

A method for fish metapopulation connectivity evaluation and barrier removal optimization

Amaia A. Rodeles, Lide de Izeta, David Galicia, María Morán-Luis, Alexia M. González-Ferreras, Francisco J. Peñas, José Barquín, Rafael Miranda



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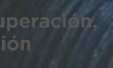
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INTRODUCTION

Dams and weirs affect the movement of water, sediment, nutrient and organisms through the river.

Impacts on **diadromous** fish migration are well known.

The impact of dams in the connectivity of **fish metapopulations** is not well understood.



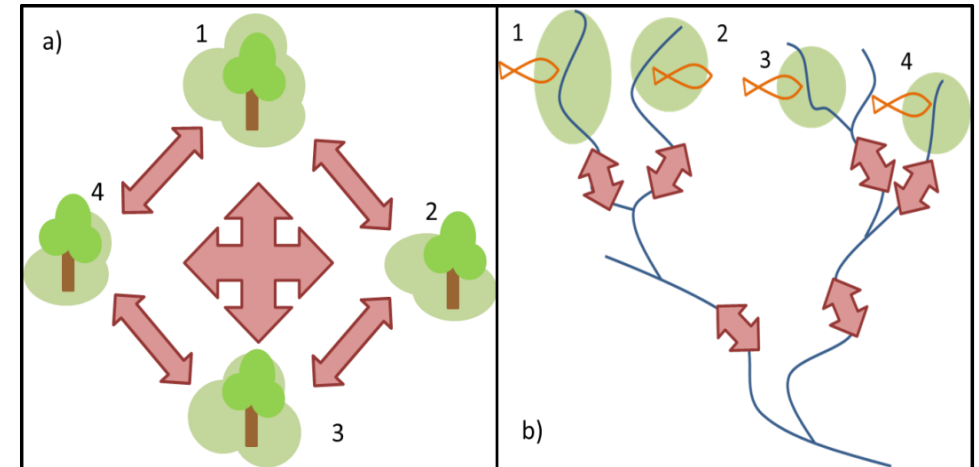
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Studies of river connectivity usually focus on the whole river **network**.

Population or habitat connectivity indices were developed for **terrestrial** landscapes.

Fish **metapopulation** connectivity has different properties due to the **dendritic** structure of rivers



a) Simple representation of the connectivity between habitats (in this case, forests); b) simplified river basin, with a fish metapopulation and their connections through the river network.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an **index** of easy application to study the **fragmentation** of potamodromous fish metapopulations.
2. Apply it to assess the **suitable habitat** connectivity of four metapopulations from the **Iberian Peninsula**.



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Dendritic Connectivity Index (DCI), modified to consider populations as the analysis unit instead of river segments.

The new Population Connectivity Index (PCI) considers:

- Probability of dispersal: 0-1 probability assigned according to literature and the dispersal capability of fish species that depends on size and swimming capability.
- Distance between populations.
- Cumulative passability of dams.

Four Iberian fish species were selected.

Large dams (> 1 hm³)

<i>PD</i>	Fish characteristics	Iberian examples
0.9	High swimming and leaping capacity	Salmonids
0.8	Medium swimming and leaping capacity. Size ≥35 cm	<i>Luciobarbus, Pseudochondrostoma</i>
0.7	Medium swimming and leaping capacity. 25 cm ≤ size < 35 cm	<i>Barbus, Parachondrostoma</i>
0.6	Medium swimming and leaping capacity. 15 cm ≤ size < 25 cm	<i>Iberochondrostoma</i>
0.5	Medium swimming and leaping capacity. 10 cm ≤ size < 15 cm	<i>Phoxinus, Anaecypris</i>
0.4	Medium swimming and leaping capacity. Size <10 cm	<i>Aphanius</i>
0.3	Benthonic. Low swimming and leaping capacity	<i>Barbatula, Cottus, Cobitis</i>

Dispersal: exponential decay with distance.

B_{ij} : product of barrier passabilities between populations i and j

- Large dams: passability = 0

c_{ij} : product of the cumulative passability and the probability of dispersal of the fish of interest, which depends on the probability of dispersal and distance between populations i and j

DCI_p : connectivity index between all pair of populations which depends on passability and length of river occupied by the populations over the total river network

Family	Species	IUCN category	Maximum size (cm)	Prob. disp. (10 km)	River basin
Cobitidae	<i>Cobitis vettonica</i>	Endangered	13	0.3	Tagus
Salmonidae	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Least Concern*	60**	0.9	Ebro
Cyprinidae	<i>Luciobarbus comizo</i>	Least Concern	100	0.8	Tagus
Cyprinidae	<i>Anaocypris hispanica</i>	Endangered	10	0.5	Guadiana

* Vulnerable in Spain.

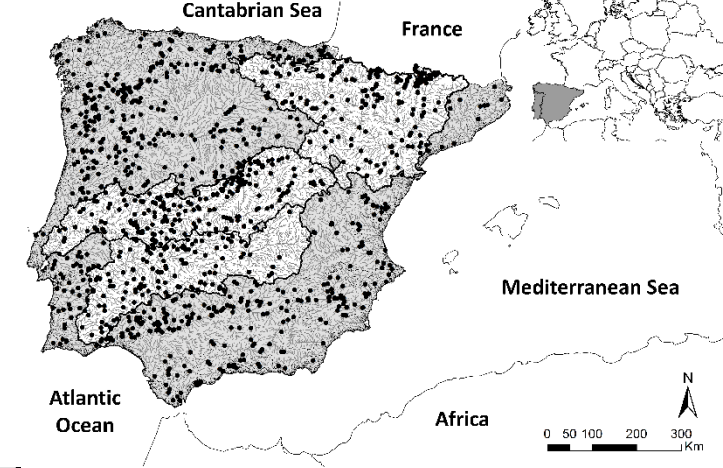
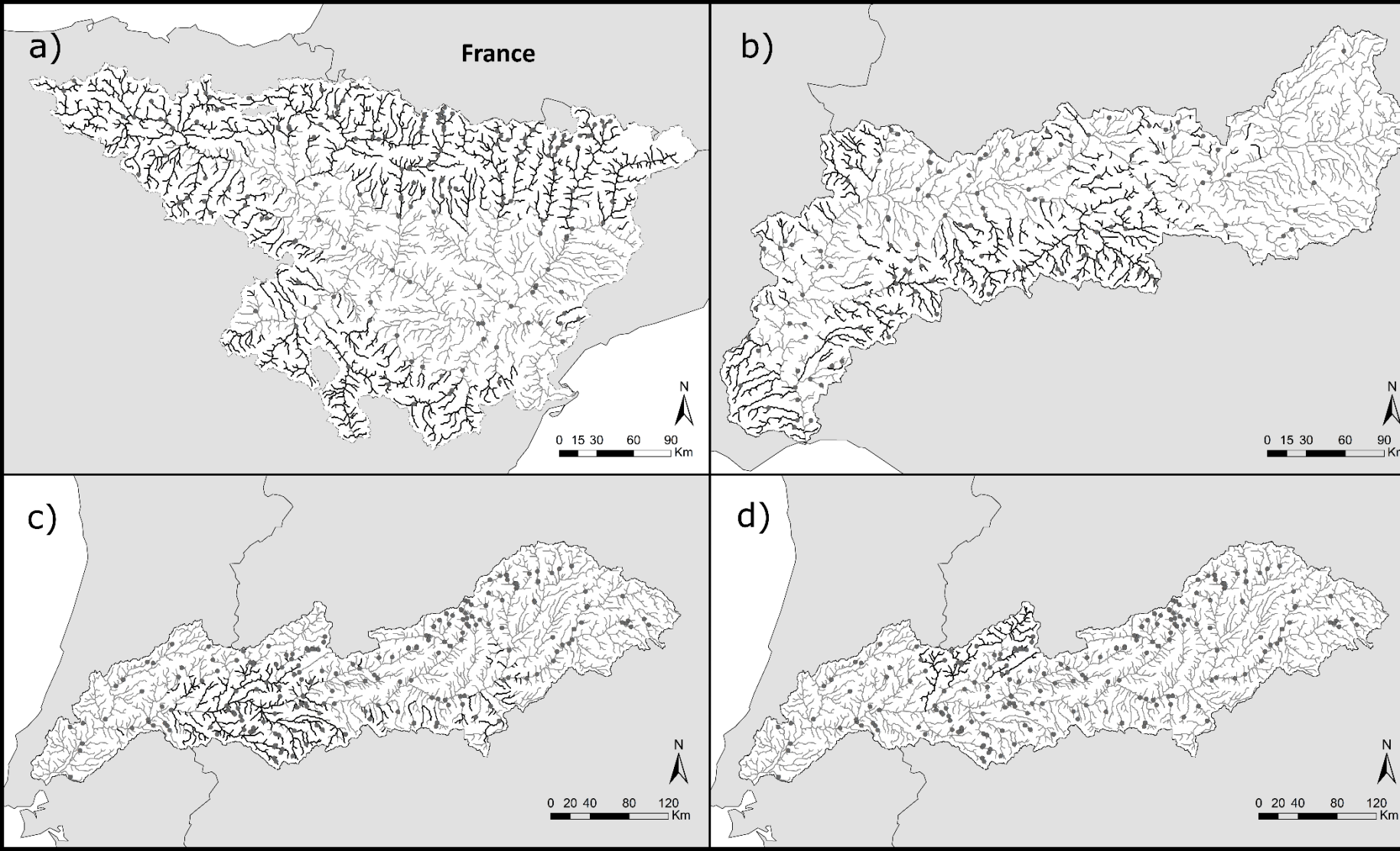
** Freshwater form.

$$B_{ij} = \prod_{m=1}^M p_m$$

$$c_{ij} = B_{ij} P D^{d_{ij}}$$

$$DCI_p = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n c_{ij} \frac{l_i}{L} \frac{l_j}{L} * 100$$

METHODS



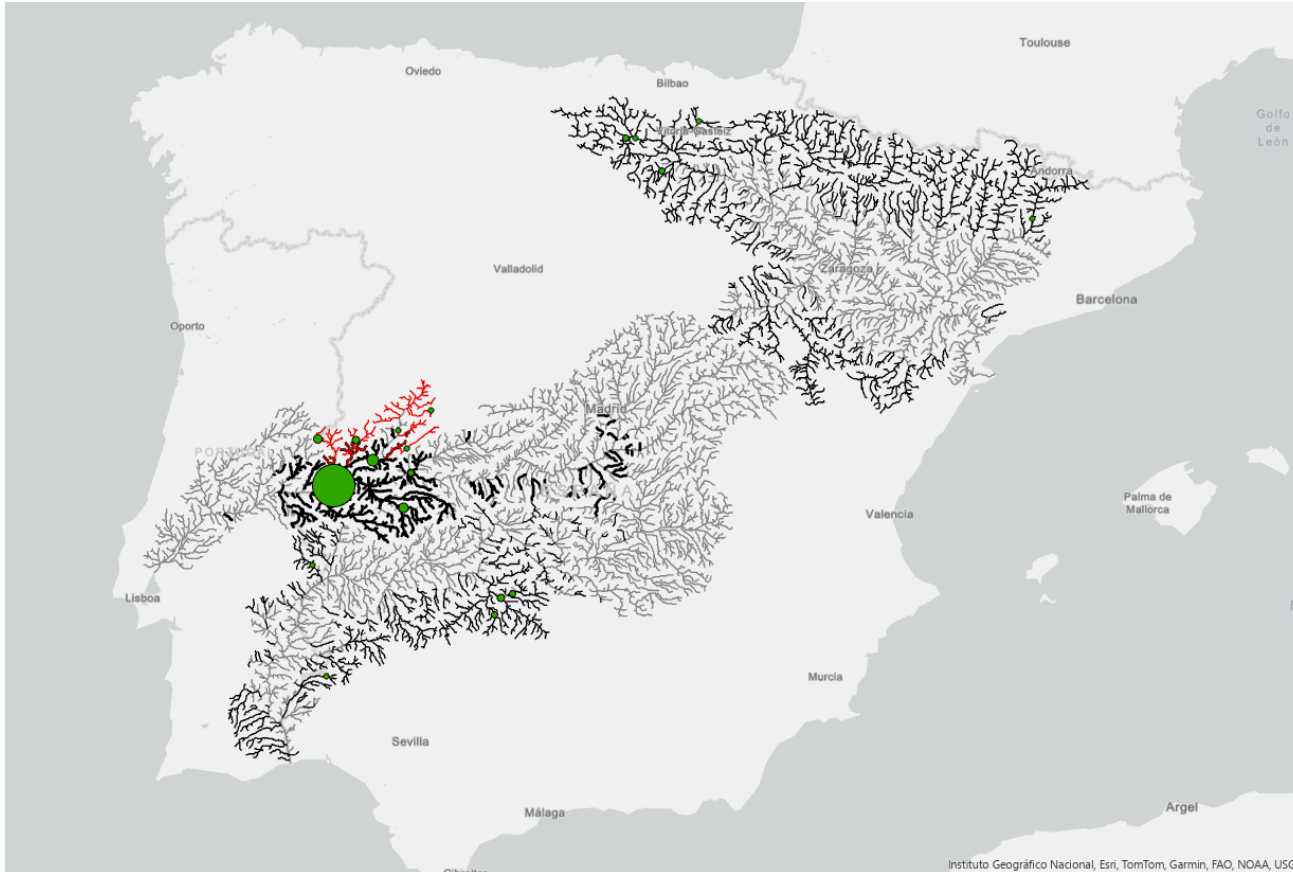
- a) *Salmo trutta* in the Ebro River basin
- b) *Anaecypris hispanica* in the Guadiana River basin
- c) *Luciobarbus comizo* in the Tagus River basin
- d) *Cobitis vettonica* in the Tagus River basin

The natural population connectivity was generally low.

Dams significantly reduced the connectivity between populations.

River basin	Species	PD	Total pop length	Natural populations			Fragmented populations		
				Number of pops	Mean pop length	PCI	Number of pops	Mean pop length	PCI
Tagus	<i>Cobitis vettonica</i>	0.3	845.82	10	84.58	20.09	29	29.17	14.36
Tagus	<i>Luciobarbus comizo</i>	0.8	2520.32	70	36.00	47.48	120	21.00	16.48
Guadiana	<i>Anaocypris hispanica</i>	0.5	4468.79	117	38.19	7.95	174	25.68	2.59
Ebro	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	0.9	8961.47	89	100.69	19.3	222	40.37	2.19

RESULTS



River basin	Fish species	Name	Longitude	Latitude	PCI Increment (points)
Tagus	<i>Luciobarbus comizo</i>	José María De Oriol	-6.8899	39.7267	13.75
Tagus	<i>Luciobarbus comizo</i>	Encín	-6.4278	39.9554	2.41
Tagus	<i>Luciobarbus comizo</i>	Santa Marta De Magasca	-6.0784	39.5221	1.43
Tagus	<i>Luciobarbus comizo</i>	Torrejón Tiétar	-5.9891	39.8441	0.57
Tagus	<i>Luciobarbus comizo</i>	Torrejón Tajo	-5.9836	39.8362	0.48
Tagus	<i>Cobitis vettonica</i>	Besagueda	-7.0778	40.1414	0.97
Tagus	<i>Cobitis vettonica</i>	Rivera De Gata	-6.6325	40.1340	0.79
Tagus	<i>Cobitis vettonica</i>	Jerte	-6.0407	40.0592	0.14
Tagus	<i>Cobitis vettonica</i>	Gabriel y Galán	-6.1301	40.2243	0.13
Tagus	<i>Cobitis vettonica</i>	Manufacturas Béjar	-5.7464	40.3951	0.11
Ebro	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Cereceda	-3.4676	42.7867	0.26
Ebro	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Leiva	-3.0501	42.5053	0.23
Ebro	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Cillaperlata	-3.3575	42.7840	0.11
Ebro	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Oliana	1.2970	42.0933	0.08
Ebro	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Ullivarri	-2.6124	42.9291	0.08
Guadiana	<i>Anaocypris hispanica</i>	Mendoza	-4.9255	38.7054	0.78
Guadiana	<i>Anaocypris hispanica</i>	La Colada	-5.0112	38.5469	0.25
Guadiana	<i>Anaocypris hispanica</i>	Castilseras	-4.7975	38.7417	0.16
Guadiana	<i>Anaocypris hispanica</i>	Caia	-7.1413	39.0022	0.05
Guadiana	<i>Anaocypris hispanica</i>	Aroche	-6.9764	37.9887	0.05

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The PCI index can **quantify** the connectivity of fish metapopulations and the impact of each individual dam.

Less naturally fragmented fish populations are **more vulnerable to dams**.

The PCI can be used to **target** fragmentation **mitigation** actions. It can be modified to account for other types of barriers, spatiotemporal scales, budgets, etc.

It is important to know the **biology** and **dispersion capability** of fish species as well as the **distribution** of populations or suitable habitat at different scales.

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