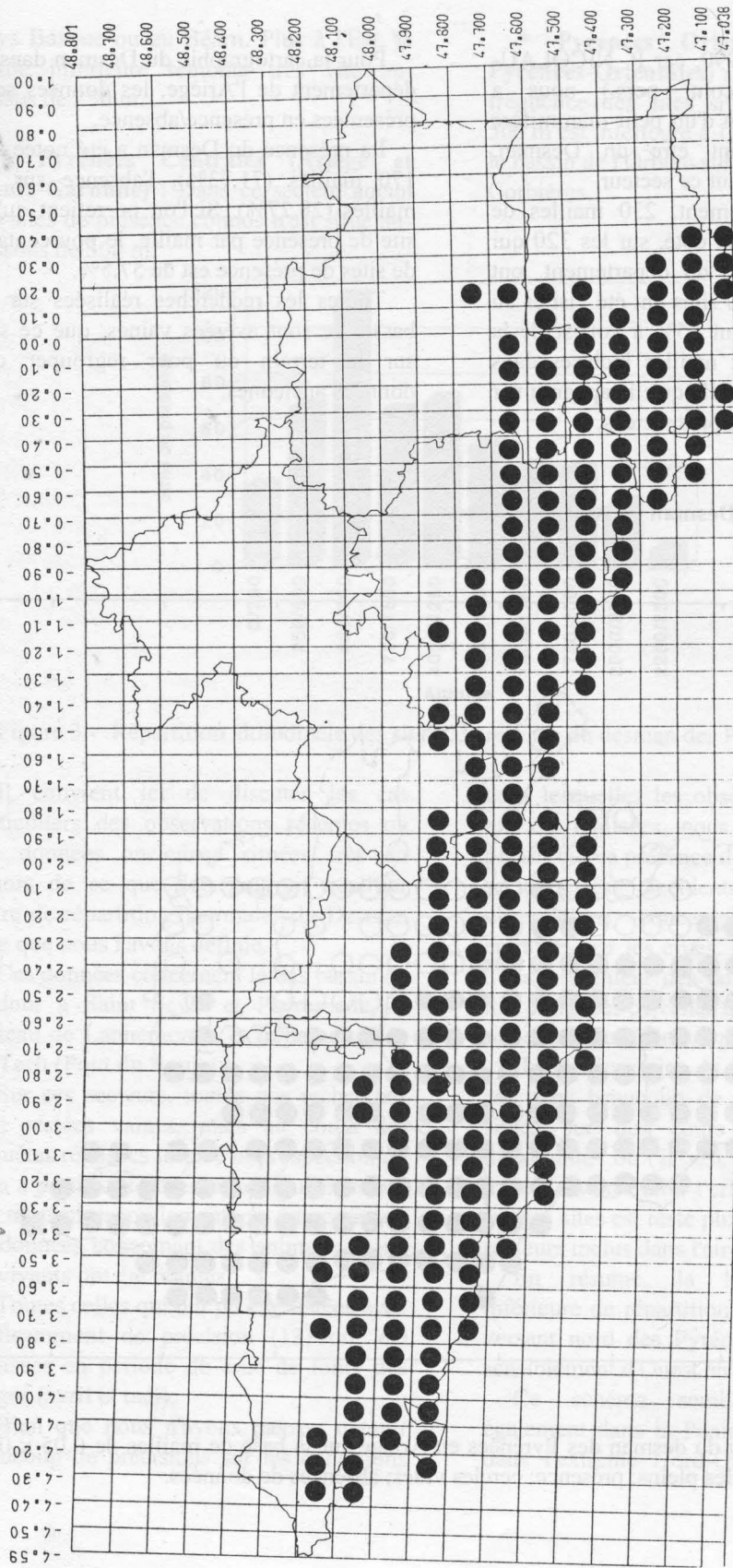


Fig. 1 - Répartition du desman des pyrénées en France (mailles de 0,01 x 0,01 grade)

il a été visité en 1990, car P. NICOLAU-GUILLAUMET (com. pers.) nous a signalé l'observation d'un petit mammifère "aquatique" pouvant être un Desman, lorsqu'il a travaillé sur ce secteur.

Pour ce département, 230 mailles de 0,05 x 0,05 grade de côté, sur les 320 qui couvrent l'ensemble du département, ont été prospectées. 410 sites ont été visités au moins une fois, dont 65% à l'ouest de la rivière Ariège. Dix mailles incluses dans l'aire de répartition telle qu'elle apparaît sur la carte n'ont pas été prospectées.

Pour la cartographie du Desman dans le département de l'Ariège, les données sont présentées en présence/absence.

La présence du Desman a été notée sur 170 mailles (71,73%), l'absence sur 67 mailles (28,27%). Si l'on ne retient qu'un site de présence par maille, le pourcentage de sites de présence est de 57,5%.

Toutes les recherches réalisées sur ce bassin se sont avérées vaines, que ce soit sur le terrain ou pour regrouper des données anciennes.

Répartition du Desman en Ariège

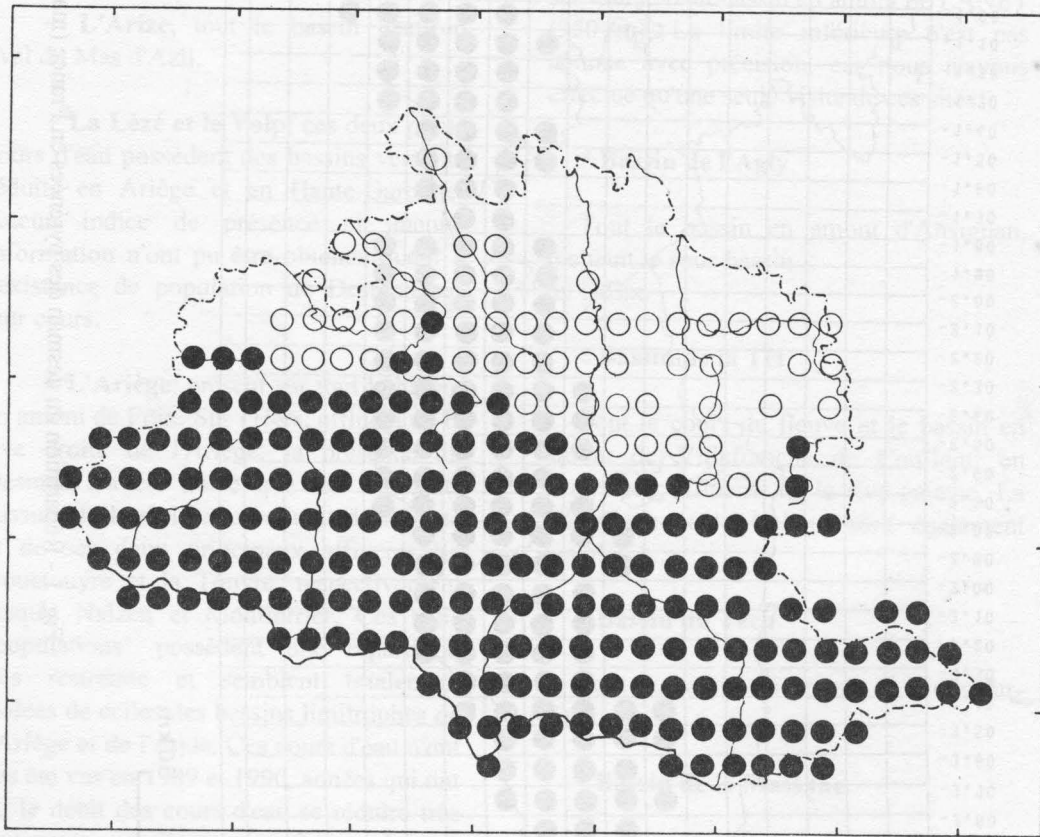


Fig. 2 - Répartition du desman des Pyrénées en Ariège sur la base de mailles de 0,05 x 0,05 grade de côté. Cercles pleins: présence; cercles vides; absences de données.

Pays Basque ou au Béarn. Plus à l'Est, la limite inférieure remonte très vite au-dessus de 250 m.

* **Pyrénées Centrales (Ariège et Haute-Garonne)** : Dans ce secteur aucun des sites de présence connus n'est situé au-dessous de 300 m.

* **Pyrénées Orientales (Aude et Pyrénées-Orientales)** : Dans ce secteur, la fréquence des sites situés au-dessous de 500 m est inférieure à 10 % et tous sont sur le bassin de l'Orbieu sur le versant nord des Corbières.

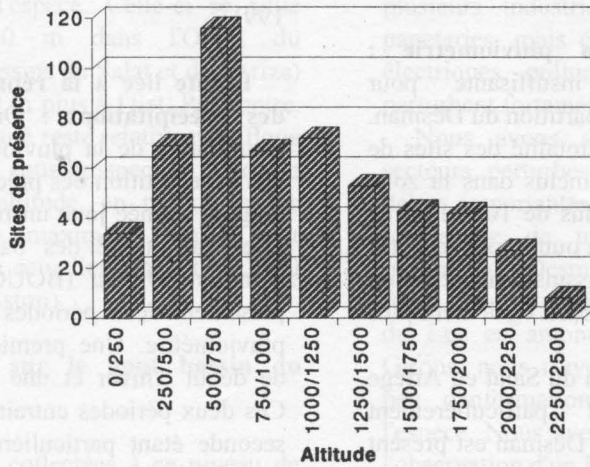


Figure 3 - Répartition altitudinale des sites de présence du desman des Pyrénées en France

Il convient ici de discuter les cas particuliers des observations récentes ou des données anciennes situées très en dehors de ce que l'on pourrait qualifier d'aire de répartition "normale" du Desman telle que nous l'avons définie.

Ces données concernent le bas bassin de l'Adour à Saint Sever et Peyreroade, le Plateau de Lannemezan, et la basse vallée du Tech (Pont du Boulou).

Sur ces secteurs, toutes nos recherches sont restées vaines, mais au cours des enquêtes réalisées lors de la prospection ou bien à partir des observations qui nous ont été transmises oralement ou par courrier, 16 données concernant des animaux morts ou vivants ont été réunies.

Toutes celles qui ont pu être datées avec suffisamment de précision (13) ont été réalisées en période de crue de fonte des neiges (avril et mai).

Bien que nous n'ayons pas pu obtenir beaucoup de précisions sur les conditions

dans lesquelles les observations ci-dessus ont été réalisées, nous sommes enclins à penser que la présence du Desman dans ces secteurs est accidentelle et que les observations concernent des animaux entraînés par les crues. En effet, ces cours d'eau présentent des conditions de milieu fort éloignées de celles qui règnent dans les secteurs régulièrement peuplés.

Il est nécessaire de rester très prudent car dans beaucoup de cas les sites sont situés sur des cours d'eau à section importante où il est très difficile de travailler. En outre, l'effort de prospection sur ces sites est resté plus faible que sur les secteurs inclus dans l'aire de répartition.

En résumé, la limite altitudinale inférieure de répartition du Desman sur le versant nord des Pyrénées augmente très sensiblement d'Ouest en Est.

Ce schéma semble se retrouver également dans la Péninsule Ibérique, où, dans l'extrême Nord-Ouest de l'Espagne

(Gallice) et le Nord du Portugal, l'espèce est présente presque au niveau de la mer. Dans la région centrale et sur le versant sud des Pyrénées, la limite inférieure ne semble être qu'exceptionnellement située au-dessous de 1000 m (BERTRAND, inédit).

Limite liée à la pluviométrie :

L'altitude apparaît insuffisante pour caractériser l'aire de répartition du Desman. Par contre, la presque totalité des sites de présence (96 %) sont inclus dans la zone pyrénéenne recevant plus de 1000 mm de précipitation par an. En outre, tous les sites sont situés sur des bassins versants dont une partie importante reçoit également plus de 1000 mm.

Le cas du bas bassin du Salat en Ariège est sur ce point particulièrement significatif. En effet le Desman est présent en aval de Saint-Girons sur tous les cours d'eau de la rive gauche qui prennent naissance dans le massif très arrosé (>1500 mm) de Lestelas. Sur la rive droite, il est absent de tous les affluents qui prennent naissance dans les contreforts Ouest du massif du Plantaurel et où la pluviométrie est inférieure à 900 mm.

De même, l'Ouest du massif du Plantaurel (Ariège) est drainé par trois rivières principales: le Volp, l'Arize et la Lèze. Le Volp et la Lèze prennent naissance dans le Plantaurel et tout le bassin versant de ces deux cours d'eau reçoit en moyenne moins de 900 mm de précipitations annuelles. Le Desman n'y a jamais été noté. Par contre l'Arize draine tout le versant nord du massif Arget-Arize qui reçoit une pluviométrie moyenne > à 1000 mm par an. Le Desman y est présent au moins jusqu'au Mas d'Azil.

A l'Ouest des Pyrénées, le Desman est présent dès 15 m au dessus du niveau de la mer. Dans cette région, l'isohyète 1000 mm remonte jusque dans le département des Landes.

A l'Est, la limite altitudinale inférieure de la répartition du Desman est exceptionnellement au-dessous de 500 m. Seul l'Orbieu fait exception. Mais sur toute la partie amont du bassin drainé par ce cours d'eau, la pluviométrie dépasse largement 1000 mm (BOUCHALLA, 1991).

Limite liée à la répartition annuelle des précipitations :

Outre l'importance quantitative de la pluviométrie, il semble que la répartition des précipitations tout au long de l'année joue un rôle important. En effet, la totalité des bassins peuplés, y compris l'Orbieu (BOUCHALLA, 1991) présentent deux périodes de maximum de pluviométrie. Une première automnale et de début d'hiver et une seconde en mai. Ces deux périodes entraînent des crues, la seconde étant particulièrement prononcée pour les bassins recevant l'eau de la fonte des neiges.

Les données disponibles tant sur les rythmes d'activités locomotrices du Desman (RICHARD, 1985) que sexuelles (PEYRE, 1961) montrent une similitude des courbes établies avec celles du débit d'un cours d'eau caractéristique des Pyrénées Centrales. Il est certes prématuré de conclure à une étroite adaptation du Desman à la vie dans des cours d'eau présentant des caractéristiques hydrologiques particulières; toutefois, comme nous le soulignons dans notre communication consacrée au régime alimentaire, cette hypothèse doit être examinée très attentivement.

Conclusion

L'aire de répartition du Desman dans les Pyrénées françaises a été étudiée à trois niveaux de perception différents.

Pour les deux premiers, ensemble des Pyrénées et département de l'Ariège, la représentation par mailles fait apparaître

Toutefois, cette valeur est beaucoup plus élevée si l'on exclut les sites des mailles très au nord de l'aire de répartition pour lesquelles 4 sites ont été vus en vain (cas par exemple du bassin de l'Hers).

Pour ce département, les données disponibles permettent dans une large mesure de préciser la limite inférieure de la répartition de l'espèce. Celle-ci se situe autour de 350 m dans l'Ouest du département (bassins du Salat et de l'Arize) et à près de 400 m plus à l'Est. Par contre, la limite supérieure reste relativement floue en raison d'une sous-prospection évidente des secteurs d'altitude, en particulier les lacs. L'altitude maximale atteinte par l'espèce, connue actuellement, est de 2300 m (massif de l'Aston).

Répartition sur le haut bassin du Salat

Les données collectées à ce niveau de perception sont représentées linéairement.

La discontinuité de l'aire de répartition du Desman soulignée notamment par BERTRAND (1987) et RICHARD & BERTRAND (1986) apparaît nettement. Cette discontinuité est spatiale, mais également temporelle (données non figurées).

La superposition sur la même carte des données de présence d'une part et l'implantation des aménagements hydro-électriques d'autre part du haut bassin du Salat montre que dans la grande majorité des secteurs situés en aval de ces aménagements le Desman est, ou absent, ou présent de manière discontinue. Le phénomène est d'autant plus net que les débits prélevés par les équipements sont importants. Cela est particulièrement évident sur tout le cours du Lez en aval de Bonnac et sur le Salat en aval de Kercabanac.

A l'inverse, les secteurs peu ou pas perturbés, comme la Bouigane qui est le seul cours non aménagé, ou bien l'Arac, le

Garbet et l'Alet qui possèdent peu d'aménagements (ou des aménagements de faible importance), le Desman présente une répartition continue.

De même, dans le secteur de Saint-Girons, que ce soit sur le cours du Salat lui-même, ou bien sur la partie aval du Lez, le Desman semble absent. Sur ce secteur plusieurs industries, laiteries et surtout papeteries, mais également usines hydro-électriques, polluent les cours d'eau ou perturbent fortement les débits.

Nous avons souligné que dans les secteurs perturbés par des variations de débits importantes, il était difficile, sinon impossible de mettre en évidence la présence du Desman, par la recherche des fèces. Sur les parties des cours du Salat et du Lez en amont et en aval de Saint-Girons, nous n'avons pu obtenir que très peu d'informations sur la présence de l'espèce. Nous avons pris connaissance de l'observation d'un Desman en plein jour sur le Baup, affluent de la rive droite du Salat dans la ville de Saint-Girons où ce cours d'eau ressemble plus à un égout qu'à une rivière!

Le Desman dans les lacs d'altitude et dans les rivières souterraines

La présence dans les lacs d'altitude a été notée à de très nombreuses reprises et actuellement l'espèce est connue jusqu'à près de 2500 m (Hautes-Pyrénées). Un cas particulier mérite d'être retenu. Il s'agit des lacs d'Ayous en haute vallée d'Ossau. Cet ensemble d'une dizaine de lacs d'altitude (< 2000 m) présente la particularité de n'être pas relié au réseau hydrographique aval par des déversoirs épigés, mais souterrains. La présence du desman sur ces lacs est particulièrement bien documentée du fait de la très forte fréquentation humaine (gardes moniteurs, naturalistes, touristes, etc...) dans ce secteur du Parc National des Pyrénées Occidentales.

L'existence de cette "population" mériterait à bien des points de vue d'être étudiée en détail. En effet, les lacs sont profondément gelés pendant près de six mois par an et il serait particulièrement intéressant de connaître la biologie et l'écologie de ces animaux.

La présence du Desman dans les rivières souterraines a été signalée pour la première par COMBES & SALVAYRE (1964) dans les Pyrénées-Orientales.

Pour notre part, nous avons noté sa présence régulière dans la rivière souterraine d'Aliou (Cazavet, Ariège) ainsi que dans les entrées de plusieurs petites rivières souterraines d'Ariège notamment et de Haute-Garonne.

Bien que très certainement anecdotique, ce biotope particulier du Desman devrait être étudié.

Discussion

L'aire de répartition du Desman sur le versant nord des Pyrénées apparaît au terme de cette étude beaucoup plus importante que ne le laissaient supposer les données antérieures. Que ce soit à l'échelle de l'ensemble du versant nord-pyrénéen, ou du département de l'Ariège, aucune discontinuité de l'aire de répartition n'a été notée. Toutefois, nous avons à plusieurs reprises souligné les limites du type de cartographie adoptée pour une espèce, qui comme le Desman peuple des milieux linéaires.

Par contre, que ce soit dans le cadre de la présente étude, ou d'une étude précédente réalisée en haute vallée d'Ossau (BERTRAND, 1987), une représentation linéaire de la répartition géographique (au niveau des cours d'eau d'un bassin) permet de mettre en évidence une discontinuité spatiale et temporelle quels que soient les paramètres retenus.

L'interprétation de cette discontinuité doit être réalisée avec beaucoup de prudence, car quelles que soient les

précautions prises, une part non négligeable de la variabilité observée trouve son origine dans la variabilité naturelle et/ou artificielle du milieu. Bien qu'il soit difficile sinon impossible de préciser l'importance des biais induits par ce phénomène, il est également évident que cette variabilité spatiale et temporelle des populations est une réalité qui trouve son origine dans les modifications profondes que subissent une partie des cours d'eau nord-pyrénéens. Les observations réalisées sur l'extrême spécialisation du régime alimentaire du Desman (voir par exemple BERTRAND, ce même volume) contribuent largement à étayer cette hypothèse.

La mise en évidence de facteurs limitants des populations de Desman ne peut-être abordée à l'issue de cette étude qu'intuitivement. Dans le cadre de la discussion des données obtenues, deux points importants peuvent être abordés. Le premier concerne l'altitude qui est considérée par plusieurs auteurs (voir RICHARD, 1976 par exemple) comme facteur explicatif de l'aire de répartition actuelle du Desman. Le second propose une approche différente, et suggère l'importance du rôle joué par la pluviométrie moyenne et la répartition annuelle des précipitations.

Limite altitudinale : L'échantillonnage des sites de présence du Desman est encore insuffisant, mais c'est aux altitudes élevées que la sous-représentation reste importante. Seule la limite altitudinale inférieure sera ici discutée. La répartition altitudinale de nos observations est présentée à la figure 3.

* **Pyrénées Occidentales (Hautes-Pyrénées et Pyrénées-Atlantiques) :** Dans ce secteur, plus de 60 % des sites connus sont situés entre 15 m et 750 m N.G.F.; 20 % des sites sont au-dessous de 250 m. Tout les sites situés au-dessous de 100 m sont au

une aire de répartition continue et très homogène.

Par contre, au niveau d'un bassin, comme celui du Salat, mais également celui de la haute vallée d'Ossau (BERTRAND, 1987) une discontinuité spatiale et temporelle apparaît très nettement.

Plus que l'altitude, les caractéristiques hydrologiques des cours d'eau peuplés semblent constituer un ensemble de paramètres fondamentaux pour l'espèce.

Bien que nous manquions de données de références suffisantes, il ne semble pas que globalement, l'aire de répartition du Desman ait sensiblement régressé au cours de ce siècle. Le seul secteur où l'espèce n'a pas été retrouvée, est celui du bas bassin de l'Adour, en particulier la Chalosse située dans le Sud du département des Landes. Toutefois, la présence régulière de l'espèce dans les cours d'eau de ce secteur est discutable et il est possible que les données proviennent essentiellement d'animaux entraînés par les crues de printemps. Par contre, nous l'avons étendue à un sous bassin de l'Aude, celui de l'Orbieu, d'où il n'était pas signalé.

Dans l'état actuel des connaissances, il n'est pas possible de tirer de nos résultats sur la répartition du desman en France, des éléments objectifs sur l'état des populations ; toutefois la fragmentation de la répartition de l'espèce à l'échelle d'un cours d'eau laisse à penser que le desman est une espèce menacée.

Son avenir en France est difficile à envisager. Toutefois, plusieurs points importants qui n'incitent pas au pessimisme méritent d'être soulignés :

- la période des "grands aménagements" hydro - électrique est pratiquement terminée ;

- la prise de conscience récente de l'importance d'une gestion économe, tant sur le plan qualitatif que quantitatif, des ressources en eau a permis à la France de se doter d'outils réglementaires

(redéfinition très à la hausse des débits réservés par exemple) qui s'ils sont mis en oeuvre ne peuvent que contribuer à l'amélioration du milieu de vie du desman.

A l'inverse, l'accroissement de la pression touristique en montagne notamment fait planer de nouvelles inquiétudes ; de même, la gestion des peuplements piscicoles basée sur l'artificialisation de la reproduction ou l'introduction de Salmonidae non indigènes devrait faire l'objet d'études d'impact. Un autre problème, quelque peu inhabituel en Europe de l'Ouest est celui de "l'enforestation" galopante des Pyrénées (+ 100 % en 1/2 siècle en Ariège !) qui succède à la régression de l'agriculture : quelles seront ses conséquences sur l'écologie des cours d'eau peuplés par le desman ?

Remerciements

Bernard Richard m'a permis de découvrir le desman des Pyrénées et m'a communiqué une très grande partie, de son savoir ; Martine Bigan puis Véronique Herrenschmidt du Ministère de l'Environnement, Direction de la Nature et du Paysage, m'ont permis de disposer des moyens matériels nécessaires à la réalisation de cette étude.

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Pyrenean Desman survey of Spain: first results

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From 1991 to 1992 a survey to evaluate the distribution and conservation status of the Pyrenean desman in Spain has been carried out supported by the Instituto Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza of Spain. The first aim of this work was to obtain a suitable low cost procedure to detect desman faeces along the river, but also get a distribution of Desman in Spain.

Faeces as a sign of presence of Desmans

To recognise faeces scats were collected from caught animals in a resting box, seeking and recognizing the faeces on the rivers and testing whether faeces were randomly distributed or were placed relating to catches.

The Minimal stretch length to detect at least one scat in 95% of the cases (with

100 random stretches from every 50 m) was calculated in 600 m.

This method to detect desmans was tested in Spanish areas. All but four of the 29 provinces with desmans records were surveyed, but only in 3 of them (Asturias, La Rioja and Navarra) faeces were found.

To compare abundance of faeces with Desman numbers, densities were calculated trapping four nights on a line using 15 nets 100m apart. The number of animals per Km of river was estimated using the 95% confidence limites by Zipping method when Pearson correlation coefficient was higher than 0.95 (equivalent to standard minimum method for removal catches). In four trapping transects (two in Asturias and two in Navarre) desman densities varies from 2.8±0.2 to 7.3±5.5 animals/Km. The presence of scats was related to successful catches but the number can probably

change with the level of water and availability of stones in the river.

Desman distribution in Spain.

On a record compilation we have obtained 466 records in Spain: 142 from the bibliography, 192 unpublished record (accidental watches, trappings, electric fishing, specimens collected, etc), 132 from a questionnaire to gamekeepers and fishermen.

The Questionnaire was designed for four aquatic small mammals (*Neomys fodiens*, *Galemys pyrenaicus*, *Arvicola sapidus* an *Rattus norvegicus*) to avoid missidentification and distributed in 32 provinces by means of regional and provincial governments.

The ratio desman/all four species was used as an abundance index (116 desman records in 607 answers) in sectors (river basins or subbasins). In the Cantabric cornise, Galicia and Northern Duero more than 20% of questionnaires were positive to Desmans, in the whole of the Ebro basin (including Spanish Pyrenees) positive answers were more than 10% and in the Southern Duero and Northern Tajo Desmans were present in less than 10% of the questionnaires.

100 random snails from every 50 m) was calculated in 600 m.
This method to detect desmans was tested in Spanish areas. All but four of the 29 provinces with desman records were surveyed, but only in 3 of them (Asturias, La Rioja and Navarra) faeces were found.
To compare abundance of faeces with Desman numbers, densities were calculated trapping four nights on a line using 12 nets 100m apart. The number of snails per km of river was estimated using the 95% confidence limits by trapping method when Pearson correlation coefficient was higher than 0.95 (equivalent to standard minimum method for removal catches). In four trapping transects (two in Asturias and two in Navarra) desman densities varied from 2.8 ± 0.2 to 7.1 ± 2 animals/km. The presence of snails was related to successful catches but the number can probably

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The causes of the Iberian Desman distribution: a proposal.

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The Iberian desman (*Galemys pyrenaicus*) are spread in water coursews of Pyrenees and almost the northern half of the Iberian Peninsula.

Until recent times this species was only extensively studied in French Pyrenees being the Iberian range not well know nevertheless constitutes the larger part of Desman distribution.

From this knowledge there was considered that altitude and rainfall were the main environmental constraints in Desman present (RICHARD, 1976 BERTRAND, 1991).

In 1991 and 1992 a survey of Iberian desman was carried out in Spain to get a more detailed information on the distribution, ecological requirements and threats. In this study relative abundance estimations were obtained and environmental abiotic conditions, which are very variable on the whole Spanish distribution range of the Desman, were analyzed trying to find general, not local, explanations of Desman distribution.

Proposals.

Classical proposals: altitude and rainfall as limits.

- **Altitude** has some relation with the presence, but the lowest limit varies between basins (from 0 to 700 m). Frequencies of altitudinal distribution of Desman records do not differ significantly from river altitude distribution ($X^2=14,98$; $FD=8$; $p>0.05$).

- There are more desmans where the rainfall is higher, ($r=0.8512$ $p<0.05$).

The rain affects Desman populations through water flow, but this is not the only conditioning factor.

New proposals: Slope and water availability and flow.

- **Slope.** Is higher in mountain areas, but is not strictly dependent on altitude. Desman frequencies differed significantly from the distribution of available river slopes ($X^2=26.03$; $FD=13$; $p<0.02$) and so there was a differential use of slopes by the Desman.

- **Flow regularity and river drying:** Desman needs a regular flow and circulating water all the year round ($r_s=0,9553$; $p<<0,01$) and low Annual Irregularity Coefficient ($r_s=0,9178$; $p<<0,01$). This depends on: pluvial régime and seasonal rainfall distribution, nival régime which allow a slow water release even in summer and others variables, as Karstic regulations.

Hypothesis on the limits for Desman presence.

River-bed slope conditions desman floating ability and 02].

Desman exploit the water current to keep close to the river bed Low speed (0-10 m/Km slope) requires high effort for diving and so medium and high speed (10-130 m/Km slope demands low effort for diving and go upstream, but very high speed imposes to desman a high effort to go upstream.

Size of prey and energy trade off.

The main energetical cost to feed is employed to detect preys, not to take them. Desmans need to get out of the water for eating their preys and larger preys involve lower energy cost for diving-exploring-eating process than smaller ones per weight unit of ingested biomass.

Minimal viable population and available rivers.

In rivers with oceanic regime, every stream or tributary has enough water to guarantee a recolonization after a local extinction. In mediterranean rivers, only main courses are permanent and the possibility of a new recolonization is lower.

Aknowledgements.

This communication was carried out in a research program to study the Status of the Iberian Desman in Spain supported by the Instituto Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza.

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There are more desmans where the rainfall is higher ($r=0.8212$; $p=0.05$). The rain affects Desman populations through water flow, but this is not the only conditioning factor.

New proposals: shape and water availability and flow

Slope is higher in mountain areas, but is not strictly dependent on altitude. Desman frequencies differed significantly from the distribution of available river slopes ($\chi^2=56.03$; $FD=15$; $p=0.05$) and so there was a differential use of slopes by the Desman.

Flow regularity and river drying: Desman needs a regular flow and circulating water all the year round. Irregularity Coefficient ($r=0.9178$; $p<0.01$). This depends on pluvial regime and seasonal rainfall distribution, river regime which allow a slow water release even in summer and other variables as Kastic regulations.

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Proposals.

Classical proposals: altitude and rainfall as limits.



Distribution and management of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in the Basque Country

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Summary: This study reports data on the geographic distribution of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in the Basque Country and the habitats occupied are also considered. A total of 45 new sites are reported with the UTM grid of 10x10 km to which they belong. The geographical and habitat data provide a preliminary background for assessing the necessary environmental conditions for the presence of the species and suggest the potential distribution area in the zone. In the Basque Country, *Galemys pyrenaicus* is found at the source of rivers spreading to the transition zone between the salmonicola and ciprinicola sectors. It can be considered a well represented species, without immediate risk of becoming endangered in the upper parts of the rivers. In the middle upper parts, more intensive human activity can negatively influence its continuity.

Galemys pyrenaicus is distributed over two large areas. The Pyrenees, from Port Bou (river Tech) to the Biarritz area (RICHARD, 1976) on the French side, and from Esterrí d'Aneu and Carege (Pallars Sobirà), located at the end of the 80s by J. Ruiz and J. Eamunt, to East Guipuzcoa on the Spanish side (CASTIEN & MENDIOLA, 1984). In the rest of the Iberian Peninsula it is found in the Cantabrian mountains, Galicia, North Portugal and the rivers of the Gredos and Guadarrama mountain ranges.

Bibliographic references indicating the presence of the species in the Basque country are as follow: RICHARD

(1976,1984) on French side, and CASTIEN & MENDIOLA (1984), CASTIEN (1984) and VERICAD (1970) on the Spanish side. The aim of this study is to provide data on the distribution of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in the Basque country as a whole and on the habitats it frequents. Comments are also made on its relative versatility in the studied zone.

Description of the area

The study area is limited to the Basque country. The rivers on the French and Spanish sides have differential features which affect the distribution of the

species.

The Atlantic rivers are short (the longest, the Bidorre is about 80 km long) and their courses are similar from source to mouth. Their gradients are steep with the upper reaches sometimes having an incline of up to 25%. Due to rainfall patterns their flow is not abundant but is fairly constant. There is a period of low water in Summer and maximum flow in Autumn-Winter.

The Mediterranean rivers have a simple fluvial structure than the Atlantic ones, all of them flowing directly or indirectly into the Ebro.

There are notable differences between these and that Atlantic rivers. They are longer and their valleys are wider and longer too. They have three very different zones (the headwaters, middle and lower courses). Flow is high, with a severe Summer low water and spates in Spring and Autumn.

Material and Techniques

The material concerning the Spanish side proceeds from data compiled by the authors and other collaborators since 1983 and references to VERICAD (1970). As far as the French side is concerned data is drawn from over a longer period of time compiled by RICHARD (1976, 1984) and J. CASAUBON. Data on water quality is drawn from ACUAPLAN S.A. (1987) study.

Distribution

The distribution of *Galemys pyrenaicus* referred to in this study concerns its presence on both the French and Spanish sides of the Basque Country (fig. 1).

Characteristics of the habitat

The authors who have carried out the most detailed studies of the habitat of *Galemys pyrenaicus* are PUISSEGUR (1935), PEYRE (1956), RICHARD (1976) and QUEIROZ (1991). PUISSEGUR (1935) and RICHARD (1976) consider that the habitat of *Galemys pyrenaicus* coincides with that of the trout, on an opinion shared by PEYRE (1956).

The altitude range in which the species has been found varies from 300-1200 m (PEYRE, 1956) and 400-2200 m (RICHARD, 1984). In this study zone the lowest altitude at which the species has been found is in the "Regata de Endara" (Navarra), (CASTIEN & MENDIOLA, 1984), at 50 m above sea level.

General characteristics of the habitat

The majority of observations referred to in the present study are from mountain streams less than 5 m wide (28 references, 65%). 30% of the observations (13) are from rivers with beds between 5 and 10 m wide and the last 5% (2 references) are from rivers with beds wider than 10 m. 96% of the observations correspond to typical habitats according to the mentioned authors: clean waters, inclines above 70/100 in the majority of cases and 15/100 in some, shallow waters in which rapids alternate with small pools and stony bottoms with pebbles of different diameters which have no significant macroscopic vegetation. The banks are stony and have tree roots (*Alnus glutinosa*). The fish community is formed by *Salmo trutta fario* and *Phoxinus phoxinus* on nearly all sites as well as *Noemacheilus barbatulus* in some.

The more meridional sites of *Galemys pyrenaicus* were found to have been Oricain (river Ulzama) and Zuriain (river Arga).

In both cases river beds were wider than 10 m and flow was between 300-800 l/sec in Summer. As far as morphodynamics are concerned the rivers alternate rapid stretches with slower ones with a luminary flow and there are even quite deep pools. The average incline is around 4 o/oo.

Discussion

With the continued presence of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in the river Ulzama since 1985 confirmed by recent sightings, it can be deduced that its requirements as far as water quality is concerned are not as demanding as information published up to now would suggest.

In Oricain riverside vegetation is dominated by aldergroves accompanied by abundant willow (*S. fragilis* and *S. alba*). There is, too, a large quantity of emergent vegetation consisting mainly of *Scirpus lacustris* and *Sparganium erectum*. An abundant quantity of submerged vegetation consisting mainly of *Groenlandia densus* and plentiful chlorophyceae (*Cladophora sp.* and *Spirogyra sp.*). The majority of fish are *Barbus bocagei* and *Chondrostoma toxostoma* although *Salmo trutta fario* still exists in small proportions. The Physiochemical analysis carried out during summer low waters (ACUAPLAN, 1987) shows the consequence of organic waste in the stretch (dissolved oxygen = 9.4mg/l, DBO₅ = 3.37 mg/l, NO₃ 0.36 mg/l).

In Zuriain the banks are also occupied by aldergroves accompanied by willow (*Salix purpurea*, *S. elegans* and *S. atrocinera*). There are also abundant nucleus of submerged vegetation (*Myrophilum verticillatum* and Chlorophyceae, *Cladophora sp.* and *Spirogyra sp.*). The fish population consists of *Salmo trutta fario*, *Phoxinus phoxinus* and *Chondrostoma toxostoma*. Some physiochemical parameters also

indicate a certain influence of organic waste in these stretches (ACUAPLAN, 1978). (dissolved oxygen = 8.3-10.4 mg/l, DBO₅ = 1.0-1.4 mg/l, NO₃ 0.8-3.5 mg/l).

In both stretches, at certain times of the annual cycle, water quality doesn't attain levels stipulated by European Community legislation for salmonicolas rivers, due to values reached in certain parameters (Arga: OD, DBO₅, NO₂. Ulzama: NO₂) (ACUAPLAN, 1978). The situation is reflected in the absence of the most demanding macroinvertebrates, which, however, are present in higher stretches of the river (Ephemerellidae or Perlidae). In the stretches studied more tolerant taxons (*Physa sp.*, *Ancylus sp.*, *Theodoxus sp.*, *Lymnaea sp.*, Chironomidae and Simuliidae) dominate, all of them being very plentiful. The trichoptera are represented basically by Limnephilidae, Rhyacophilidae and Trichoptera without carcass. These features make these stretches typical of the middle reaches of rivers, though not without a certain amount of organic pollution.

Likewise the presence of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in the Regata de Endara at 50 m above sea level (CASTIEN & MENDIOLA, 1984) also indicates a wider range in altitude than that indicated in the bibliography.

The data obtained inclines one to consider the species to be common on the upper reaches of river. In these areas, with the exception of punctual actions, human interference is minimal. On the other hand the middle-upper reaches are much more vulnerable to artificial alterations to river beds and varied affluent. Reasonably the lower limit of distribution of *Galemys pyrenaicus* must be considered to be these stretches.

This makes it clear, at least in the study area, that the basic problem for the survival of species is not in the

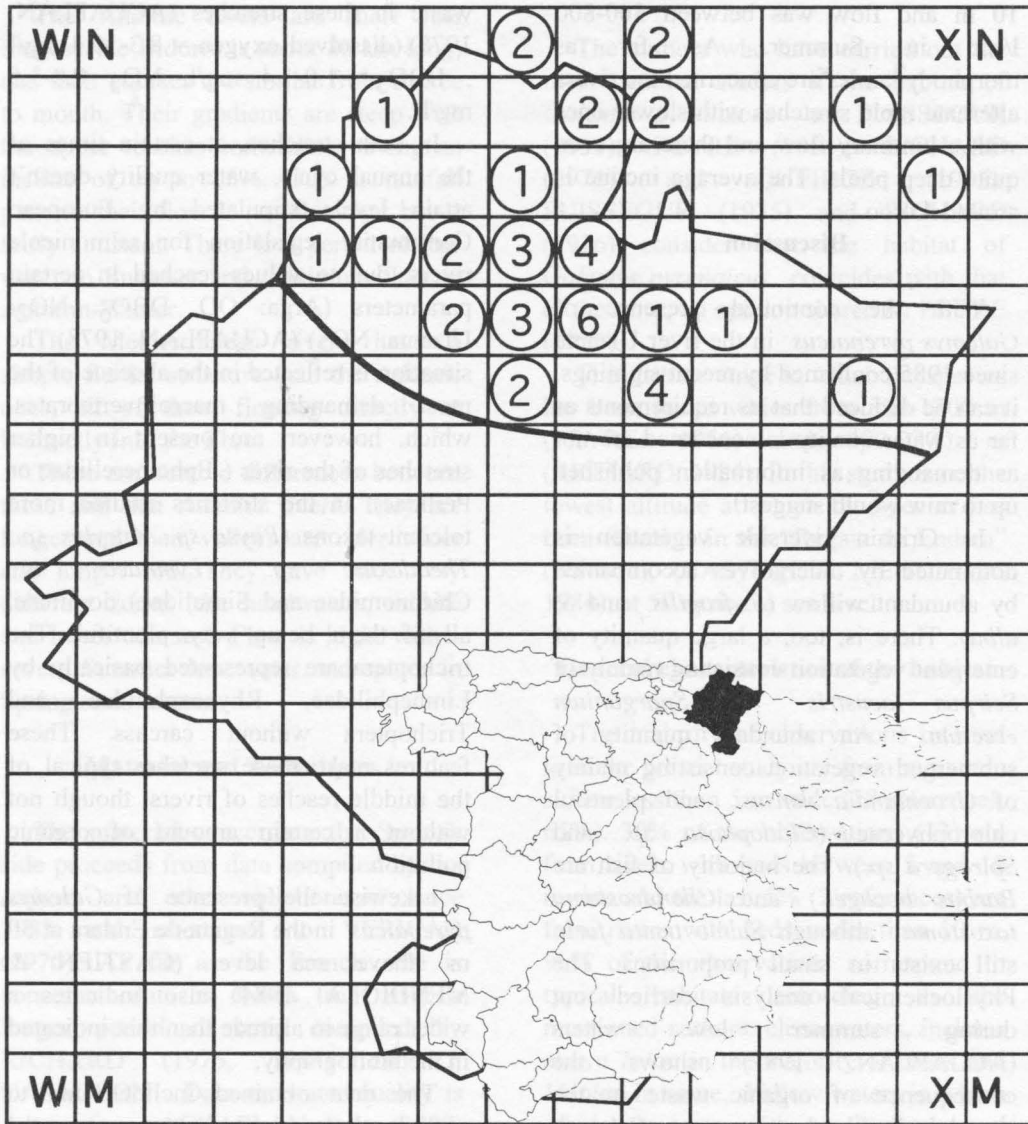


Fig.1 - Localities in which *Galemys pyrenaicus* was found. The number of localities for squares is shown into the circles. The thick lines indicate the Southern potential limit to the area considered for the species.

headwaters of the river but in the upper-middle reaches.

In the opinion of the authors, a great effort should be made to search for this species in the upper-middle reaches of rivers which are inhabited by this species. It is also important to carry out studies to determine the real toleration of *Galemys pyrenaicus* to different polluting agents and alterations in environment.

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Habitat of the Pyrenean desman: assessment of running water quality. Monitoring pollution

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It is not difficult to speak about the habitat of the desman and the wonderful landscape that surrounds it. Many authors have already done it. However this landscape is changing and as so is the life of Pyrenean desman. In 1986 WALTER PODUSCHKA & BERNARD RICHARD, co-authors of a paper titled "The Pyrenean desman - an endangered insectivore" called our attention to the problem concerning the extreme vulnerability of this mammal to the disturbance of its habitat. *Galemys pyrenaicus* was once found in almost all fast flowing, well oxygenated streams. It is now confined to small, water courses in mountains where it can easily find its prey". But even these water courses are changing day after day. Industry along the rivers, increases pollution and changes ecotone; construction of dams and reservoirs, even in places where this animal was supposed to be safed, like protected areas, is endangering this species, whose first records remount to the Oligocene and Miocene in Europe, namely in the

Oligocene of Germany, where signs of a desman-like insectivore - "The Dimyloides - have occurred" (SAVAGE, 1986).

Both species of desman discussed here during these two days are endangered: the russian desman because of overhunting for its fur, the Pyrenean desman specially from habitat destruction, like damming of mountain streams. Desmans obtain nearly all their food from water, particularly aquatic insects such as stone-fly and caddis-fly larvae, but as we said before these streams are being deteriorated. In 1989 we began a study in north-eastern Portugal, to know better some aspects of the ecology of desman, namely food regimen, population dynamics, density, composition of the riparian vegetation of the streams, possible predators and biological quality of the waters.

However with the negative evolution of the landscape in Portugal as well as the world environmental changes, we became more interested in the use of monitoring, to detect incipient and

usually undesirable changes. In our opinion this must be one of the areas of greatest interest for ecologists and conservationists.

If we consider only the other aspects, such as the ones related with the general biology of the species, overlooking the continuous assessment of environmental variables, we can face the danger of

Such monitoring should serve to detect the effectiveness of any management carried out to protect or enhance any of the special features, biotopes or species; be repeatable on whatever time interval is appropriate; the sample points must pick up changes in short period of time; must be simple to carry out and not too time consuming. Unfortunately it is difficult to satisfy all these criteria but they make a useful list of points to be considered when preparing a monitoring programme. Having identified our objectives as primarily the monitoring of biotopes and species of international importance, like *Galemys pyrenaicus*, and recognising that we are dealing essentially with aquatic systems, we decided to give priority to the water quality of the habitats, without forgetting the surrounding ecosystem, specially the vegetation of the banks.

Our monitoring programme intends to include the following aspects:

- Identification of arboreal stratum
- Identification of aquatic invertebrates
- Identification of zooplankton
- pH of the water
- Water current
- Dissolved oxygen
- Phosphorus concentration

We began our study in the "Parque Natural de Montezinho" located in northeastern of Portugal and chose 3 stations where specimens of *Galemys pyrenaicus* were captured in 1988.

losing particularly sensible species, like the desman, eventually forever. If a correct monitoring program can be applied including periodical analysis of several ecological and biological parameters of the threatened species then we can provide assurance in order the standards were being maintained.

Unfortunately we had to give up of collecting data from one of this points because a dam was constructed there and the habitat changed completely. So we only considered 2 stations.

The monitoring program of the desman's habitat and bordering ecotones started in eighty nine and includes:

1 - identification of the arboreal components of the vegetation along the banks.

The arboreal stratum has not changed since eighty nine (with the exception of station 3 where the vegetation was completely destroyed, because of the referred dam).

Station 1: The main species found in station 1 were:

- Common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) - prevailing
- Sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) - not very abundant
- White poplar (*Populus alba*) - not very abundant
- Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*) - rare
- Willow (*Salix* sp.) - rare

Station 2

- Common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) - very abundant
- White poplar (*Populus alba*) - very abundant
- Common walnut (*Juglans regia*) - not very abundant
- Willow (*Salix* sp.) - rare

In Station 3, before the destruction of habitat took place, the main arboreal species were:

Common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) - prevailing

Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*) - rare

2 - analysis of the running water quality through the study of macro-invertebrates communities

We used the community of benthic macro-invertebrates (insects in larval and nymphal stages, crustaceans, mollusks and annelids) for monitoring the water quality because of the following reasons:

- its sampling and identification is easy, what does not happen with algae, bacteria and protozoa.
- they have long phases of aquatic life showing short periods of pollutants action.
- they have short dispersal movements
- they are preys of great diversity, presenting several trophic levels.

The samples were collected on the substratum of lotic waters where pebbles predominate, using hand nets.

Station 1 (fig.1)

Order Heteroptera., Family Gerridae, genus *Gerris*

Order Plecoptera, Family Perlidae, several species of genus *Perla*

Order Trichoptera, Family Hydropsychidae, genus *Hydropsyche*

Class Oligochaeta, genus *Octolasion*

Class Diptera, Family Tipulidae, genus *Tipula*

Station 2 (fig.2)

Order Diptera, Family Tipulidae, genus *Tipula*

Order Odonata, Family Gomphidae, Genus *Gomphus*

Order Odonata Family Calopterygidae, Genus *Agrion (=Calopteryx)*

Order Plecoptera, Family Perlidae, several species of genus *Perla*

Class Oligochaeta, genus *Octolasion*

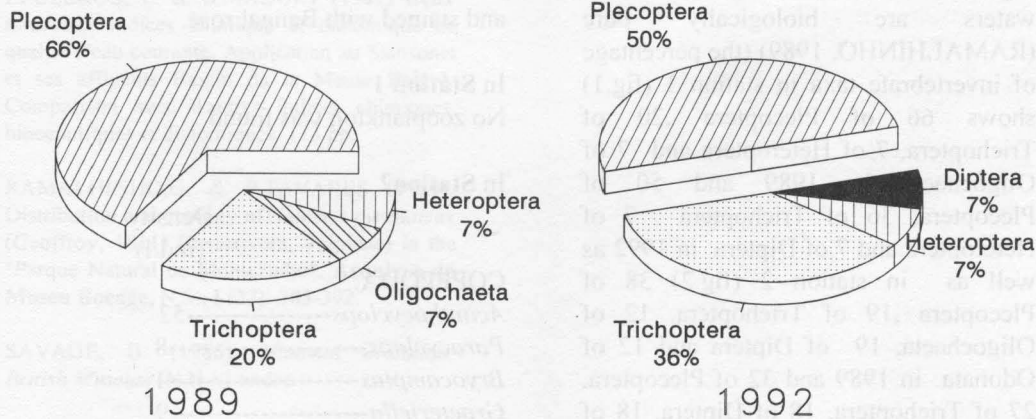


Fig.1 - Percentage of the Invertebrata Taxa found in station 1

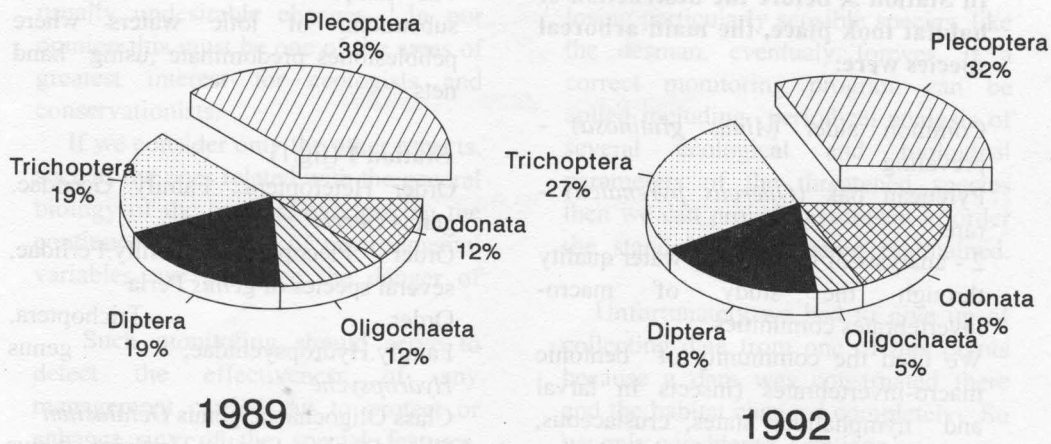


Fig. 2 - Percentage of the Invertebrata Taxa found in station 2

The Method of the Biotic Belgian Index (BBI de PAUW & VANHOOREN, 1983) was used in order to evaluate the running water quality. This biotic index is evaluated with two variables (diversity and degree of tolerance of taxa to the water pollution (FONTOURA, 1985, LECLERCQ & MAQUET, 1987). The biotic index of waters in station 1 and station 2 show high values (10-9) indicating that the waters are biologically pure (RAMALHINHO, 1989) (the percentage of invertebrate taxa in station 1 (fig.1) shows 66 of Plecoptera, 20 of Trichoptera, 7 of Heteroptera and 7 of Oligochaeta in 1989 and 50 of Plecoptera, 36 of Trichoptera, 7 of Heteroptera and 7 of Diptera in 1992 as well as in station 2 (fig.2) 38 of Plecoptera, 19 of Trichoptera, 12 of Oligochaeta, 19 of Diptera and 12 of Odonata in 1989 and 32 of Plecoptera, 27 of Trichoptera, 18 of Diptera, 18 of Odonata and 5 of Oligochaeta in 1992.

However and for the first time in the monitoring programme, in 1992, although the biotic index results, just like the precedent years between 10-9, reveals that percentages of Diptera are

higher and Plecoptera are lower in station 1. We are studying in this moment these results: we wonder if they are already a consequence of the construction of the upstream dam.

Finally, as to the zooplankton identification -3 - We can only report our first steps, made in 1992.

For zooplankton identification and enumeration, water was filtered (75mm) and zooplankton fixed in formol solution and stained with Bengal rose.

In Station 1

No zooplankton was found

In Station 2

Density
(ind/l)

COPEPODA:

<i>Acanthocyclops</i> -----	52
<i>Paracyclops</i> -----	8
<i>Bryocamptus</i> -----	4
<i>Graeteriella</i> -----	9
juveniles-----	15

CLADOCERA:

<i>Alona</i> -----	3
<i>Chydorus</i> -----	4

None of this groups is considered a biological indicator. The density being so small that not allow conclusions. However we can say that this low density is characteristic of samples of water from fast flowing streams.

In a next future other monitoring parameters will be included :

- 5 - pH of the water
- 6 - Water current
- 7- Dissolved oxygen
- 8 - Phosphorus concentration
- 9 - Chlorophyll determination

With the determination of chlorophylla, phosphorus concentration as well as the concentration of the dissolved oxygen in water and pH we can measure the trophic level of the running water.

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The small hydroplants: predicted impacts on the Pyrenean desman populations (*Galemys pyrenaicus*, Geoffroy)

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Summary: Legislation concerning the exploitation of hydroelectric energy by the private sector is causing a large increase in the number of small hydroplants in Portugal. Since 1988, about 900 requests were presented to obtain the necessary licences. Most of them are in watersheds in the North and Center of the country. Small streams and fast running rivers can be significantly transformed by these projects. An important overlap between requested sites and distribution area of pyrenean desman is recorded.

We predict a number of direct and indirect negative impacts on the species during construction and exploitation. These include changes in patterns of instream flow, solid transport, substratum composition, the impoverishment of the benthic organisms on which this species feeds and the formation of physical barriers reducing gene flow and dispersion ability. This effects have unpredictable consequences for the social structure and dynamic of the local populations.

We suggest some mitigation measures.

Introduction

Legislation concerning the exploitation of hydroelectric energy by the private sector is causing a large increase in the number of small hydroplants in Portugal. Since 1988, about 900 requests were presented to obtain the necessary licences.

Most of them are in watersheds of the North and Center of the country. Small streams and fast running rivers can be significantly transformed by these projects. An important overlap between requested sites and distribution area of the pyrenean desman is recorded.

It is well known that the installation of hydroplants causes a number of

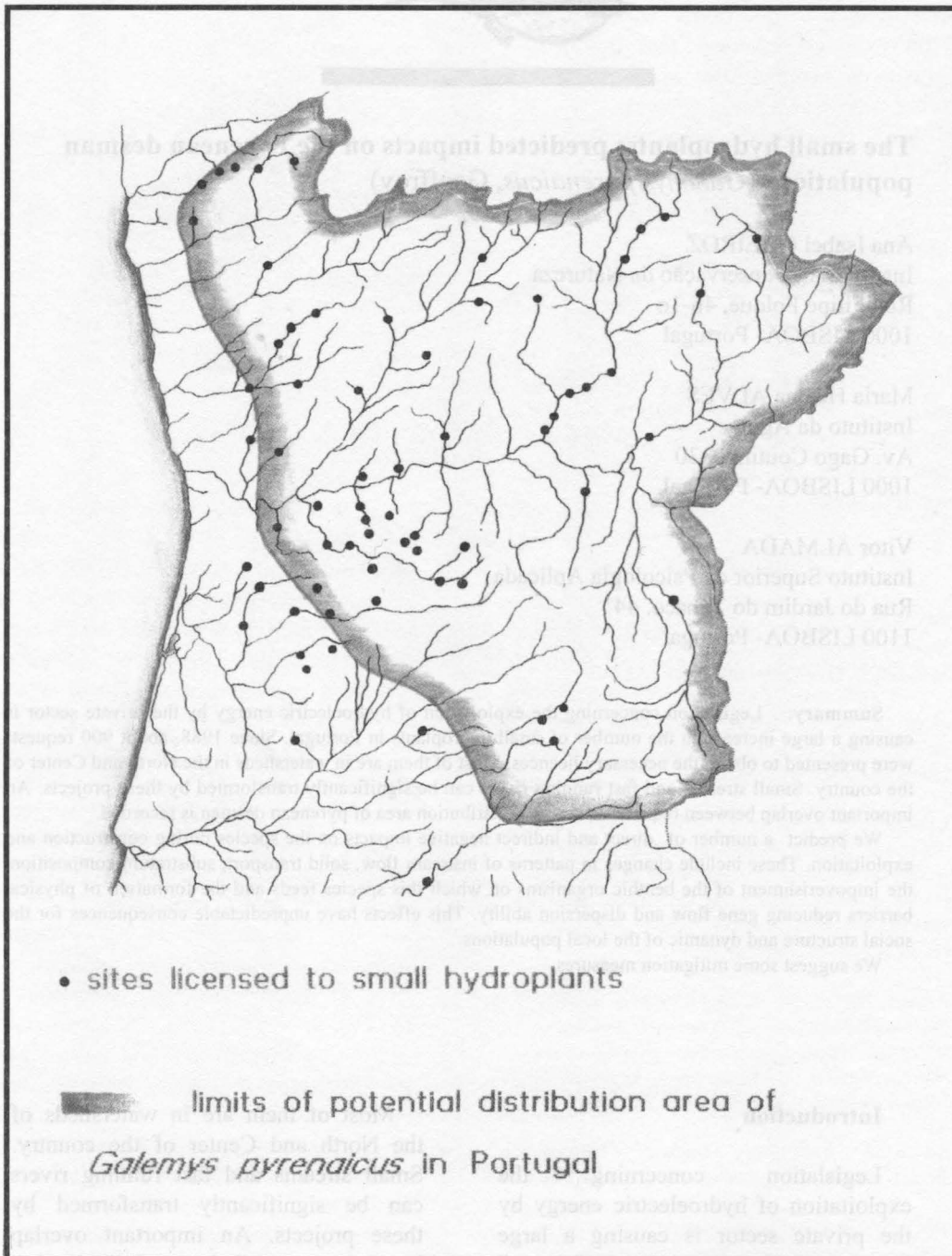


Fig. 1 - Distribution area of the Pyrenean Desman and locations of requested sites for hydro plants, until 1991 (ESPÍRITO SANTO, M.J. et al, 1991)

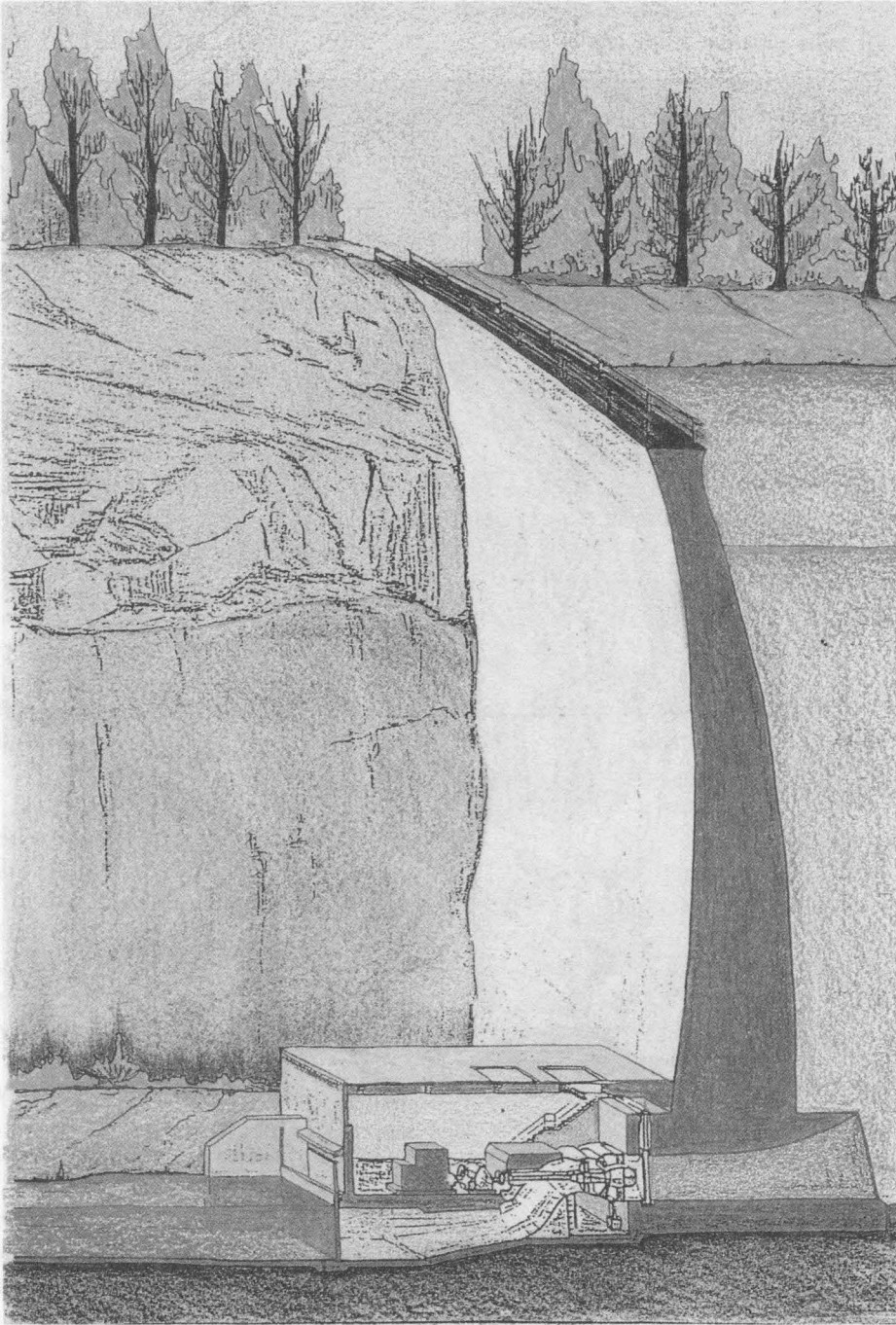


Fig. 2 - Hydro plant with the generator placed at the base of the dam

The projects for hydroplant building are heavily concentrated in the North and Center of the country, consisting of 100 projects with a total capacity of 10,000 MW. The projects are concentrated in the North and Center of the country, consisting of 100 projects with a total capacity of 10,000 MW. The projects are concentrated in the North and Center of the country, consisting of 100 projects with a total capacity of 10,000 MW.

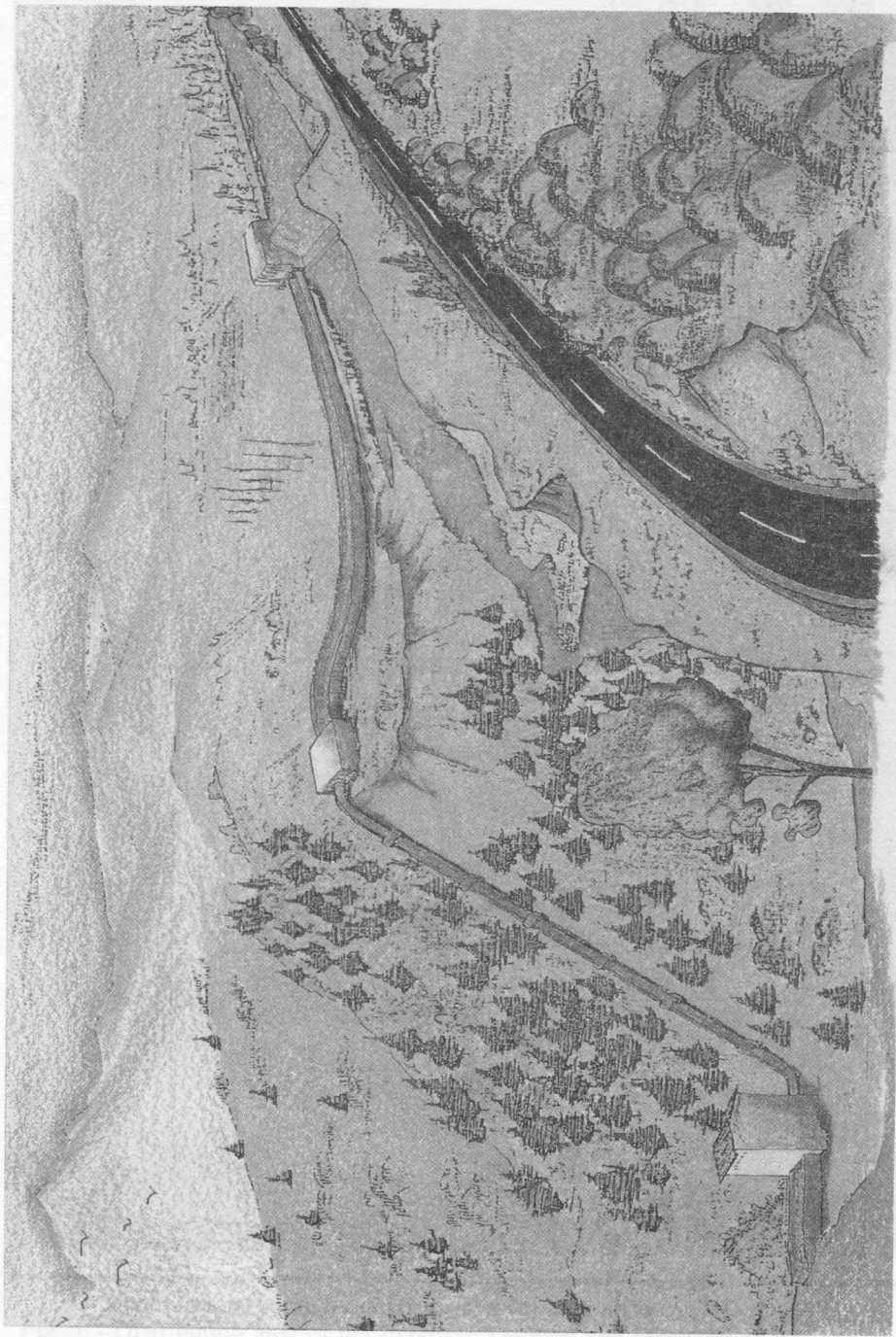


Fig. 3 - Hydro plant where a large part of the river flow is driven to a channel

physical and biotic modifications on the streams and rivers where they are implanted (TELHADO et al, 1989; ALVES, 1991) during both construction and exploitation phases. This information, together with available data on the life history and behaviour of the pyrenean desman, leads to several predictions concerning the effects of a rapid increase of the number of hydroplants on the *Galemys* populations.

In this paper we discuss the probable threats that these intensive environmental changes may cause. Our aim is to define mitigation measures that should be taken into account in designing, and managing hydroplants, in order to minimize the risk of a massive population destruction.

Overlap between distribution area of *Galemys pyrenaicus* and requested sites for small hydroplants installation

In fig.1, we present the potential distribution area of the pyrenean desman and the locations of requested sites for small hydroelectric schemes, until December 1991.

Data on potential distribution area of *Galemys pyrenaicus* are based on a survey of the ecological literature about the species (RICHARD, 1986; PALMEIRIM & HOFFMANN, 1983; PODUSCHKA, W. & B. RICHARD, 1986), an inventory of the watersheds that fulfilled the ecological requirements of the species and the available information on the occurrence of the species in Portugal (QUEIROZ, 1989; QUEIROZ, 1991; RAMALHINHO & TAVARES, 1989)

The analysis of Fig.1 clearly shows that the projects for hydroplant building are heavily concentrated in the North and Center of the country, coinciding

with the potential distribution area of the pyrenean desman.

Some of the most suitable sites for small hydroplants are streams with steep profiles that keep a flow even in the summer. Watersheds with these characteristics are just those where *Galemys* is found. Thus, the overlap shown in Fig.1 is not merely geographical but also ecological. If we consider that from this potential habitat for desman only a fraction is currently known to be inhabited by this species we conclude that the situation is even more serious than Fig.1 would suggest.

Predicted impacts of hydroplants on pyrenean desman habitat

There are basically two types of small hydroplants, illustrated in Fig.2 and 3.

The first type is constructed in rivers that carry large water volumes and involve the formation of a small artificial lake upstream of the dam. The generation plant is placed at the base of the dam.

On the second type, a large part of the river flow is deviated to a channel, leaving a section of the river without water or with a reduced flow. The water rejoins the river downstream of the generation plant.

Thus, in predicting the impact of a hydroplant three river sections must be considered: upstream of the dam, between the deviation and the release and downstream of the release. Only in the second type of hydroplant the area between deviation and release exists.

Upstream of the dam the building of a small hydroplant involves the formation of an artificial lake. With the rise of water level the primitive stream banks are submerged and burrows used by desman as shelter and nest sites cease to be available. It is also probable

that the new shore line does not present replacement shelters and nest sites unless they are artificially provided. The formation of the lake also causes a sharp decrease in water velocity and an increase in water depth. These modifications tend to drastically affect substratum composition, promoting the accumulation of fine sediments and reduce oxygen concentrations near the bottom.

These changes typically impoverish both the abundance and the diversity of the benthic invertebrate fauna upon which desmans rely for food (SANTAMARINA & GUITIAN, 1989 ; BERTRAND, 1991). Thus, the new muddy and poorly oxygenated substratum may cease to provide adequate food supplies for the desman. It is also unknown if the sensory mechanisms of desmans allow them to search and detect prey in these conditions.

When feeding in a gravel bottom the desman "anchors" itself with the claws of the hindpaws, while the proboscis scans the substratum for food.

It seems unlikely that such prey catching behaviour can be operated efficiently in soft substratum.

This problem may be even more serious due to the following reasons:

1. The animals tend to float and unless they are able to anchored in the bottom they must perform continuous swimming movements with the hindpaws (QUEIROZ & ALMADA, 1991) to keep near the substratum. Thus, even if they can get some food in these muddy conditions, the net energy obtained may be insufficient to offset the costs of diving and swimming;

2. The increase in water depth caused by the formation of the lake means that the animal must swim longer distances and will take more time to reach the bottom. This situation will further

increase the energetic cost of feeding and is likely to reduce the time available in each dive for effective prey catching.

The potential problems mentioned in the previous section apply to the area upstream of the dam. However, the river bed is also affected downstream the dam. Between the points of deviation and release, the water flow is reduced and may affect the invertebrate fauna.

Downstream of the dam a different set of problems has to be dealt with.

Near the point where the water is returned to the river the substrate is strongly washed out of benthic organisms, water turbidity tends to increase, while fine sediments tend to accumulate further downstream. In these conditions the water flow becomes subject to sudden fluctuations that the animals will not able to track.

Thus, this river section downstream of the dam is also an area of unstable conditions and lowered productivity.

In the case of large dams with regular discharges the impoverishment of the river fauna may extended to 3 Km downstream of the dam (BOON, 1988).

In conclusion, it is predicted that the construction of a small hydroplant is likely to affect the desman populations both upstream and downstream of the dam, both in terms of destruction of shelters and nest sites and in terms of food availability and efficiency of prey catching by the desman.

Apart from these treats, there are also reasons to suppose that this type of habitat modifications may exert a direct negative impact in the desman populations.

Predicted impacts of hydroplants on pyrenean desman populations

The available data on social behaviour indicates that the adults are solitary in nature and aggressive to

conspecific (STONE, 1987 ; RICHARD, 1986) In such way the population density is always very low.

RICHARD (op. cit.) found that when two individuals are confined in a restricted space very serious aggression acts results and one of them being usually badly wounded. Based on radio-tracking studies STONE (1987) found that in a section of about 500 m of river only a single pair can occur. Male and female use separate nests and their patterns of movement both in time and space tend to minimize the possibility of direct contact. Thus the available data indicate that in this species agonistic behaviour causes a wide spacing of individuals and it is likely that juveniles are forced out of their parents home-range.

The building of an hydroplant may affect desman populations in several ways:

1. The habitat will be fragmented in small units between which the animals are unable to move, unless special measures are taken to ensure that the animals can effectively cross the obstacles, resulting from the construction and river modifications. The fragmentation of a population in very small units is usually detrimental due to the increase of inbreeding with the depression in variability and fertility that commonly accompanies it. On a larger time scale the reduction of genetic diversity may affect the potential of the population to adapt to new conditions. This is probably much more serious for populations like those of the desman in which is low population density even in unchanged conditions.

2. Apart from the negative consequences of inbreeding, the sub-populations in a river system cut by several barriers may become so small in size that they may be at high risk of

local extinction. It is important to remember that fertility in this species is low.

PEYRE (1961) found that the litters are of three to four young at best and the females produce only one litter a year. The same author PEYRE (1968) found that in a pyrenean population of 72% of multiparous females have ovarian cysts that can be an important limiting factor to the reproductive success of this species.

3. Small insectivores are highly susceptible to stress that can inhibit reproduction. When in a confined river section there are serious risks of aggression and stress due to the inability of juveniles to move out of the parental home-range. This may further decrease the reproductive output of the population and increase mortality.

4. The formation of barriers that the animals are unable to cross means that local extinctions are not compensated by immigration from the areas where the population density is high.

Taken together, the facts reviewed above indicate that desman populations may be seriously affected by habitat fragmentation and great care must be taken to avoid it.

Mitigation measures

The relative importance of the different potential threats listed in this paper needs to be assessed with adequate empirical data. It is important to remark, however, that biological studies of this species have a slow progress. We think that it is not admissible to allow major habitat disruption with the argument that empirical data are not yet available to support the resolution of all the potential problems that were outlined above.

A number of cautionary measures should be taken in order to anticipate the probable detrimental effects for the desman caused by the increase of small hydroelectric schemes.

We propose the following global measures:

1. Establishment of undisturbed rivers that should be sanctuaries for the species.

2. Management of the river basins ensuring that the localization of hydroplants will minimize the fragmentation of the populations in order to keep viable populations.

3. Ensuring a minimum flow in the stream to allow the maintenance of the natural levels of abundance and diversity of invertebrates.

4. Development of biological studies in order to determine minimum viable population size.

In addition, the following specific measures should be considered:

1. Development of devices, including the eventual adaptation in fishways, in order to allow desman movements across the dams.

2. Adaptation of the banks to ensure the availability of shelters and nest sites.

a) Recuperation of affected river banks

b) Revegetation of new banks of the reservoirs

c) Placement of rock and artificial burrows in the new banks of the reservoirs.

The hydroplant are not the only cause of disruption of desman habitat. Pollution, deforestation of river banks, and all kinds of stream modifications, contribute to threaten *Galemys* populations. In this way, the set of measures proposed to minimize the impact of hydroplants must be integrated in a broader framework of a global policy of river conservation.

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everywhere and produce methods for its breeding in captivity.

In 1970 started our project to release desmans in different parts of their former area and out of it. A total of 10 thousands animals were released. Some new populations of desman appeared, but its total number did not increase because of bad protection and lack of management. In 1977 desman hunting with special permissions was allowed. Although it was limited, the number of desman continued to decrease. In 1987 hunting was banned again.

During the last 25 years the number of desman was reduced almost twice.

Now there are approximately 40 thousands animals. The main reason of desman decreasing are human activities such as drain, hydroelectric dams, wood

cutting, fishing with nets, grazing of cattle and so on.

Now desman populations exist in basins of Volga river (23 thousands animals), Dan river (10 to 12 thousands), Dniester (2 or 3 thousands), Ural river (2 thousands) Uj and Tegal rivers 2 or 2,5 thousands.

Desman hunting activity is not enough for desmans survival. Now we have 3 nature reserves and 80 refuges for desman. There are a lot of problems to preserve it and most of these refuges have not specific instruments to protect desmans.

Now we have only a few experts for desman, but we have a lot of knowledge about this animal and we are able to manage populations.

Our main goal is to work on the scientific strategy of restoring this species. On the first step we should find and preserve large natural habitats of desman.

Before this, we should carry out the inventory of habitats and make a list of them. It is necessary to produce scientific methods for survey and evaluation of habitats.



The strategy of Russian Desman conservation

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Russian desman is an endemic species of East Europe. It is included in Red Data Books of IUCN, Russia, Ukraine, Bielorussia and Kazakhstan. In the past was object of fur trade.

One hundred years ago, in 1892, an effort was undertaken to reduce desman hunting, but it was not successful. Since 1920 desman hunting was banned everywhere and produce methods for its breeding in captivity

In 1929 started one project to release desmans in different parts of their former area and out of it. A total of 10 thousands animals were released. Some new populations of desman appeared, but its total number did not increase, because of bad protection and lack of management. In 1940 desman hunting with special permissions was allowed. Although it was limited, the number of desman continued to decrease. In 1957 hunting was banned again.

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After inventory of habitats we can choose the most favorable ones with the high density of desmans. These areas will be natural "genetic banks", which should be strongly protected.

The animals from such refuges can be used for establishing new populations in different regions.

Now, because of the special situation in our country, it is difficult to establish new desmans refuges. But it is possible to protect desmans in special sport game areas. We already do it and are going to enlarge their number.

Till this moment we failed to breed desman in captivity but we worked out

different methods for keeping and feeding animals in captivity. The Hopior State reserve realizes this project. The goal is to get offspring from captive borne animals.

So, to save desman in recent conditions we have to make surveys of animals and inventory their habitats, realize management program, including designing new types of fishing nets and hunting traps, which are not dangerous for desman. Ecological education programs are also very important. All kinds of human activities should include conservation management. It is the only way to prevent desman from extinction.

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Desman in Oka State Reserve (Russia)

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Russian desman is an animal of flood-land habitats. It lives in reservoirs with stagnant or slow stream water. The optimum reservoir for desman should be about 2 or 3 meters depth with scum on the bottom, good developed littoral, open water and considerable amount of invertebrates.

Desman makes its holes in banks with the exit under the water.

The fur of desman is very beautiful. It was very popular at the end of 19th and early 20th centuries. The hunting was very active. Simultaneously its habitats were destroyed because of wood cutting, draining marshes and other human activities.

In 1920 desman hunting was banned. Some years later several refuges and reserves were established for desman preservation.

One of them is OKA State Reserve, in Riazan region. In this area the OKA flood-lands is about 30 Km wide. It is the largest flood-lands in Europe.

About 18% of flood-lands are reservoirs, some of them are temporary. In late Summer they become shallow and dry.

Desmans use such types of reservoirs for breeding in Spring and Summer but they spend the Winter in more deep reservoirs.

In the beginning of the 20th century there were approximately the same number of both types of reservoirs. Now the number of deep ones, which are good for wintering, decreased 5 times because of drain and agriculture. As a consequence, desman habitats decreased almost 5 times in the last 25-30 years.

Every Spring, in flood time, the flood-lands are covered with water for one to one and a half month. During this time the flood forest is very important for desmans. They make temporary nests on trees and cushions.

The OKA State Reserve was established in 1935. At the same time the investigation of desman biology began. The first researches were Borodin, Shaposprikov and Kudriashov. The authors of this report continue the investigation since 1975. Surveys of desmans were carried out during 54 years, using the same methods. In October and November when vegetation is finished and the water level is the lowest

we count desman holes in each reservoir and define the length of coast line. Then we try to catch all desmans in 5 typical reservoirs. To estimate the average number of animals per hole. Results obtained in different years range between 0.5 to 1.5 animals with an average number of 1.

Desman density fluctuates very much because of often and strong the changeable hydroregime. First of all it depends on rainfalls in Summer and Autumn. Correlation between number of desmans and rainfalls is very strong. If the level of water is high, desmans have good wintering conditions not only in deep reservoirs, but also in shallow ones. If desmans can spend Winter in their breeding reservoirs they are more save. If they need to migrate to other reservoirs, the mortality rate is higher because of predators.

We study desman distribution and migrations by marking animals. We have marked 322 animals and recaptured only 56 of them. We catch desmans in April, just after ice disappears. It is easy to find animals at this time. They live in temporary nests on trees or in temporary holes in high parts of flood-land, which are not under the water. As a rule, at this time they live by couples, but sometimes, there are 3 or 4 animals in one hole.

We approach desmans by boat. If they are on the trees, it is possible to catch them with the use of hands or nets. If desman is in the hole, we make noise outside, and the animal come out into the net. In Summer and in Autumn we use special traps.

After trapping we take some measures, weight, identify sex and age and mark animals.

During the first years we used bird rings. We put them on the tail bedding or on the leg. But it occurs that such method

can damage the skin. Next method we used was amputation of a part of a toe. During the last ten years we use small bird rings. We make a small hole in the upper part of a tail and pass the ring through this hole. Such method does not disturb the animal, and a bright ring is visible on the black tail even at a long distance.

Marking results showed us that desmans are more or less settled animals. 77% of recapture occurred at the same reservoirs. As a rule, they use the same holes for many years. So, if environmental conditions are stable, desmans are not only settled, but also territorial animals. In 1977-79 we carried out radiotelemetry researches. We put radiotransmitters on 5 females and 2 males. Adult females have territories ranging from 0.34 to 0.56 hectares and 2 to 6 holes.

Desmans have seasonal local rooms. In Spring they have both active and passive trips (when moving with the water). In Summer and Autumn they move from shallow reservoirs to deep ones by walking.

The nutrition of desmans was studied in OKA Reserve in 1936-1957. Its food consists of 90 items, 72 of them are animals and the others 18 are plants. The most important food item are insects and their larvas, followed by worms and mudflasks. Other invertebrates are not so important.

We caught pregnant females during all seasons. So breeding takes place during the whole year, but is more active in Spring and Autumn.

In pregnant females the higher number of yellow bodies was 7, and the higher number of embryos was 5. The average number of offspring was 3.6.

Histological investigations of desman gonads showed us that there is no reason for desman extinction due to reproductive failure. The reason of population decrease is habitat degradation.

We preserved desman during 70 years, but it is not enough for saving this animal.

So in 1977 we decided to improve desman habitats by deeping reservoirs. We carried out this project in 1977-84. 28 reservoirs ranging from 0.1 to 0.3 hectares were made deeper. Also we made artificial banks 2mts high and 5mts wide. They are not covered with water in flood time so desmans and other animals can stay there in Spring.

As a rule such artificial reservoirs are occupied by desmans and muskrats in the first year during flood time or Autumn settling of young animals. Artificial reservoirs have enough food for successful wintering of animals because we produced them from old shallow reservoirs. Besides desmans and muskrats, the largest artificial reservoirs are used by beavers, gulls, terns and ducks nesting on the banks.

So we have good results. If we have the possibility to continue our project, we can increase the density of desman population, and also improve habitats for other aquatic animals.

I. The participants of this meeting stress the urgent need to:

1. Promote research in the fields most relevant to the conservation of the populations of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in particular: habitat requirements and limiting factors to distribution and abundance, population and genetic dynamics, reproductive biology, patterns of movements and dispersal, predation and competition.

2. Study the impact of the factors that have been recognized to be damaging to the population - urban, industrial, and mining pollution - and other potentially negative factors such as industrial forestry, forest fires, milk production, etc.

3. Identify potential habitats, distribution area and abundance with a standardized methodology in order to define natural breeding local as sanctuaries areas for this species.

4. Define prevent measures for habitat degradation.

5. Prepare methods to breed this species in controlled conditions (for repopulation purposes).

6. Have precautions to over collecting or unjustified killing of animals.

7. Have special environmental education programs with local populations.

II. The participants of this meeting knew that *Galemys pyrenaicus* conservation need an international coordinated efforts and they compromise themselves to:

1. Exchange information about the situation of this species in their countries, making a bibliography data base with reports and papers.

2. Join all the information about research resources existent in each countries (names and addresses).

3. Promote technical knowledge about capture, handling, maintenance, habitat evaluation and census.

4. Transmit to the government of their countries and to the non-governmental environmental institutions the urgent need of strictly preserved measures.

5. Report this meeting when new sufficient data about *Galemys* will be disponible.

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Conclusions

Galemys pyrenaicus is a relict from the Tertiary with a distribution restricted to certain areas of the Pyrenees and of the Northern half of the Iberian peninsula. This important part of the European heritage was considered to be highly endangered. Current and planned human activities are worsening the chances of survival of this species. The conservation of this species is hampered by the lack of knowledge about key aspects of its biology.

It is the responsibility of Europe, and in particular of Portugal, Spain and France to guarantee the survival of this component of world heritage.

The construction of dams, strong mining, industrial and urban pollution are recognized to be highly negative to the populations of this species. In addition these factors are increasing the already worrisome fragmentation of the populations.

I. The participants of this meeting stress the urgent need to:

1. Promote research in the fields most relevant to the conservation of the populations of *Galemys pyrenaicus* in particular: habitat requirements and limiting factors to distribution and abundance, population and genetic dynamics, reproductive biology, patterns of movements and dispersal, predation and competition.

2. Study the impact of the factors that have been recognized to be damaging to the population - urban, industrial, and mining pollution - and other potentially negative factors such as industrial forestry, forest fires, mink predation, etc.

3. Identify potential habitats, distribution area and abundance with a standardized methodology in order to define natural breeding loci as sanctuaries areas for this species.

4. Define preventive measures for habitat degradation.

5. Prepare methods to breed this species in controlled conditions (for repopulation purposes)

6. Have precautions to avoid over collecting or unjustified killing of animals.

7. Have special environmental education programs with local populations.

II. The participants of this meeting know that *Galemys pyrenaicus* conservation needs an international coordinated effort and they compromise themselves to:

1. Exchange information about the situation of this species in their countries, making a bibliography data base with reports and papers.

2. Joint all the information about research resources existing in each country (names and addresses).

3. Permute technical knowledge about capture, handling, maintenance, habitat evaluation and census.

4. Transmit to the government of their countries and to the non-governmental environmental institutions the urgent need of strictly preserved measures.

5. Repeat this meeting when new sufficient data about *Galemys* will be available.

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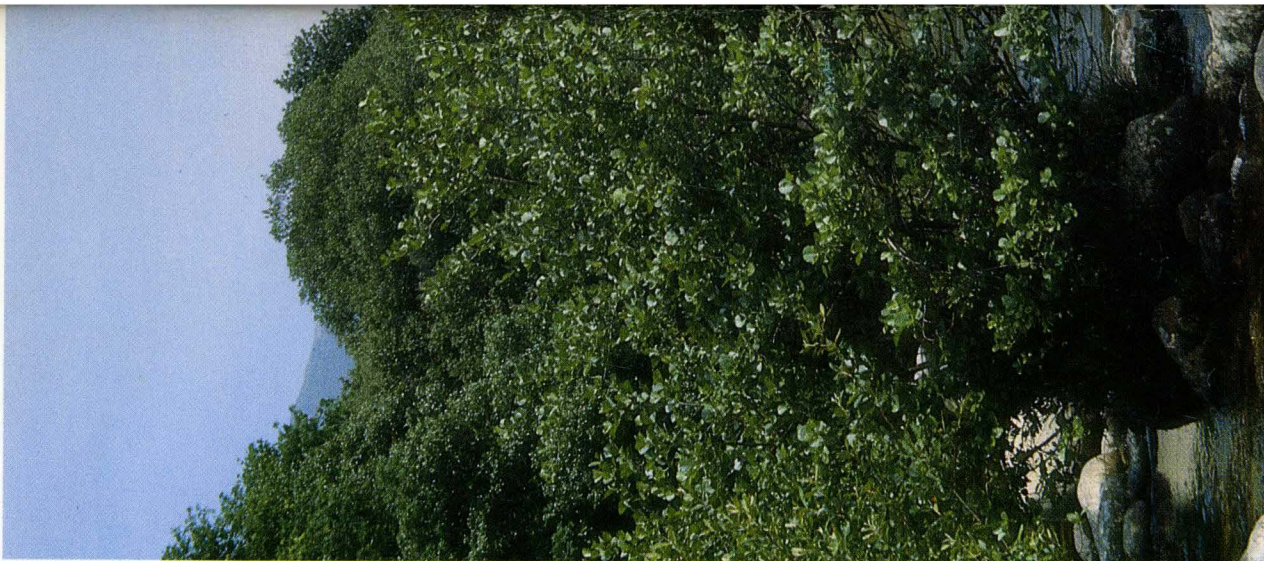
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