

2nd Mediterranean Plant Conservation Week

"Conservation of Mediterranean Plant Diversity: Complementary Approaches and New Perspectives"

CONSERVATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ON WILD PLANTS, DESPITE THE VANISHING OF THEIR NATURAL HABITATS: THE CASE OF CENTRAL SPANISH WETLANDS.



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Framework

Research project: SPIP2015-01659 ETNOBIOLOGIA DE LOS HUMEDALES DE LOS P.N. DE TABLAS DE DAIMIEL Y CABAÑEROS (Wetlands ethnobiology of the National Parks Tablas de Daimiel and Cabañeros)

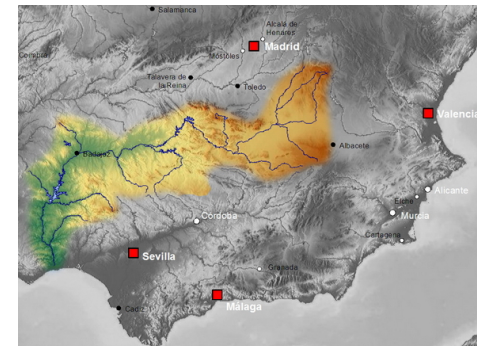
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Guadiana River

Guadiana is one of the most important rivers in the Iberian peninsula

River name	Length km	River basin km ²	Average flow m ³ /s
Tajo	1007	80.600	444
Ebro	910	86.100	600
Duero	897	97.299	675
Guadiana	744	67.733	79
Guadalquivir	657	57.101	164
Jucar	498	21.578	50
Segura	325	18.870	26



Maps source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guadiana>
 authors: Port(u)o's



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Guadiana River

On its upper course, in the current region of Castilla-La Mancha, the river was the centre of human activity since the pre-Roman times.

Ancient fortified settlements named ‘motillas’ were established along the river and some of its main tributaries.

The reconstructed site ‘motilla del río Azuer’ near Daimiel, from the Bronze Age, holds the most ancient water well found in Spain



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Guadiana River

After centuries, a local culture was established around the Guadiana River in the province of Ciudad Real (Castilla-La Mancha), particularly on the lands placed in the current National Park 'Tablas de Daimiel', and between Daimiel and the National Park 'Cabañeros'



Map of Spanish National Parks, provided by Organismo Autónomo de Parques Nacionales



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The river people

A rich local culture around the sustainable use of natural resources flourished for centuries, until mid XXth century.



Fishermen house, locally named ‘casillas’. El Morenillo, 1960s

Source: Banco de Imagen, Centro del Agua, Daimiel



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The river people

The ‘River people’ mainly lived from the riparian resources such as wild plants, wood, fishing, etc.



Source: Banco de Imagen, Centro del Agua, Daimiel



Flowers and edible tubers of *Bunium macuca*



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The Guadiana river degradation

Public and private projects since 1950s progressively depleted water underground resources of the Upper Guadiana. The overexploitation continued until 1990s and early 2000s

The surface of the so-called ‘Tablas de Daimiel’, the most important wetland in central Spain was severely reduced and many of the river people had to emigrate, due to the lack of resources



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Legal protection

In 1973 the Spanish government declared the National Park Tablas de Daimiel (3.030 ha). However, hundreds of wells continued opening around the wetland – often allowed or promoted by official projects- for 3 decades, and the sheet of water, formerly permanent, became intermittent and even dry most part a year



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Recovering the information

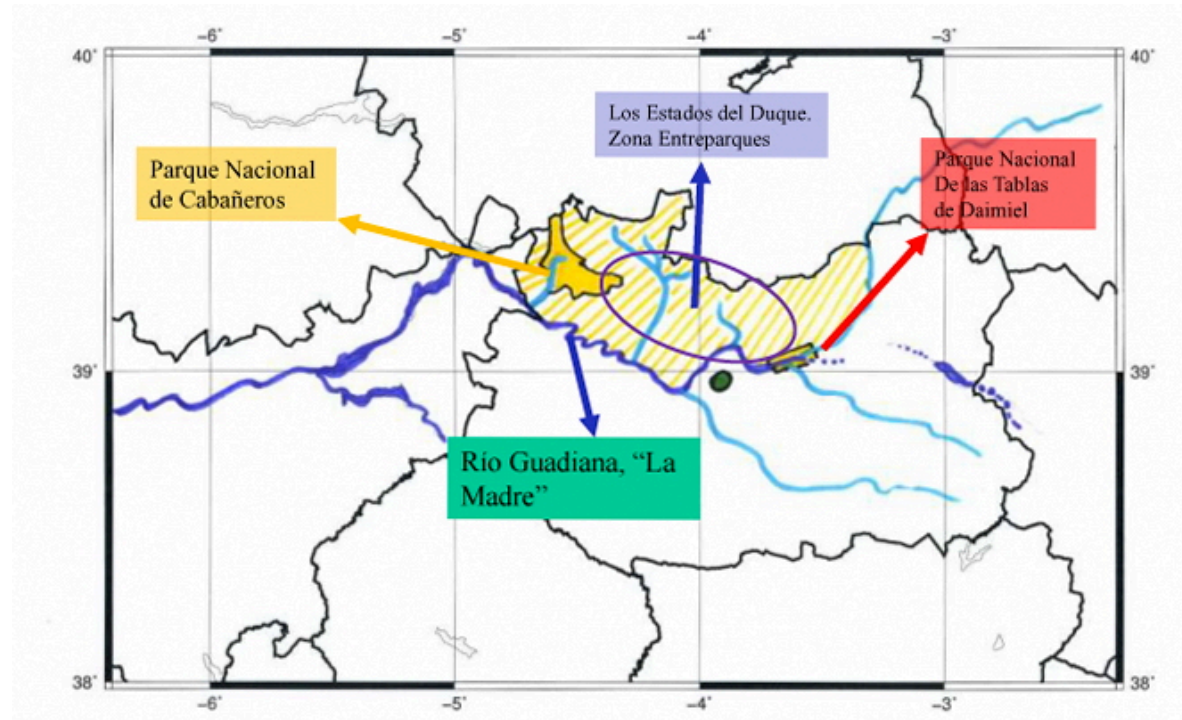
A part of the ancient culture of the river people is probably lost forever, but most of it still remains in the local knowledge kept by the elderly.

In order to recover this knowledge, the Research Group on Ethnobiology of the Southeastern Spain (see <http://ethnobiowetlands.org>) develops a project granted by the Spanish Autonomous Organism of National Parks, finishing in 2018.



Study area

The project has been developed between 2016 and 2018 in the National Parks Tablas de Daimiel and Cabañeros, as well as the intermediate zone known as ‘Entreparques’



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Methodology

Main source of information have been 243 interviews (204 informant people), 6 workshops with local elder people (80 people). More than 1.500 voucher specimen (mainly herbarium sheets) were taken and mounted to facilitate the identification



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Provisory results

The database of field work and bibliographic searches host 16.077 records regarding 1.022 species (772 vascular plants, 3 bryophytes, 35 fungi , 3 lichens, 209 animal species and 15 minerals) locally known and/or used. Data for vascular plants are:

	NP Cabañeros	NP Tablas de Daimiel	Cabañeros, Tablas de Daimiel and Entreparques
Nr of species	577	419	772
Vernacular names	1268	804	1752
Species with handcraft uses*	126	121	184
Medicinal plants	132	91	177
Food wild plants	221	172	285
*Handcrafts, basketry, building, etc.			



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Lost trades and recovered processes

The river and surrounding ecosystems provided specific professions such as fishermen, chair craftsmen, broom makers, esparto grass artisans, etc.

All these trades have vanished, but the project has allowed to document and recover the manufacturing processes, in order to transmit them to the next generations as a cultural heritage.



Elaboration of fish traps



Basketry

Some remarkable activities as basketry were strongly linked to the rivers, both for uses (i.e. traps for fishes and crabs) and for original materials (wicker, rushes, bulrush, etc.)



Social and legal changes have also contributed to the extinction of some crafts (i.e. through the



Elaboration and use of 'garlitos', local traditional traps for freshwater crabs

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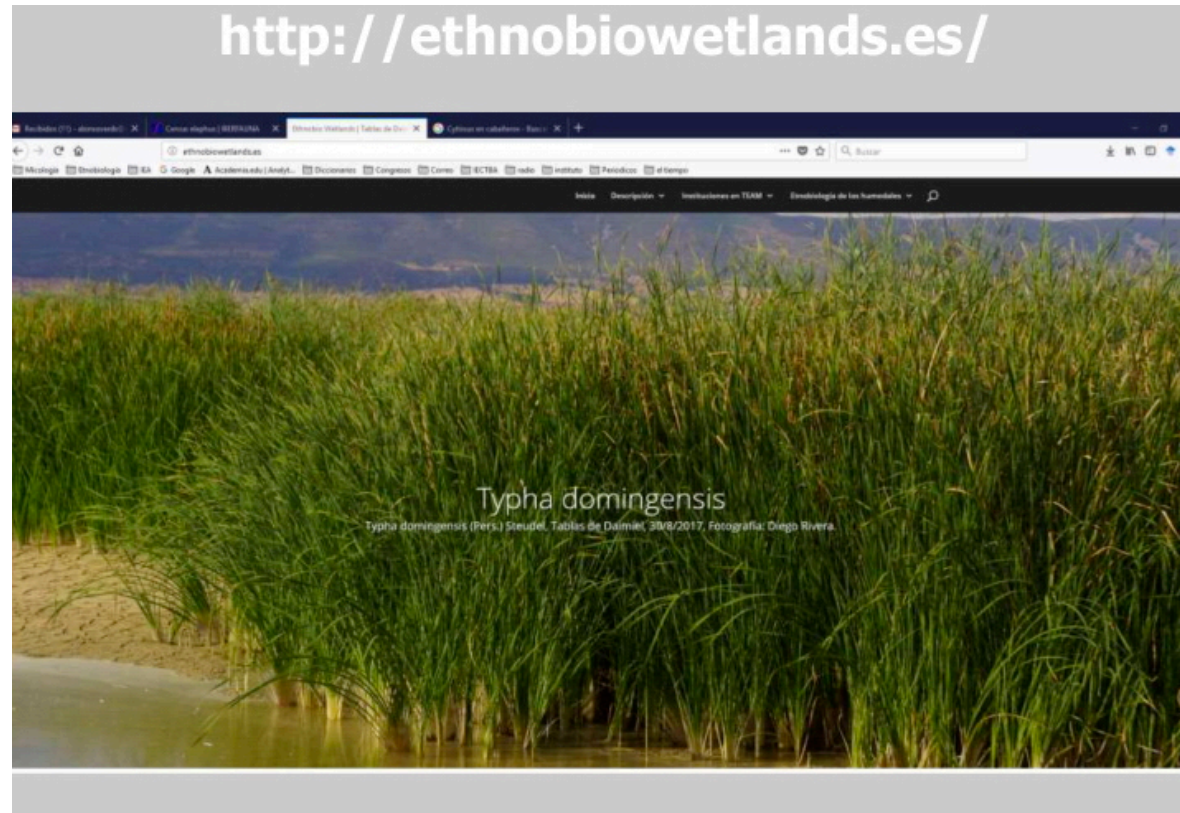
Children of river people families, carrying a esparto grass stool ('serijo') on the boat. Source: Banco de Imagen, Centro del Agua, Daimiel



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The project and research group webpage



Many thanks to:

National Park Cabañeros

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Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales – Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica



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... and especially to them



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