

VALORIZZAZIONE, TUTELA DEL MARE E GESTIONE DELLE RISORSE MARINE

A Novel Approach for the Management of the Blue Crab: the case of Puglia Region within the framework of the strategic project BEST

Puglia Region, through its participation in the strategic project BEST (“Addressing joint Agro and Aqua-Biodiversity pressures Enhancing SuSTainable Rural Development”), financed by the European Interreg Programme V-A Greece-Italy 2014-2020, is promoting conservation and management of biodiversity, including the development of management and control plans for Invasive Alien Species (IAS). Through an analysis of literature and alien species reporting, the blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus* RATHBUN 1896) is one of the IAS present in Puglia that has been selected for more detailed studies. *C. Sapidus*, native to the waters of Western Atlantic Ocean, has been introduced in the Mediterranean Basin at the beginning of the 20th century; its presence along the Apulian coast dates back to 2001. Through the analysis of two case studies on two alien species that represent both an ecological issue and an economical income as shellfish products (the red king crab *Paralithodes camtschaticus* and the green crab *Carcinus maenas*), a focus on the blue crab is then provided, notably on the control of the population through the exploitation of the species as a fishery resource. Potential advantages and menaces are considered, evaluating different scenarios and posing the basis for future conservation actions.

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