

## INTRODUCTION

The European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) is listed as “**Critically Endangered**” by IUCN since 2011, and included in the **annex II and IV** of the Habitat Directive 92/43/CEE. A small population is remained in Spain, threatened by the invasion of the **American mink** (*Neovison vison*). The rapid expansion of the alien mink has caused significant fragmentation in the spanish population of the European mink during last decade. Earlier culling campaigns carried out for the conservation of native mink, have been insufficient.

## AMERICAN MINK TRAPPING METHOD

Use of **mink rafts** is the principal method to eradicate American mink in the project LIFE LUTREOLA SPAIN.

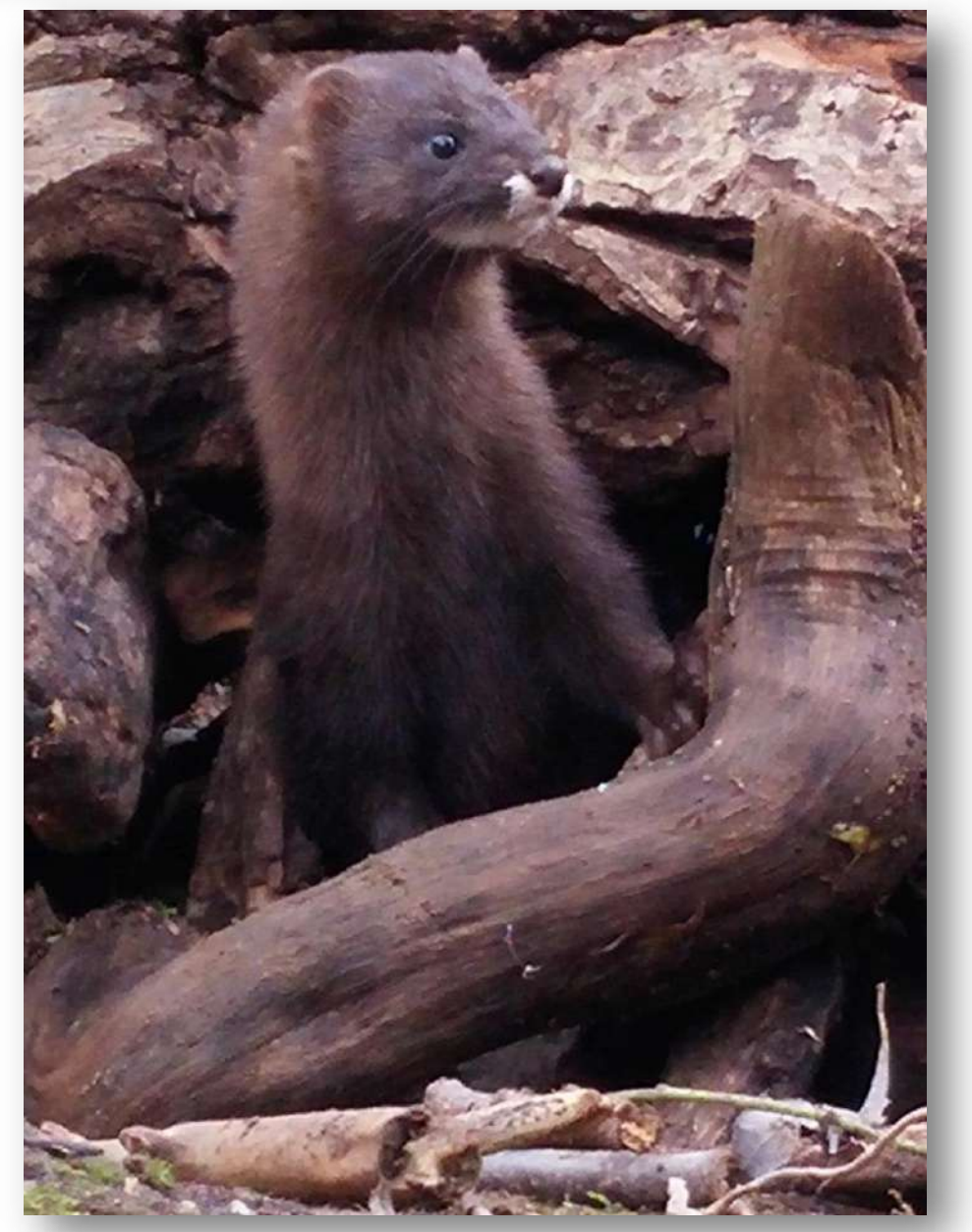
Experimental trapping, carried out in the first phase of the project, showed that the mink raft method is **7,4 times more effective** than conventional trapping.

Trapping period lasts from last of august to april

## MAIN GOAL

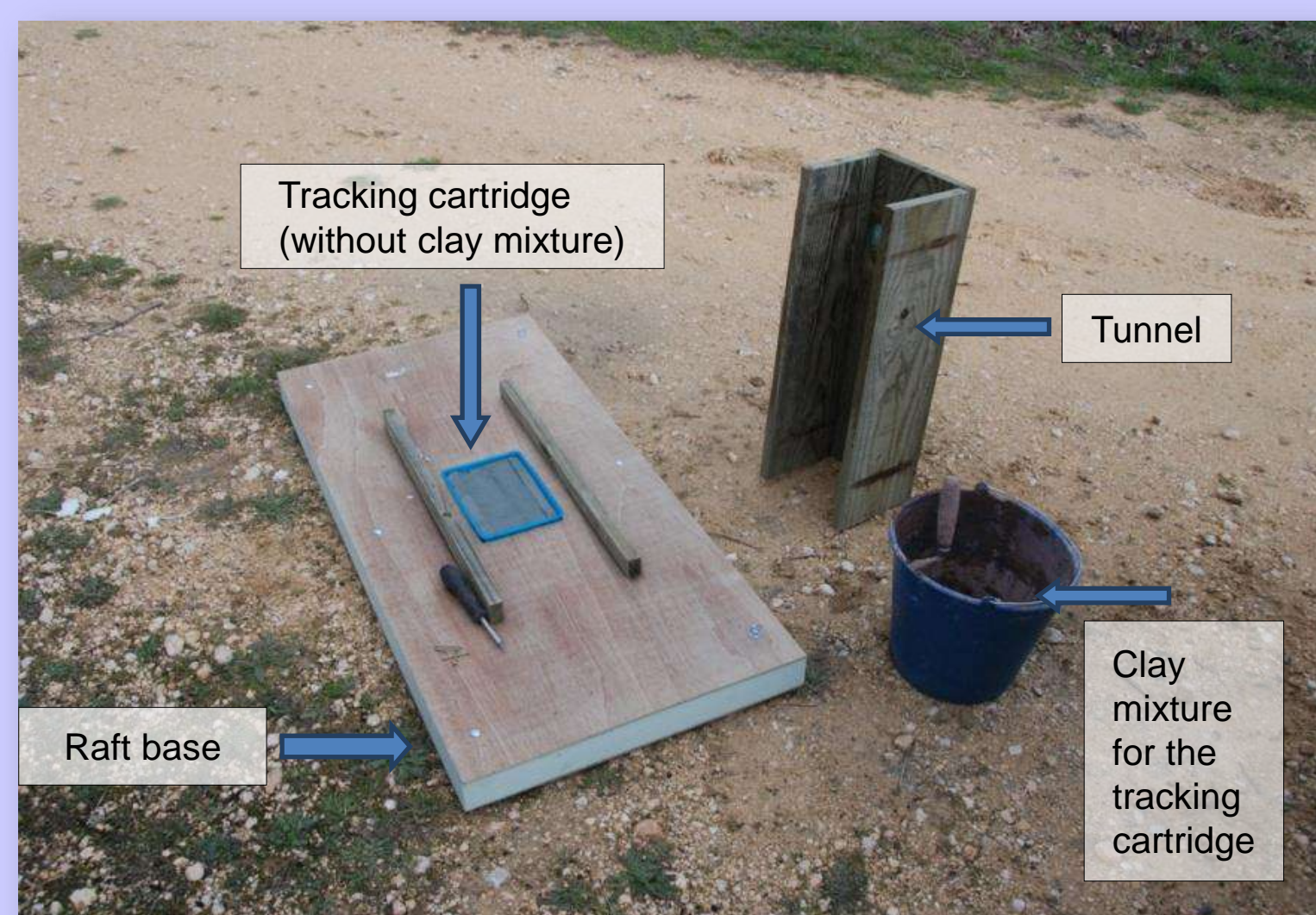
The main goal of the project is to improve the conservation status of the European mink in Spain.

- American mink eradication is a key action to achieve this.
- A protocol was developed for successful completion of the eradication.



European mink

### 1. Installation



- Installation of raft
- Set **1 raft per 1 km** of river
- At the water edge
- Riverside with vegetation (trees, shrubs)
- 1 or 2 ropes are used to tether the raft

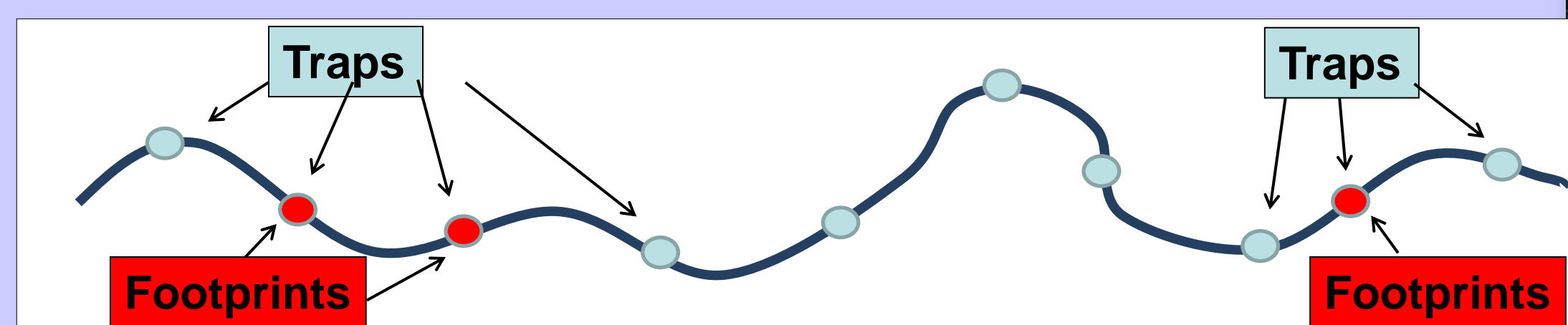
### 2. Monitoring mode before trapping

- Rafts are placed without trap (only tracking cartridge) **during 15-20 days**
- Checking:
  - With stable conditions checked in the end of monitoring period.
  - More frequent checking is needed with change of water level (>0,5 m).



### 3. Trapping mode

- Trapping lasts **10-15 days**
- **Traps are checked daily** during first hours of day.
- No bait is used
- Traps are placed on the rafts where footprints were found, and in adjacent ones



### 4. Monitoring mode after trapping

- Needed to evaluate eradication success
- Similarly to the previous monitoring, rafts are placed without trap (only tracking cartridge) **during 15-20 days**
- Trapping will be repeated again after when footprints are found



### 5. Evaluation of success

- Two different categories are distinguished:
  - “**mink-free**” area: **1 capture for 6 months** period in one definite river basin.
  - “**reduced density**” area: **>1 capture for 6 months** period in one definite river basin.
- Monitoring network will be created once the river basin is evaluated as „mink-free“.



## Conclusions

- 🐾 The use of **mink rafts is the most effective method** to detect and capture the American mink.
- 🐾 **Design of the removal operation** is of key importance:
  - 🐾 Concentration of trapping-effort to the definite river basin.
  - 🐾 Cooperation between different administrative regions.



American mink