



© Toni Llobet

Twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*)

Shads are anadromous species that belong to one of the world's most commercially exploited fish families (Clupeidae). The European species, allis (*Alosa alosa*) and twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*), used to be commonly found along most Atlantic basins in Europe; but have experienced serious declines during the last century.

Ebre River historically supported one of the most important twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*) populations in the Western Mediterranean. At 16th century since the beginning of the 20th century, it was considered an abundant and valuable commercial species. However, multiple anthropogenic-driven alterations of the drainage (mainly dams) and water pollution caused/promoted a severe decline of the species that culminated in the closure of the commercial fishery in 1970. Since the closure of the Twaite shad commercial fishery, the species was considered to be locally extinct).

Between 2001 and 2005 accidental captures of Twaite shad reported downstream of the Xerta Weir provided evidence of a nascent recovery of this population in the Ebre River. Studies suggest a gradual and natural recovery of the Ebro River twaite shad population. The abovementioned recovery might probably be due to an improvement in water quality in the last 10 years due to the implementation of EC Water Framework Directive coupled with the absence of the traditional fishery over the last 40 years. Currently twaite shad has wild populations in Catalonia, apparently slowly increasing, but probably at its limit of survival.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- **UICN Worldwide Category.** Not classified.
- **Spanish UICN Category proposal.** VD 2cd (Vulnerable)
- **Regional legislation.** Classified as "Sensitive to its habitat variation" in Annex I of Extremadura endangered species regional Catalogue, law 8/1998 26th June
- **International Conventions.** In Annex III Bern Convention 82/72.
- **European Directives.** Annex II and V Habitat Directive 21st May 1992.
- **Red Books.** Mentioned as "Vulnerable" in Spanish Vertebrate Red Book (992).