



## Book of Abstracts

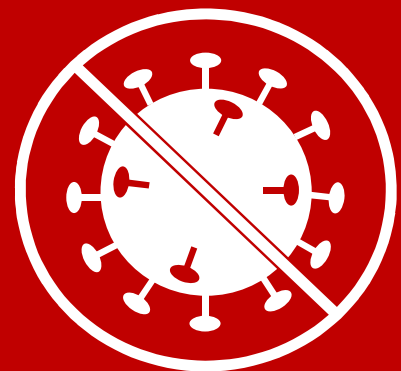


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**P79****“First record of the invasive crab *Percnon gibbesi* (H. Milne Edwards, 1853) at Pianosa Island: the second goal reached by the innovative Marine Citizen Science Literacy Project “PERCORSI NEL BLU” (“BLUE PATHS”)**

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**Abstract**

“**PERCORSI NEL BLU / BLUE PATHS**” is an innovative Project of well-integrated Marine Citizen Science Literacy, launched by the School Institute ISA 2, in La Spezia Italy. Since 2011 the Project has set up a Network among schools, institutions, citizens and research centers (CNR ISMAR - La Spezia, Department STEBICEF - University of Palermo and University of Bicocca-Milano) in data collection activities within touristic coastal sites and in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The Project highlights how important can be the contribution of Citizen Scientists for collecting new data and information on alien species in MPAs, representing an opportunity of early-warning system, such as the first record of the cryptogenic species *Aplysia dactylomela* (Rang, 1828) at Pianosa Island (2015). Starting from this perspective, this study represents the second scientific goal reached by the operating Project Team and the first record of the cryptogenic species *Percnon gibbesi* (H. Milne Edwards, 1853) at Pianosa Island (October 2019). During a Scuba survey, almost 150 specimens of *P. gibbesi* were recorded up to a depth of 1m and analyzed, according to some indicators such as health state, sex, morphology, and parameters such as temperature, covering of algal species, type of rocky bottom. This tropical Atlantic grapsid crab is considered as the most invasive decapod currently expanding its distribution in the Mediterranean Sea. Its rapid expansion and colonization of the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea is due to the ability of this algivorous species to adapt to the favorable climatic conditions found in an empty ecological niche along the infra-littoral zone, where it settled well. Further investigations at Pianosa Island by BIOBlitz surveys will give us the opportunity to assess the extent of *P. gibbesi* distribution and to monitor the possible relationships with native species and/or any changes that this could cause to the marine ecosystem.