

Status of the Eurasian Badger, *Meles meles*, in Jordan (Carnivora: Mustilidae)

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Abstract. New records of the Eurasian Badger, *Meles meles*, from Dana and Mujib Nature Reserves in Jordan represent the most southern occurrence of the species in the Levant. Records from Al Munaysah and Um el Jimal indicate an expansion of the species' range in the east. The population density of the Badger in Jordan is quite low which is explained by the country's position at the edge of the distribution range. Observations on morphology and conservation status are communicated.

Kurzfassung. Neue Nachweise des Daches, *Meles meles*, aus den Schutzgebieten von Dana und Mujib in Jordanien stellen die südlichsten Punkte der Verbreitung in der Levante dar. Feststellungen in Al Munaysah und in Um el Jimal deuten auf eine Arealerweiterung im Osten des Landes hin. Die Populationsdichte des Daches ist in Jordanien sehr gering, was mit der Lage des Landes am Rande des Verbreitungsgebietes erklärt wird. Es werden Beobachtungen zur Morphologie und zum Schutzstatus der Art mitgeteilt.

Key words. Middle East, Levant, carnivores, conservation, nature reserve.

Introduction

The Eurasian Badger *Meles meles*, has only recently become known to occur in Jordan. The first record was that of CLARK (1977) who collected it at Suwaylih. Other records are available from the northern mountain regions (AMR et al. 1987, AMR & DISI 1988, QUMSIYEH et al. 1993, QUMSIYEH 1996) with the help of new data. We review here the distribution of *Meles meles* in Jordan and present additional morphometric data and cranial illustrations. Human threats and conservation strategies are also addressed.

Material and methods

Personal field observations by the authors, along with field observations and collections made by The Jordan Natural History Museum staff (JNHM) at Yarmouk University, were recorded. In addition, data collected by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature field researchers (Research and Surveys Section) during field surveys in Dana and Mujib Nature Reserves are included.

Material: JNHM 039, Thagret Asfour, 4.1.1984; JNHM 043, An Nu'ayyimah (20 km SW of Irbid; 32°25'N 35°55'E), 7.7.1982; JNHM 045, Kharja (6 km N Irbid; 32°40'N 35°53'E), 16.8.1982; JNHM 046, Kharja (see above), 16.8.1982; JNHM 049, Marsa'a (25 km S Jarash; 32°05'N 35°48'E), 3.10.1982; JNHM 118, Marw (32°37'N 35°53'E), 28.10.1984; JNHM 156,