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The Taxonomy Lab: a sentinel for Mediterranean bioinvasions

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Mediterranean Sea has a long history of bioinvasions. The total amount of records of non-indigenous species (NIS) increased continuously though the knowledge of the taxa remains scattered and their distribution is probably underestimated.

The Taxonomy Lab of the University of Palermo plans researches focused to fill gaps in the study of NIS range and to deepen their knowledge. Some examples are summarized below.

The amphipod *Grandidierella bonnieroides* Stephensen, 1948 is an invasive alien species recently established along Israeli coasts. The identification of this taxon results difficult and needs further analyses since its taxonomic key is built only on adult male stage.

A taxonomic revision, with genetic characterization, behavioural observations and ecological notes, allowed to clarify diagnostic features of *Parhyale plumicornis* (Heller, 1866), an endemic Mediterranean amphipod, supporting a recent record in the Red Sea and designating this species as the putative first anti-lessepsian amphipod.

Caprella santosrosai Sanchez-Moyano, et al., 1995, an amphipod considered Mediterranean endemic with a restricted distribution along the Strait of Gibraltar, was recently reported along the Atlantic Portuguese coasts missing its Mediterranean endemic status.

A further taxonomic approach integrated with DNA-Barcoding helped identify *Kyphosus vaigiensis* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1825), one of the vagrant kyphosid fish species already recorded more than one hundred years ago within the Mediterranean Sea, thus, not exactly a new entry as previously thought.

These results corroborate the role of taxonomy as a starting-point to develop the hypothesis that the Mediterranean may be at the same time a sink and a source of bioinvasions.

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