



Conference Abstract

# Recolonisation or invasion? First insights into the origin of the newly established beaver populations in Bulgaria via eDNA

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## Abstract

After a series of reintroductions (including unofficial releases) and natural recolonizations during the last decades, the Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) is returning throughout Europe. However, it is hard to distinguish the species from its American relative, *Castor canadensis*, that has also been successfully introduced and is thriving in some parts of the continent as an invasive species. In this context, it is important to obtain genetic information for the newly recorded populations, in order to take appropriate management actions. The current paper presents results of the first genetic assay of five recently established beaver populations along the Danube River and two of its tributaries in Northern Bulgaria. The non-invasive method of eDNA sampling was applied. We found that all populations belong to *Castor fiber* and are of the haplotypes from the refugial populations in Norway and France. We hypothesise that they naturally spread from Romania, where reintroductions have been done using individuals from Bavaria, which were in turn translocated from Scandinavia, France, Russia and Poland.

## Keywords

genetic monitoring, eDNA, *Castor fiber*, mammal conservation, Danube

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## Conflicts of interest

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.