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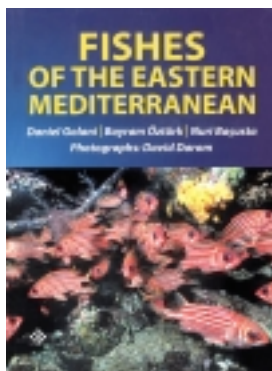


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BOOK REVIEW

Fishes of the Eastern Mediterranean

By Daniel Golani, Bayram Ozturk, and Nuri Basusta

Photographs by David Darom

Copyright: Turkish Marine Research Foundation, 2006, 260 pp.

Few seas have evidenced an environmental impact throughout human history to the degree that the eastern Mediterranean has. In the last century alone, the Levant Basin has seen the opening of the Suez Canal, leading to a massive Red Sea biological invasion, and construction of the Aswan Dam on the Nile River, leading to an abrupt cessation of its annual floodwaters. These man-made activities have had a serious impact on the eastern Mediterranean causing the collapse of some fisheries, the creation of others, and large-scale alterations in the ecosystem. This book deals with fish species living in the Levant Basin and includes all currently-known indigenous and immigrant species.

Three experienced ichthyologists, one from Israel and two from Turkey, have joined forces to author this comprehensive guide that documents some 470 fish species from such diverse habitats as the shallowest coastal tide pools to deep offshore waters. The authors begin with an introduction that briefly explains Lessepsian migration (the invasion of Red Sea species through the Suez Canal) and its biogeographical and ecological impact. Following are several concise, but useful, chapters that deal with the main groups of fish, their basic body shapes, conventional methods of fish classification, the meaning of scientific names, and fishing techniques commonly employed by fishermen in the region. There is also a handy glossary of relevant terms at the end of the book, followed by a list of bibliographic sources.

The main part of the book presents indi-

vidual species descriptions: a color photograph or drawing, the currently accepted scientific name, the common English name (if one exists), maximum length, distinctive morphological characters, meristic formula, and ecological data such as depth, diet, reproduction, and life cycle, when available. Although it does not include keys for identifying species, it is quite easy to identify a sought species by the illustrations. Leafing through the book, one cannot help contemplate the research constraints that stem from the problematic political situation in the region. Fish communities from the Lebanon and Syrian coasts are still rather poorly known, a deplorable situation since both countries have significant coastlines in the area discussed in the book.

As in previous books authored by Dr. Golani and collaborators (*Guide to Fishes of Israel*, 1997, in Hebrew; *Exotic Species in the Mediterranean*, 2002, in English), the English text is clear and very reader friendly. The printed font is sizeable and the illustrations are very useful. The excellent photographs have been contributed mostly by Dr. David Darom and the drawings are by Tuvia Kurz, both highly gifted artists in their respective fields.

Fishes of the Eastern Mediterranean is a thorough and professionally produced book. I envisage that the volume will be a welcome addition not only to university libraries, to be used by fishery scientists and marine biologists, but also to the bookshelves of amateur fish enthusiasts and regional nature lovers.

Dr. Arik Diamant