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Native freshwater fishes of Morocco: Current knowledge, threats analysis and conservation perspectives

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Little is known about native freshwater fish diversity in Morocco, especially after the broad national program of introduction of exotic species applied for over 90 years. This paper is an attempt to describe the current situation emphasizing the distribution of the various species, their current status using detailed threats analysis and propose conservation measures. The freshwater fish fauna of Morocco is the richest of the Maghreb region and is composed of 65 species belonging to 14 families. 36 species are indiginious, of which, 19 are endemics including six newly described *Taxa*. We recognise pronounced species richness and a high degree of endemism of the Moroccan ichthyofauna (52.78%). Using IUCN categories, one species is globally extinct (EX), four species are vulnerable (VU), two are endangered (EN) and two are critically endangered (CR). 27 species were introduced mainly for aquaculture and sport fishing, of which, four never became established and 23 were established. Two species were listed as invasive. As a result of climate change impact, agricultural and industrial development as well as non native species introduction, the populations of native fishes have become highly threatened in Morocco. Long-term monitoring and researches are therefore strongly needed in order to implement appropriate conservation measures.

Biography

Sidi Imad Cherkaoui has completed his PhD from Mohamed V University and Post-doctoral studies from Natural History Museum of Paris (France) and Faculty of Sciences of Gabes in Tunisia. He is currently an Associate Professor in Ecology and Wildlife Management at Moulay Ismail University (Meknes, Morocco) and Visiting Lecturer of International University of Casablanca. He has published more than 22 papers in reputed journals and has been serving as commission member of IUCN SSC and CMS. He has attended several conferences in more than 30 countries.

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