

## FOREWORD

The Norway lobster, *Nephrops norvegicus*, is a species of considerable fisheries importance which, together with red shrimps, form the main decapod crustacean resources in the Mediterranean. The Norway lobster has been extensively studied in its Atlantic distribution area, where there exist specific Working Groups for its assessment and management. Despite its importance, no scientific reference framework existed for this species in the Mediterranean. A few, isolated studies were available, mostly posterior to the late seventies. These aspects of Norway lobster studies made the information available for the Mediterranean seem relatively less important than the knowledge amassed for the North Atlantic.

In this volume, current knowledge on *N. norvegicus* in the Mediterranean is compiled, using the new available information made possible by the NEMED project, funded by the EU. This volume includes the results of the project that studied and compared the biology and fishery of Norway lobster in seven areas of the Mediterranean and adjacent Atlantic areas: Algarve (Portugal), Alboran and Catalan Seas in Spain; Ligurian, Tyrrhenian and Adriatic Seas in Italy and the Euboikos Gulf in Greece. The participants in the project comprised scientists specialised in Norway lobster and crustacean decapods.

This volume focuses on biological knowledge, such as moult, growth, reproductive aspects, feeding and population genetic differentiation, as well as on aspects relating to fisheries and exploitation: distribution, population dynamics and selectivity. Some novel aspects detailed in this work include the relationship of sexual maturity with age, the estimation of growth parameters and studies on the spatial distribution and abundance by kriging techniques. The authors of this volume want to make available to the Administration the state-of-the-art of biology and fisheries of Norway lobster in the Mediterranean, contributing to the basis of well-structured fisheries policies in this area.

J. Lambea and J.M. Anguita collaborated in the preparation of this volume.

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The editor