

# Floods and Green Vultures Devastate Valencia, Spain

by Claudio Celani

Nov. 5—The Spanish Royals were assaulted by the angry local population when they visited Valencia, Spain, Nov. 3, four days after floods devastated the region. The death count from the disaster is up to 217, and rising, and hundreds of people are still missing. People threw mud balls at King Felipe VI, and someone took a stick to Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

Their rage is justified. Not only could the heavy toll of human lives, and destruction have been avoided, if the authorities had sounded the alarm in a timely way, but the flooding itself might have been vastly lessened, or even prevented, had local and national authorities invested in traditional water-management and flood-control infrastructure—dams, levees, retention basins, etc.—in recent decades. In addition, aid from government authorities was slow and insufficient.

The people's rage is motivated by the absence of government help before, during, and after the flood, which had been forecast by meteorologists. At one point 170,000 people were displaced, 50,000 were without electricity, and 350,000 without water. Despite meteorologists' early warnings that an extreme rainstorm was coming, the local government did not tell people to stay home or take other measures, early on. Thousands of cars were slammed off the road; some people drowned in underground parking lots. There were many ground-floor deaths, including seven people at one nursing home.

Right off the mark, the Green vulture mainstream media and politicians declared the disaster to be the inevitable result of lack of sufficient response to miti-

gate “climate change.” The BBC on Oct. 31, wrote, “In a preliminary report, World Weather Attribution (WWA), a group of international scientists who investigate global warming's role in extreme weather, found that the rainfall which struck Spain was 12% heavier due to climate change and that the weather event experienced was twice as likely.” The WWA, based in Britain, is a media-control operation, enforcing the climate-change narrative.



CC/Manuel Pérez García and Estefanía Monerri Minguez.

*Wreckage from Valencia's flooding at the end of October.*

However, in reality, Madrid has been wasting resources in the cultish attempt to lessen climate change, all the while not building and maintaining flood defenses. This is the main factor causing flood damage.

Over recent decades, Spain has invested tens of billions of euros in so-called climate-mitigation policies that have weakened existing flood-prevention measures. One billion euros was spent to meet the targets

of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol; 50 billion euros to reach the 20-20-20 target (20% less CO<sub>2</sub> emission, 20% “renewables,” 20% more efficiency) set by the European Union; and 240 billion euros to reach the targets of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Wasted money. The waste comes in two respects: the attempts to lessen emissions and to further biodiversity, otherwise called “re-naturalization” in the European Union parlance. The climate is not like a giant refrigerator, in which you can turn the thermostat on and off (as pointed out by Italian Prof. Franco Battaglia). E-cars and solar panels have no effect on global climate. Worse: Evidence shows that in Valencia province, as in other regions, the money was spent on “restoring nature”—riverine projects that weakened infrastructure, or even prevented new infrastructure, for flood control.

### Valencia Flooding—A Known Threat

Valencia is on the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula, on the Balearic Sea, of the Mediterranean. With 840,000 people, it is the third-largest city in Spain. The Turia River discharges into the sea here, after rising 170 miles upriver in the *Montes Universales*, in the mountains of the northwesternmost end of the *Sistema Iberico*.

A large number of floods have been recorded in Valencia, from 1321 to 1897; up to 75 major floods are estimated to have taken place in the seven centuries prior to the October 14, 1957 flood, which was extreme. It is still remembered as the “*Gran Riada de Valencia*”—the Great Flood of Valencia. It caused an official death toll of 81, and unofficially, a reported 300 deaths. Destruction was vast.

After the 1957 flood, au-



October 25, 2022

October 30, 2024

earthobservatory.nasa.gov

*Before-and-after interactive split-screen satellite view of the latest Valencia flooding available on NASA's website.*

thorities decided to divert the Turia River from flowing through the city center, so that it would no longer constitute such a threat to Valencia. A new riverbed was built south of the city. It was completed by 1969, successfully providing protection. However, in the following years, authorities permitted more and more ur-



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*Before and after views of Valencia, the right shows the flooding after 12-20 inches of rain fell on the area in a matter of hours.*



banization of those areas at the southern periphery of Valencia, which were part of the flood retention basin, thus increasing vulnerability again.

On Oct. 29, more than 12 inches (300 mm) of rain fell in parts of the Valencia province. In Chiva, a town of 16,750 inhabitants, just west of Valencia, nearly 20 inches (500 mm) of rain fell in eight hours. The ensuing run-off was massive.

Landsat 8 OLI (Operational Land Imager) posted a spectacular pair of before-and-after satellite [photo-graphs](#) of the results of the extensive flooding on urban and agricultural lands, and on the coastal wetlands south of Valencia, the l'Albufera lagoon, on October 31.

Exceptional though this latest torrential rainfall episode may be, the phenomenon is well known and may well happen in the region. They occur, according to NASA, “where cold fronts encounter warm, humid air masses, such as over the Mediterranean Sea.” The Spanish acronym DANA is the name for the phenomenon where a high-altitude, low-pressure weather system becomes isolated from the jet stream: *Depresion Aislada en Niveles Altos*. The resulting rainstorm can linger before dissipating, augmenting flooding risk.

### **Defending Eco-Myths, Not People**

Instead of looking at this reality, the Green vultures insist that the Oct. 30 flood is an extreme event caused by man-caused rising sea temperatures, which creates a violent impact with the colder northern temperature. Serious scientists, however, notice that global warming affects the northern hemisphere, so that the difference in temperature in the impact should be lower.

As this “climate change” orientation took over public discourse and institutions, the authorities in Spain abandoned their flood-defense orientation. They ceased building more flood mitigation structures, like the Turia River diversion outside Valencia city center, and instead turned to re-naturizing and “liberating” the Turia River! In other words, the goal became saving “nature,” not people.

Civil engineers have been studying other flood-control measures for the Turia River, and other rivers in the basin, but these projects have gone nowhere. For example, there is a plan to alleviate the constriction in the Rambla Del Poyo, a 43.5-km long gorge upstream from Valencia, by building a new diversion channel to

run the Turia River flow, at that point, directly into the diversion channel south of Valencia.

Instead of working on such measures to control run-off and prevent damage, the government has undertaken a series of interventions its officials described as eco-habitat restoration. A marker date in this shift against protective infrastructure is the Water Framework Directive issued by the EU in 2000, aimed at restoring biodiversity in wetlands, of plants, animals, and aquatic life.

In Spain, the goal on the Turia River, was to increase the flow, so that its temperature and other features would favor fish and riverine life. A 2019 [report](#) by Wetlands International and the Italian Center for River Restoration (CIRF) on the state of implementation of the EU Directive in eight cases, reported on the Turia River situation as one of their studies, along with similar projects in France, Belgium, and the UK. The report stated that intervention on the Turia River had successfully increased its flow.

The interventions focused on the Benagéber Dam, which was built in 1950 and, according to the report, caused harm, because it “significantly altered the hydrological regime of the Turia River downstream. The low flow rates resulted in consequent rise of water temperature—up to 24°C (75°F) in summer. This condition affected the ecological integrity of the riverine communities and caused the almost total disappearance of the brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) throughout the water body.

“The project focused on the increase of the minimum environmental flow below the dam. The effort aimed to improve one of the four aspects of environmental flows (following Spanish regulation) in the River Basin Management Plan with the overall objective to contribute to improvement of the ecological status of the water body.

“The measure established a minimum ecological flow of 1.20 cubic meters [per second] to allow the recovery of the hydrological conditions and riverine communities... The increase of the minimum flow had positive consequences on macrophytes, benthic macroinvertebrates and fish. The populations of brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) are recovering thanks to the newly created areas with loose gravel that are of fundamental importance for spawning. The abundance and diversity of benthic macroinvertebrates improved due to in-channel habitat diversification.



damremoval.eu

*Removal of Spain's Molino de Zúñiga Dam.*



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*Another view of the removal of the Molino de Zúñiga Dam: letting nature take its course, come hell or high water.*

Moreover, the condition of the riparian forest is also improving.

“The most innovative aspect of this restoration project is the establishment of environmental flows, a kind of restoration measure that has been shown to be important to the ecological and geomorphological dynamics of regulated rivers, with significant implications in terms of environmental services provided.”

Thus, macroinvertebrates are safe at the cost of human lives.

## EU: ‘Free-flowing’ Rivers

The EU insanity has not stopped. In 2022, the Water Framework Directive was upgraded in the Nature Restoration Law. Its Article 7 calls for removing dams as a means to “contribute to the natural longitudinal and lateral connectivity of rivers and the EU’s objective to have 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers” and to “help restore river areas and floodplains.” A year before, the EU issued a guidance document to its member nations, on how they could identify waterworks for removal, in order to further the EU Biodiversity Strategy, a key part of the EU Green Deal.

Leading the charge against water-management infrastructure is the group called Dam Removal Europe. It is a coalition of organizations, including the World Wildlife Fund, The Rivers Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Wetlands International, Rewilding Europe, The European Rivers Network, and The World Fish Migration Foundation. Dam Removal Europe works closely with the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the World Economic Forum, and related networks.

It is reported that 487 barriers (dams, weirs, river walls, etc.) were removed in 15 European countries in 2023, an increase of 50% over the previous year’s figures. These initiatives have enabled more than 4,300 km of river to be “reconnected.” Spain is in first place for numbers of barriers removed in the last three years. In 2021, Dam Removal Europe gave its “dam removal award” to a biodiversity river project in Spain.

This anti-infrastructure perspective was promoted at the recently concluded COP16 Biodiversity conference (Oct. 21-Nov. 1) in Cali, Colombia, which took place at the same time as the Valencia disaster occurred. Expect more drumbeat for “bolder climate action” in mainstream media as the opening approaches of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan on Nov. 11. Its theme is, “In Solidarity for a Green World.”

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