

As Lionfish Invade, Divers Defend Threatened Ecosystems

Christopher Pala

Comments

João Pedro Barreiros

Lionfish Invasion Turned into Solidarity Fishing. C. Pala's News & Analysis in Marine Ecology "As Lionfish Invade, Divers Defend Threatened Ecosystems" (7 February, 343, 591) start the first paragraph with a crucial alert when writing that "...my group of divers had caught four of the gorgeous fish (...); they made excellent eating that night." This is indeed one of the most practical and useful approaches to deal with the lionfish invasion in Caribbean coral reefs and, at the same time, a possibility to catch good value fish and eventually turning the whole initiative towards social welfare while offering the catches to public or private institutions. A recent project called "Diving for a Cause" (see: <http://www.divingforacause.org/>) invites spear fishers to catch fish and donate catches to people under fragile economic situations. This project is also linked to a more regional one called "Atlântico Solidário" [A Solidary Atlantic, see: <https://pt-pt.facebook.com/AtlanticoSolidario>] that started in 2009 in the Azores and spread to the whole of Portugal in just a couple of years. The most dramatic faunal shift and local extinctions caused by invaders is the situation on the Eastern Mediterranean basin where Lessepsian migrants are destroying native species at an unprecedented and unstoppable scale (1). One of the control solutions that are being implemented in the most affected countries is precisely stimulating fishing of those alien species (2) that, indeed, are valued for food in many markets and do provide protein for thousands of people. Promoting active fishing of Lessepsian fish is a way to reduce populations of invasive species while allowing native populations to recover and to expand fishing for needed people. Surely this kind of approach would perfectly work in the Caribbean tragedy of Lionfish invasion.

References

1. A.L. Nunes et al., Aquat. Inv. 9, (2014);
http://www.aquaticinvasions.net/2014/Supplements/AI_2014_Nunes_etal_Supp...
2. EastMed, GCP/INT/041/EC – GRE – ITA/TD-04. Athens 2010: 138 p. (2010).

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