THE ATLAS OF EUROPEAN MAMMALS


POYSER NATURAL HISTORY

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**Distribution**

*World:* native to North Africa: Morocco, Grand and Middle Atlas south to Agadir and north edge of Sahara, north-west Algeria.

*Europe:* introduced to Fuerteventura, Canary Islands.

**Geographic variation**

Monotypic species.

**Habitat**

The species is well adapted to stony environments, mountain slopes and open country, but also a wide array of agricultural habitats, where its presence is favoured by stone walls where it can seek refuge. It does not enter irrigated fields.

**Population status**

Initial rapid growth resulted in c. 200000 or even more individuals but was followed by a considerable reduction of its numbers. However, the squirrel is now more evenly distributed throughout the entire island.

**International legal & conservation status**

None.

**Other information**

The species was first introduced to the Canary Islands in 1965 as a single mating pair from North Africa. It does not seem to provoke any serious economic or ecological damage. The eradication of this species is now quite impossible; nevertheless every attempt has been made to prevent its dispersion to other islands of the Archipelago.

**Literature**

Machado Carrillo (1985)

G. Amori & A. Machado Carrillo