Manzanares River Renaturalisation — Madrid Opens Its 1940s Weirs and Lets a Canalised Urban River Rewild (Spain)

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · Spain

Quality score: 40/100

Evidence strength: Moderate

Summary

In May 2016 Madrid opened the weir gates on a 7.5 km canalised reach of the Manzanares. Sand bars, islands and willows formed unaided, 50+ bird species were recorded and native barbel became the dominant fish. Peer-reviewed studies confirm the habitat gains.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced	0/3
Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced	2/3
Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control	2/3
Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced	0/3
Governance, certification & transferability	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-11-16

Ayuntamiento de Madrid (proposed and co-monitored by Ecologistas en Acción) — accessed 2026-11-16

Ayuntamiento de Madrid — Renaturalización del río Manzanares — accessed 2026-11-16

Díaz-Redondo et al. (2022), River Research and Applications — initial habitat evolution — accessed 2026-11-16

Ecoticias (2018) — 1.3 km first reach completed, €1,216,054 — accessed 2026-11-16

Urban Forestry & Urban Greening (2024) — recreation potential and use — accessed 2026-11-16

El Español (2025) — Ecologistas en Acción call to remove remaining gates — accessed 2026-11-16

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