

NEW RECORD OF NUTRIA (*MYOCASTOR COYPUS* (MOLINA, 1782)) DOWNSTREAM OF THE MARITSA RIVER IN BULGARIA

Gradimir Gruychev

Department of Wildlife Management, Faculty of Forestry, University of Forestry, 10 Kliment Ohridski Blvd. 1756 Sofia, Bulgaria. E-mail: gradi.val@gmail.com

Received: 04 April 2012

Accepted: 30 May 2012

Abstract

Fragments of a skull and lower jaws of Nutria were found near river Maritsa, close to Harmanli town. There are suitable habitats for this species in the area, overgrown with reed and rush near the bank and the islands in the river. The location lies at about 50 km on a straight line from the nearest one known on river Maritsa in Turkey, and at about 35 km from another one in Bulgaria and probably results from invasion of the Nutria along the river.

Key words: *Myocastor coypus*, Bulgaria.

Nutria is a South American species introduced in Bulgaria in lake Mandrensko and Arkutino Natural Reserve, at the Southern Black Sea Coast in 1953 (Peshev et al. 2004). Inland, it was reported only from river Maritsa, near the city of Plovdiv (Popov 2003), and from river Salzliyka, at the drainage basin of river Maritsa near Radnevo town (Myhajlov, Stoyanov 2001).

The fragments of a skull and lower jaws were found near the den of a Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes* (Linnaeus, 1758)) N 41° 56', E 25° 56' on 18.02.2012, of 350 m on a straight line from the bank of river Maritsa, near Harmanli town. They were discovered by a hound dog which followed the bloody trail of the fight between the animals. The material was determined and measured up according to the detailed reports by Peshev et al. (2004) (Table 1). The sample was registered un-

der No RM-1040 at the National Natural Science Museum in Sofia. All distances are measured using the Garmin eTrex Legend Global Positioning System and the program MapSource, Version 6.11.6 (Garmin Ltd.).

In the area of study, there are stretches overgrown with reed and rush along the bank and in the islands in the river. The adjoining territories are mainly arable lands. These habitats correspond to those described as suitable for the species by Özkan (1999) and Peshev et al. (2004). That is why we assume that it is possible for Nutria to reproduce in this region. The species occurs along the rivers Tundzha, Arda and Maritsa in Northwest Turkey (Özkan, Kurtonur 1994, Özkan 1999) and in North Greece (Carter 2002). Also, there is this species in Aras river from Northeast Turkey (İlker et al. 2009). The new location lies at about 50 km on

Table 1. Skull and mandible measurements of Nutria *Myocastor coypus*, the Maritsa River, SE Bulgaria.

No	Skull measurement	Dimensions, mm
1	Length of upper diastema DL	30.08
2	Coronary length of $P^4 - M^3$ $LcP^4 - M^3$	30.4
3	Coronary length of $P_4 - M_3$ $LcP_4 - M_3$	32.96
4	Length of the lower diastema LDL	21.66
5	Length of the foramina incisivi IFL	13.43
6	Width of the foramina incisivi IFW	2.17
7	Coronary length of $I_1 - M_3$ $LcI_1 - M_3$	65.11
8	Coronary length of $I^1 - M^3$ $LcI^1 - M^3$	67.01
9	Length of lower first molar LM_1	6.55
10	Length of lower second molar LM_2	8.72
11	Length of lower third molar LM_3	11.6
12	Length of first upper molar LM^1	6.55
13	length of second upper molar LM^2	9.19
14	length of third upper molar LM^3	9.75
15	width of first upper molar WM^1	6.65
16	width of first lower molar WM_1	5.99
17	width of second upper molar WM^2	7.95
18	width of second lower molar WM_2	7.35
19	width of third upper molar WM^3	8.02
20	width of third lower molar WM_3	8.12

a straight line from the closest one known on river Maritsa in Turkey and at about 35 km from the one on river Salzliyka (Maritsa drainage basin) in Bulgaria. It probably results from invasion of the Nutria along river Maritsa.

Acknowledgements

We are greatly thankful to B. Milchev for his advises on the field work and manuscript preparation.

References

- CARTER J., LEONARD B.P. 2002. A review of the literature on the worldwide distribution, spread of, and efforts to eradicate the coypu (*Myocastor coypus*). Wildlife Society Bulletin 30 (1): 162–175.
- İLİKER, A., ARSLAN, A., PAMUKOĞLU, N., ALBAYRAK, İ. 2009. C-Banded karyotype of *Myocastor coypus* (Molina, 1782) from Turkey (Mammali: Rodentia). Folia Biol. (Kraków) 57: 33–36.
- MYAHJLOV H., STOYANOV S. 2001. Hunting birds and mammals in Bulgaria. Pensoft. 208 p. (In Bulgarian).
- PESHEV C., PESHEV D., POPOV V. 2004. Fauna Bulgarica. Vol. 27 Mammalia, Sofia, BAS. 632 p. (In Bulgarian, English summary).
- POPOV V., SEDEFCHEV A. 2003. The mammals in Bulgaria. Vitosha, Sofia. 290 p. (In Bulgarian).
- ÖZKAN B., KURTONUR C. 1994. First record of *Myocastor coypus* (Molina, 1782) (Rodentia: Mammalia) from the European part of Turkey. XII National Congress of Biology 6-8 July 1994 Odrin, Zoology Section 7: 273–275. (In Turkish, English summary).
- ÖZKAN B. 1999. Invasive coypus, *Myocastor coypus* (Molina, 1782), in the European part of Turkey. Israel Journal of Zoology 45: 289–291.