

BOOK REVIEW

Golani, D., L. Orsi-Relini, E. Massutí and J. Quignard. – 2002. *CIESM Atlas of Exotic Species in the Mediterranean. Vol. 1. Fishes*. F. Briand, ed. CIESM Publishers, Monaco. 256 pp. ISBN 92-990003-1-X

As stated in the title of the book, this work deals with those fish species detected in the Mediterranean Sea whose origin is located outside the Mediterranean and that by any cause have entered this sea through its western or eastern accesses. Some of these species are only known from single or a few individuals, whereas some of them form well-settled populations.

This book is undoubtedly a turning point in the dissemination of knowledge of a part of the Mediterranean ichthyology. It is a very useful and indeed necessary reference for all those showing interest in ichthyofauna and its distribution. It contains a good deal of updated information that is very useful because many of the original papers from which it was compiled are not readily available to most researchers and people interested.

It is printed on satin-finish paper with a glossy colour cover, and its size, 15 x 21.5 cm, makes it very easy to handle. Also, the coloured edging applied to the margins to indicate the species of the same order facilitates the search for the required species.

The book is divided into eight sections. The first two are dedicated to the Foreword by the publisher and the Acknowledgements of the authors. There follows an interesting Introduction in which the authors describe the foundations of the work, stressing the dynamic nature in space and time of the gateways to the Mediterranean, the Straits of Gibraltar, the Dardanelles and the Suez Channel, and paying special attention to the latter.

The authors then devote nine pages to general scientific remarks on binomial nomenclature, anatomy, morphology and taxonomy. With the aid of schematic illustrations, this is intended to help non-experts to understand the terminology and meristic formulations used. Nevertheless, no reference can be found to the specific fish classification work used, though the well-known work of Nelson (1974,

currently available in its 1994 edition) is included in the list of references.

The fifth section occupies the main body of the work. It starts with a detailed list, in which a series of codes is used to indicate the origin, status and location of each of the 90 registered species.

Each species, in sheet format, is represented by a drawing or photograph, its radial formula (when necessary), a diagnosis or short description, a series of subparagraphs comparing it with close species and discussing its biology, its general distribution, its entrance passage to the Mediterranean, the occurrence of any established populations, its importance to humans, a bibliographically-based map of its distribution in the Mediterranean and basic references. This information is standardised for presentation on two pages, which allows to all the information available to be seen at a glance.

The sixth section of eight pages may be rather controversial because it justifies the exclusion of certain species, but it is based on well-founded criteria.

The last two sections are devoted to the bibliographical references and the index with entries by both the generic and specific names of the species. The bibliographical section covers 21 pages and, though not exhaustive, contains the references of the first published occurrences and distribution of all the species dealt with. It also includes some works published in little known journals or in journals not specifically dealing with the Mediterranean. The authors are thus able to enrich their work by showing the distribution of some species in localities for which little information is available, such as the Gulf of Libya.

Finally, we wish to encourage both the authors and the publisher to continue in this effort of compilation and synthesis and to prepare future editions, either through the CIESM website <http://www.ciesm.org/atlas/> or by means of periodical editions of the present work that include improvements and updates with new findings and reports as they become available.

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