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THREATENED FISHES OF THE WORLD: *Cobitis levantina* Krupp & Moubayed, 1992 (Cobitidae)

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ABSTRACT

Cobitis levantina is distributed only in the uppermost Litani and Orontes River basins in Syria and Turkey. Its populations are under threat due to several factors such as desiccation, climate change and pollution. The species is assessed as Endangered (EN) in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Keywords:

Turkey

Orontes loach

Distribution

Threats

COMMON NAME

Orontes loach; Taşısiran (TR) (Fig 1).

CONSERVATION STATUS

Present status: Endangered B1 ab (i,ii,iii,iv,v)+ 2ab (i,ii,iii,iv,) (Freyhof, 2014)

IDENTIFICATION

D 6-7; P I, 7; C 15-17. Vertebrae 40-42. Has a compressed and elongated body and head. Eyes are small and covered by skin. A strong retractable suborbital spin below the eye with two branches, which has a well-developed dorso-lateral branch. Scales usually wider than long, with small eccentric focal zone; two Canestrini's scales present, the first one being rudimentary. Caudal peduncle is short and slightly longer than deep (Krupp and Moubayed, 1992; Erk'akan et al, 1998; Erk'akan and Ekmekçi, 2000).

DISTRIBUTION

Restricted to the Litani river basin in Lebanon and to the Orontes (Asi in Turkey) river basin in Syria and Turkey (Krupp and Moubayed, 1992; Erk'akan and Ekmekçi, 2000).

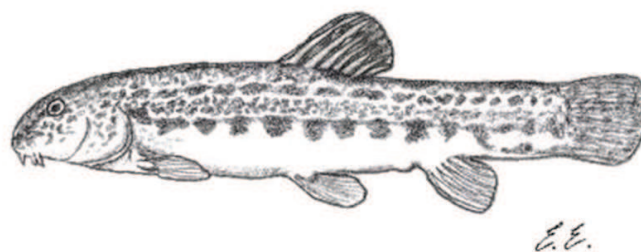


Fig 1. *Cobitis levantina*

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

It prefers lake shores and running waters without turbulence or still parts and shaded bank of the rivers with silty bottom and submerged vegetation like *Ceratophyllum* (Erk'akan and Ekmekçi, 2000). Demersal. May reach up to 81 mm SL and 91 mm TL.

REPRODUCTION

Non-guarders, open water/substratum egg scatterers. It spawns in April or May, laying eggs which adhere to gravel or aquatic vegetation (Beckman, 1962).

THREATS

Especially the Orontes River receives great amount of pollutants from Syria. Other main threats are water extraction and drought, and because of the water policy of Syria there are drastic water level fluctuations. Climate change has induced low rainfall, which leads to extremely degraded habitats and restricts the species to few sites.

CONSERVATION ACTION

None known to be in place.

CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The water level is necessary to be regulated at least to keep a certain amount of water flowing in the main course during the dry period. The adverse effects of the hydrological regime and pollution that seriously threaten the population of this species in Turkey should be prevented or minimized (Erk'akan and Ekmekçi, 2000).

REMARKS

Further investigations on the population dynamics and abundance of the species are needed.

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Sažetak

UGROŽENE VRSTE RIBA U SVIJETU: *Cobitis levantina* Krupp & Moubayed, 1992 (Cobitidae)

Cobitis levantina je rasprostranjena u području najgornjeg dijela riječnih slivova rijeka Litani i Orontes u Siriji i Turskoj. Njezina populacija je ugrožena radi nekoliko čimbenika kao što su isušivanje, klimatske promjene i zagađenje. Vrsta se procjenjuje kao ugrožena (EN) prema IUCN Crvenom popisu ugroženih vrsta.

Glavne riječi: Turska, Sirijski vijun, distribucija, ugroženost

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