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The Lessepsian Immigrant Fish Species, Is it a National Disaster or a National Wealth

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Abstract

There are probably no ecosystems on earth which may resist the introduction of an alien species. Success of an introduced species in the new environment generally depends on a combination of several bio-ecological factors. The migration of Red Sea fishes through the Suez Canal, which is known as “Lessepsian migration” has impacted the ecosystem of the Eastern Mediterranean. Not all the invasion through the Suez Canal is of negative impacts, the richness of Red Sea species introduced through the Suez Canal (Lessepsian species) to the eastern Mediterranean coastline, reaching a maximum of 129 species per 100 km², as well as many Lessepsian species have positive impacts on the ecosystem and biodiversity and securing food for millions of people. In Egypt, more than 50% of the Mediterranean catch is of Red Sea origin. Out of 43 Lessepsian fish species recorded in the Egyptian Mediterranean waters, about 20 fish species are became of commercial importance and compose the main food for the coastal communities on the Egyptian Mediterranean. Most of Lessepsian species distributed in the region have begun to be caught in increasing quantities in recent years and became one of the economically important species landed in many Mediterranean countries like Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon, ...etc. On the other hand, few numbers of species have caused some health problems but this could be mitigated by some regulations. This study is prepared to discuss and demonstrate the economic importance of most Lessepsian immigrant fish species and their contribution to the eastern Mediterranean economy and food security as well as the negative impacts of some Lessepsian immigrant and how to mitigate it. So, this study will answer a very important question is the Lessepsian immigrant fish species a national disaster or a national wealth.

Keywords: Alien species, commercial importance, lessepsian migration, positive impacts