Exploring and exploiting marine aliens in Greece and beyond: is there a light at the end of the tunnel?

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defining aliens (EU Regulation 1143/2014)

 alien species (AS) ⇒ any live specimen of a species, subspecies or lower taxon of animals, plants, fungi or micro-organisms introduced outside its natural range; it includes any part, gametes, seeds, eggs or propagules of such species, as well as any hybrids, varieties or breeds that might survive and subsequently reproduce

 invasive alien species (IAS) ⇒ AS whose introduction or spread has been found to threaten or adversely impact upon biodiversity and related ecosystem services

https://www.ipbes.net/IASmediarelease

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Invasive alien species are one of the 5 major drivers of biodiversity loss

Alien species are animals, plants, and other organisms that have been introduced by human activities to new regions

Invasive alien species are a subset of alien species, known to have established and spread with negative impacts on nature. Many invasive alien species also have impacts on people

#InvasiveAlienSpecies Assessment



https://www.ipbes.net/IASmediarelease

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

People and nature are threatened by invasive alien species in all regions of Earth

37,000 established alien species have been introduced by human activities worldwide

200 new alien species every year

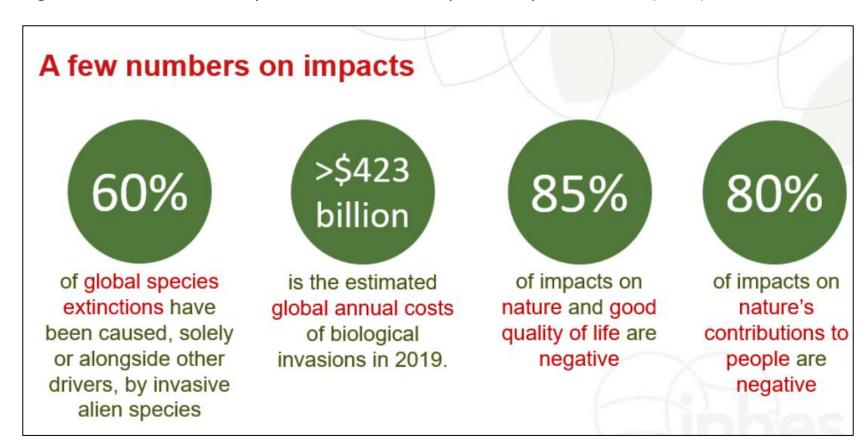
3,500 invasive alien species, with negative impacts on nature, and also on people

More than 2,300 invasive alien species are found on lands of Indigenous Peoples across all regions of Earth

Impacts Good

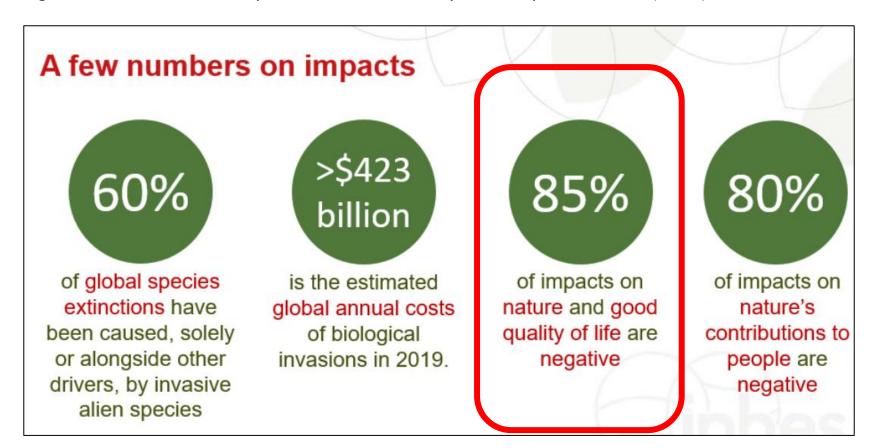
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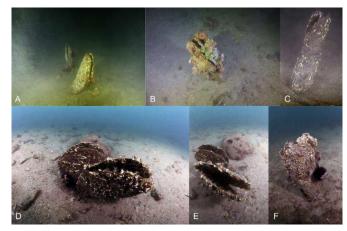
https://www.ipbes.net/IASmediarelease

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)



Impacts on biodiversity

- species extirpation
- loss of habitats
- barrens due to grazing ⇒ Siganus spp.
- mass-mortalities due to infectious diseases ⇒ Pinna nobilis infected by Haplosporidium pinnae



(from Čelebičić et al, 2020): Dead individuals of *P. nobilis* in Neum Bay, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



(from Sala et al, 2011): 10 m depth near Kas, Turkey, May 2008. Note the absence of erect algae and sea urchins.

Impacts on fishers and fisheries

- Gear destruction ⇒ Lagocephalus spp.
- Health (painful stings) ⇒ Hermodice carunculata (fire worms)
- Net clogging ⇒ Ropilema nomadica
- Fouling



(from Turan, 2010)





Rhopilema nomadica

impacts on health

Since mid 1980's, large swarms of *Rhopilema nomadica*, appear along the Levantine.

The species entered though Suez Canal and is well established in the Eastern Mediterranean











A swimmer that encountered a *Rhopilema* nomadica in Yumurtalik (Adana, Turkey), fall 2009 (photo:Tahir Ozcan).



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Toxicology Reports

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/toxrep

Severe anaphylactic reaction to mediterranean jellyfish (*Ropilhema nomadica*) envenomation: Case report

Nadav Friedel^a, Dennis Scolnik^b, Dikla Adir^a, Miguel Glatstein^{a,c,*}

Impacts on health

Hindawi Publishing Corporation Case Reports in Critical Care Volume 2012, Article ID 782507, 3 pages doi:10.1155/2012/782507



Case Report

Severe Tetrodotoxin Poisoning after Consumption of Lagocephalus sceleratus (Pufferfish, Fugu) Fished in Mediterranean Sea, Treated with Cholinesterase Inhibitor

Julia Kheifets, Boris Rozhavsky, Zehava Girsh Solomonovich, Rodman Marianna, and Arie Soroksky

Intensive Care Unit, Wolfson Medical Center, Holon, Israel

existing databases & networks



JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

EASIN - European Alien Species Information Network

European Commission > JRC > IES > EASIN

http://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/



https://www.nobanis.org/



http://www.europe-aliens.org/



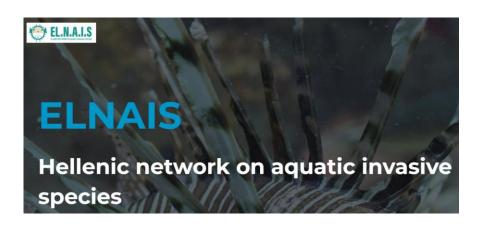


http://www.sibm.it/

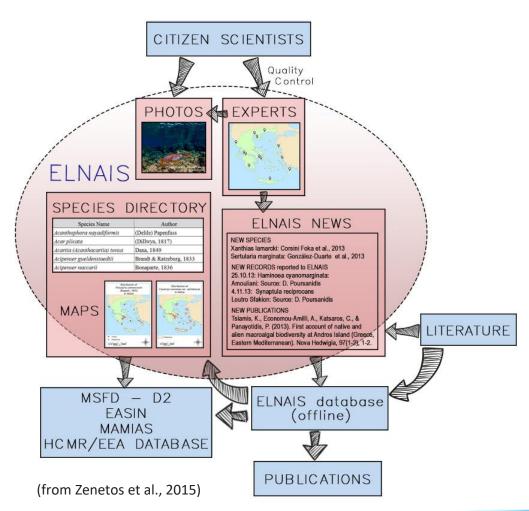


http://www.corpi.ku.lt/databases/index.php/aquanis/

HCMR's ELNAIS database & network



A dynamic online information platform aiming to collect and report spatial information on Aquatic Alien Species in Greek waters, initiated in 2007

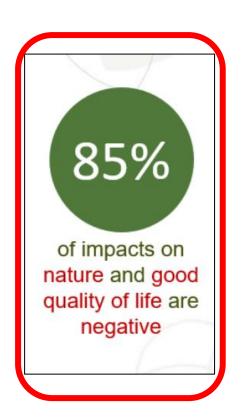


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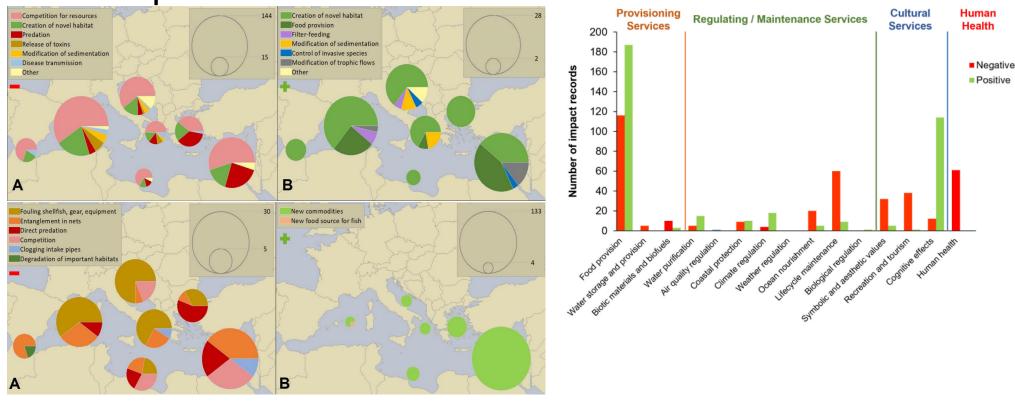
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

What can we do to mitigate the impacts of this 85%?

Can we see IAS as a boon??



marine aliens: is there a positive output?



Tsirintanis et al. (2022) Bioinvasion impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem services, and human health in the Mediterranean Sea. Aquat Invasions 3, 308–352

scientific research in Greece

- Action Plan towards combating the negative impacts of Lagocephalus sceleratus (just delivered to NECCA-Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency) - IMBRIW
- projects funded aiming to find nature based solutions funded by NRSF 2017-2020
 - 4ALIEN project: Biology and the potential economic exploitation of four alien species in the Hellenic Seas IMBRIW
 - LAGOMEAL: An alternative way of utilizing the alien fish species of the genus *Lagocephalus*. Production of fishmeal for use in the diet of Mediterranean farmed marine species IMBBC
 - ExplIAS: Design and piloting methods of commercial exploitation of marine alien species towards the contribution to the control of their population - IO

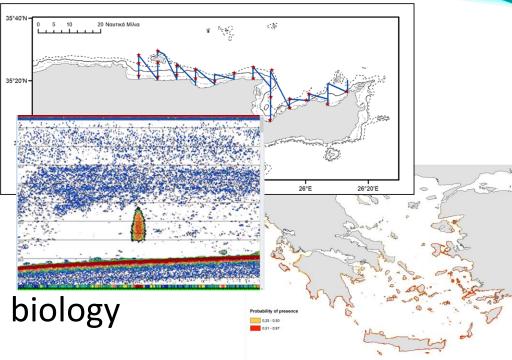
4ALIEN project

Aim was (among others) to

 gain new knowledge on the biology ecology and distribution

analyse the nutritional quality

Fillet yielding	35.01±2.56	31.00±2.66	29.06±1.34	44.26±1.43	
Protein	20.5±0.5	18.9±0.1	18.1±2.8	23.0±0.1	20
Fat	2.2±0.1	1.7±0.2	1.7±0.1	1.2±0.0	3
Moisture	75.6±0.3	77.6±0.2	76.8±0.4	73.8±0.8	75
Carbohydrates	0				1
n3:n6 ratio	1	1	4.0	9.3	



4ALIEN project

 explore the potential exploitation by the related industry







LAGOmeal project





- Why Lagocephalus?
 - a widely distributed IAS
 - abundant in Greece
 - strongly impacting biodiversity, ecosystem services and human health
 - consumption by humans is PROHIBITED!
- Why fishmeal?
 - aquaculture is one of the most important primary production activities in Greece
 - increased demand of aquaculture products ⇒ increased demand on aquafeeds and hence fishmeal
 - Greece yearly imports of fishmeal is up to 50.000 t, that 70.000.000 euros

LAGOmeal project

- development of a protocol that will ensure the deactivation of TTX
- production of a high nutritional value of fishmeal in fish feed for Mediterranean farmed fish species
- preparation of an operational

FAMENET stories

FAMENET communicates the successes of the EMFF and EMFAF, through the collection of good practices and stories, to a wide range of audiences.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Local Support Network



News article 22 December 2023

Turning the toxic pufferfish invader into aquaculture feed

When the Suez Canal was opened 150 years ago, it brought many positive aspects for travel and trade. But it also opened a channel (pun intended) for the mass migration of invasive marine species from the Indo-Pacific region, with significant, and generally negative repercussions for the biodiversity

LAGOmeal project

	Control	UnP-LM	HT-LM	LT-LM	Combo
Fishmeal conventional	30	-	-	-	15
LM Unprocessed	-	30	-	-	-
LM High temp	-	-	30	-	-
LM Low temp	-	-	-	30	15
Wheat meal	10.9	10.9	10.9	10.9	10.9
Corn gluten	19	19	19	19	19
Soybean Concentrate	17	17	17	17	17
Soybean meal	9	9	9	9	9
Fish Oil	13	13	13	13	13
Monocalcium phosphate	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Mineral & Vitamin	2.4	^ 1		ontrol	LInD

Lysine Methionine

		Control	UnP-LM	HT-LM	LT-LM	Combo
Fin	al weight	103.3±4.3 ^{ab}	111.8±2.4 ^a	98.5±4.4 ^b	98.9±3.0 ^b	106.1±5.9ab
SGI	R	0.94±0.04 ^{ab}	1.00±0.05°	0.89±0.04 ^{ab}	0.87±0.05 ^b	0.92±0.05 ^{ab}
Foc	od consumption	1.22±0.10	1.17±0.09	1.31±0.03	1.29±0.01	1.24±0.01
FCF	₹	1.45±0.16 ^{ab}	1.32±0.11 ^a	1.64±0.02 ^b	1.65±0.10 ^b	1.53±0.08ab
Mo	ortality (%)	0	0	0	0	0
TT	(nd	nd	nd	nd	nd

SGR: % weight gain/day

Food consumption: % weight/day

FCR: total food/weight gain

ExplIAS project



TOXINS

There is considerable interest in its pharmaceutical application as an analgesic or as a substitute for botox in cosmetic formulations.

Learn more



COLLAGEN

Levels of collagen in the human body begin to decrease naturally from the age of 25. Therefore, the intake of collagen through the diet becomes imperative.

Learn more



OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

 Ω -3 and Ω -6 fatty acids have been characterized as containing fatty acids as the body cannot synthesize them on its own and their intake through the diet is necessary.









other approaches: Pterois jewelry





other approaches: *Lagocephalus* leather





https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/turkish-engineer-makes-fish-leather-purses-out-of-invasive-species/news

2LTA ZUL



efforts in the future...

VALIAS: Valorization of Marine Invasive
Alien Species a Pathway Towards the
Protection of European Marine
Biodiversity: From Destructive
Invaders to a Source of Wealth

Fostering Sustainable Resource Utilization: Developing novel methods to utilize IAS leads to sustainable resource management, aligning with circular bioeconomy principles.

Driving Economic Growth through Innovation: Controlling IAS and creating new value chains stimulates economic growth and enhances resilience in fisheries and related industries.

Empowering Marine Biodiversity Conservation: Protecting marine biodiversity by managing IAS positively impacts ecosystem health and promotes long-term sustainability in European seas.



ALIAS





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thank you...

