

Eurofish International Organisation

For the Development of
Fisheries and Aquaculture
in Europe

UTILISING THE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLUE CRAB

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“PREDATORS AND INVASIVE SPECIES – A THREAT OR A BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITY”
TALLIN, ESTONIA
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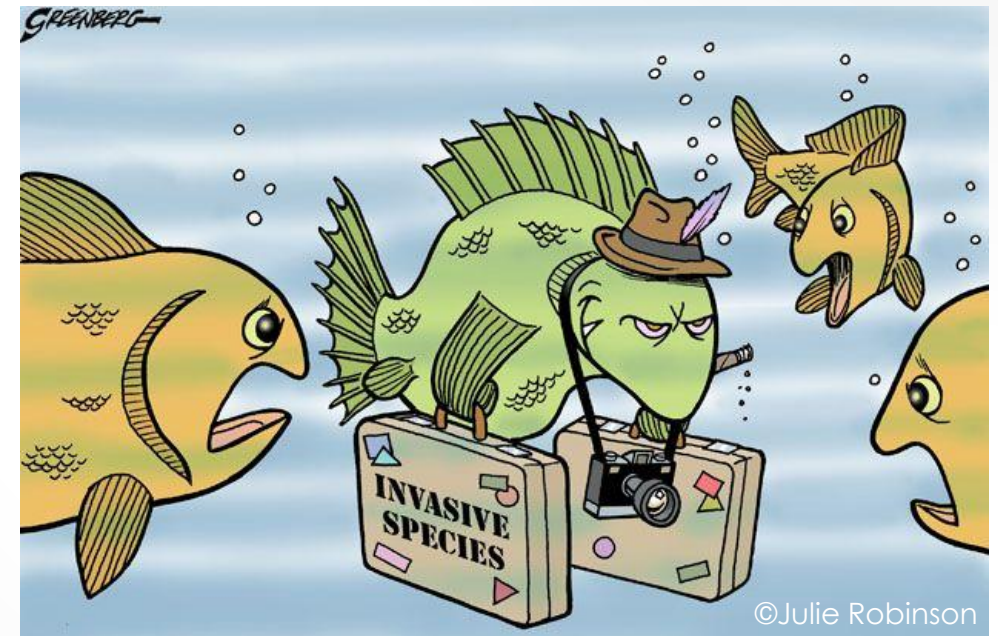
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)

“Once established, the eradication of AIS is almost always considered impracticable in aquatic environment. Consequently, the irreversible nature of aquatic invasions underscore the imperative for adaptive management.”

↓
Commercial exploitation



↓
Bioeconomic paradox risks





AIS: THE BLUE CRAB IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA



American blue crab
(*Callinectes sapidus*)



Blue swimming crab
(*Portunus segnis*)

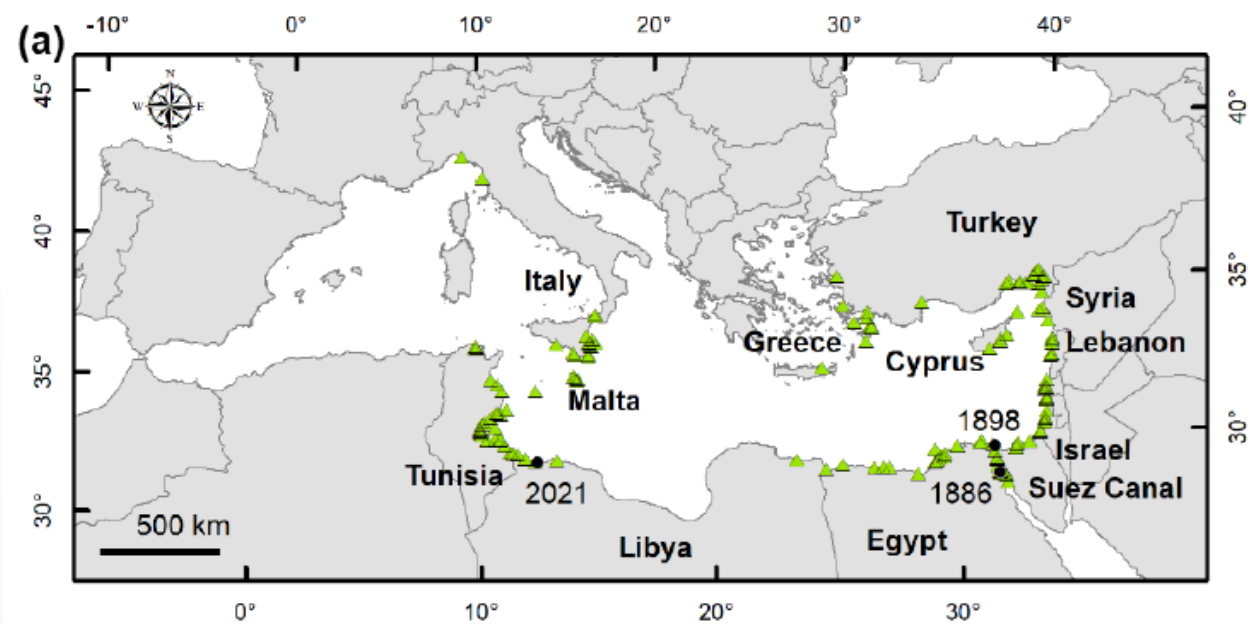
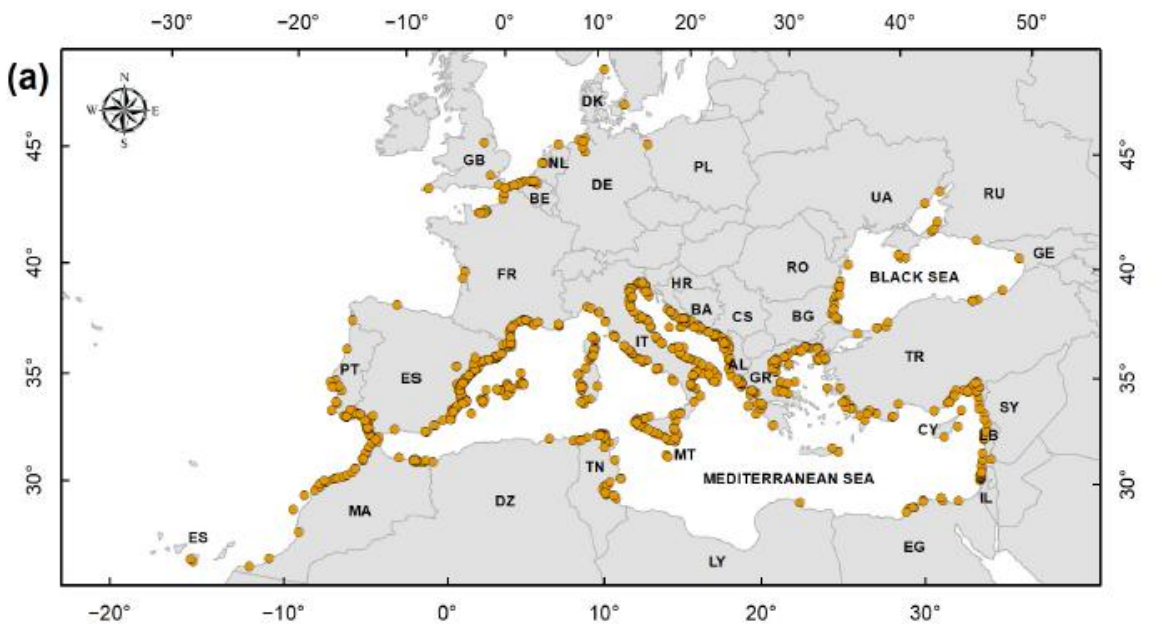




THE RISE OF THE BLUE CRAB

Origin: Native to Western Atlantic

Origin: Red Sea and Indian Ocean



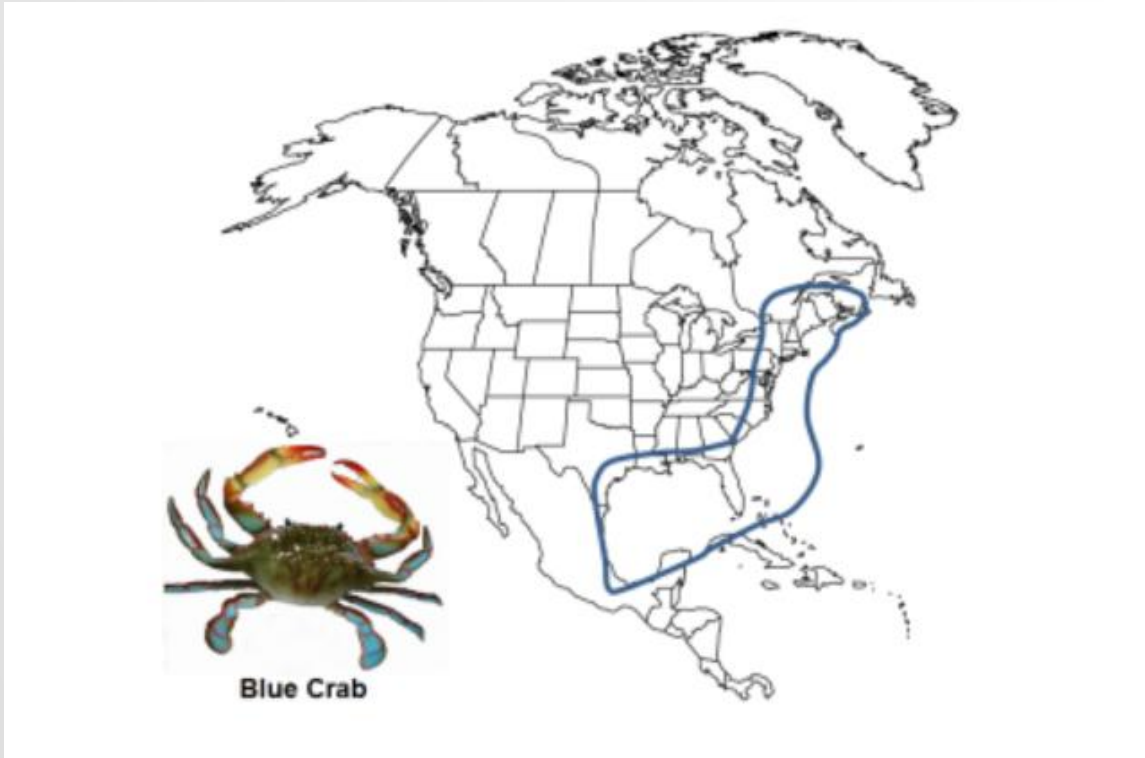
Callinectes sapidus



Portunus segnis



CALLINECTES SAPIDUS MARKET IN THE USA



Landing: 71.000 tonnes, recent years.

Economic Value: \$200–300 million/year nationally

Jobs: Maryland alone, supports about **5.500** workers

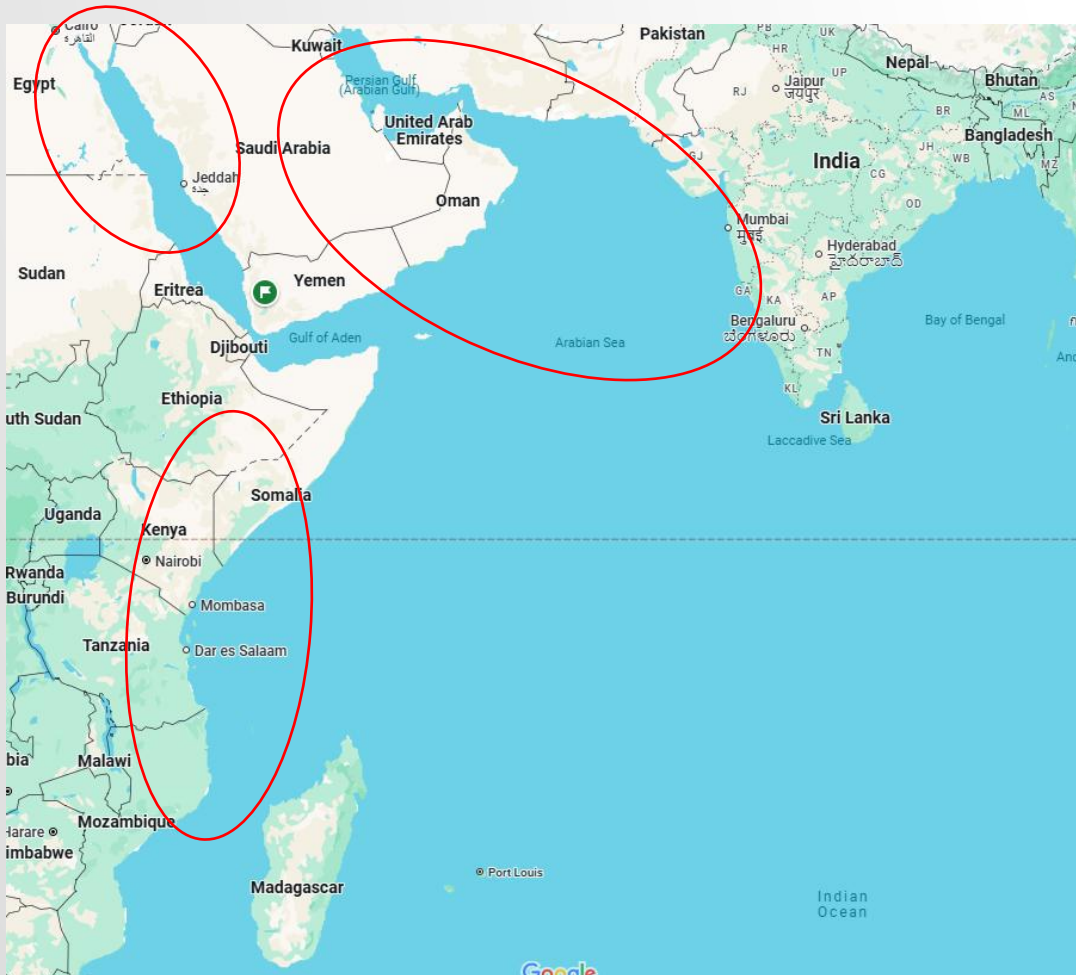


Imports: crab meat to meet demand

Exports: small volume



PORTUNUS SEGNIS MARKET



Relevant for local small-scale fisheries

No specific fishery - by catch

High market price females with eggs.

Bahrein is focusing on processing and export.





BLUE CRAB VALUE



**Soft-Shell
Crabs**

100%

High biomass yield
Aquaculture



**Hard-Shell
Crabs**

20-25%

Low biomass yield
Small scale fisheries



Soft shell crab prices can exceed
hard-shell by 300-400%



CASE STUDY - SPAIN



Catalonia pioneer in 2016



Listed as a commercial species.

Not included in the national catalog of invasive alien species



Only professional fishers

5 million specimens caught between 2016 - 2023, with a value of € 4,5 million.



CASE STUDY – ITALY

Introduced to the IT market in 2022. The project Blueat started in 2021.



Purchased mainly to the fishers in the Po Delta (5 – 6 tonnes/day)

International market
(USA, Korea)

Semi-processed frozen crab

National market

Ready to cook products - restaurants



©Blueat

Testing: Use by-products to produce film for packaging.

CASE STUDY – TUNISIA



First detected in 2014.

Main fishery in southeast Tunisia. In high season, the blue crab represented more than 70% of the catch.



49 processing and exporting companies

Attraction of foreign investments



Status: overfished





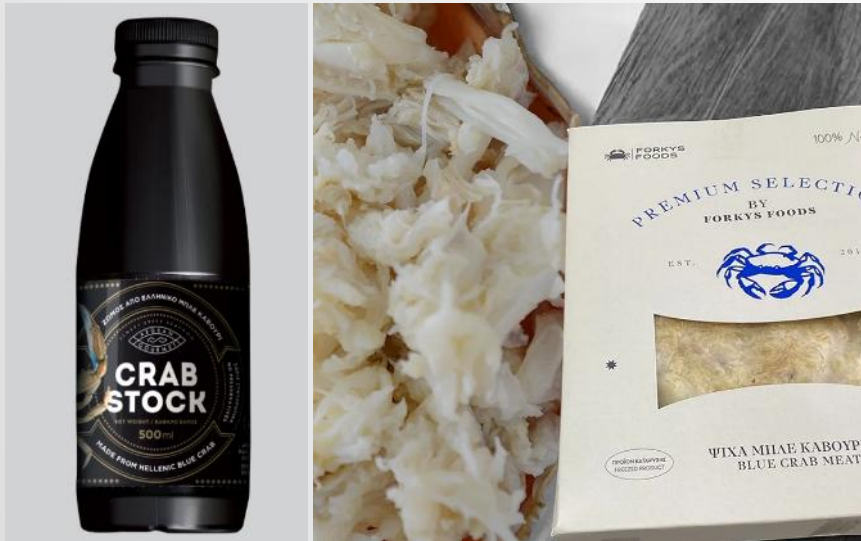
CASE STUDY - GREECE



Main fishing area Northwest Aegean Sea.



Several companies involved in blue crab operations, processing and distribution.



Export in Europe (Italy/Spain), Asia, and USA.



Gourmet product development



CASE STUDY - TÜRKIYE



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Small scale fisheries

Annual exports: 300–500 tons;
valued €8–10/kg

Main export market: Eastern Asia

Processing and export effort





CASE STUDY – ITALY

Delicacy: Moeche ~ Fried Soft Shell Crabs

Mediterranena
green crab
(*Carcinus aestuarii*)



Market price:
+80 €/kg

Blue crab



Eastern USA
Aquaculture
activities for
soft crab

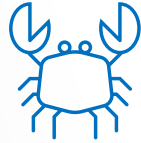
Lesina lagoon


Flowthrough system
to rear pre-molt
individuals

Diversifying the
market

CASE STUDY - TÜRKIYE

Family company farming soft shell crab.



 Kept individually in boxes – highly dependent manual labour.

Sales primarily to hotels and restaurants in Türkiye.



 The shell is currently being discarded.





Challenges

- Highly invasive species;
- Harmonized monitoring and data collection;
- Implementing a Sea basin common strategy;
- Managing by-products and waste.



Opportunities

- New resource for SSF;
- Businesses creation and new job opportunities;
- Export market;
- Coastal states, high seafood consumption;
- Versatile product.

Thank you for your attention!

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