

NORTHEASTERN MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES

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The Seyhan, Ceyhan and Goksu rivers turn North-eastern corner of the Mediterranean in to a favourable fishing ground which has been exploited since early 1940's. The continental shelf has been broadened by the sediment load of the rivers and nutrient rich waters has enhanced the productivity. However, in the last two decades rivers were polluted and the fisheries developed tremendously. Consequently the fish composition changed and the stocks were depleted.

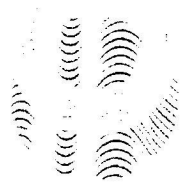
Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences has been carrying out a fisheries research to monitor the state of the fish stocks since 1980. Based on different intensity of fishing and topography, the region between Anamur and Gulf of Iskenderun was subdivided into three areas; Gulf of Iskenderun, Mersin Bay and west of Goksu Delta. Various trawl surveys has been accomplished on these areas.

During 1980's, a remarkable difference in the fishing pressure on east and west of the area, where the continental shelf is very steep and not suitable for trawling was evident. The west was still holding intact stocks. At the same period, the success of the Lessepsian immigrants were at a negligible level on the west.

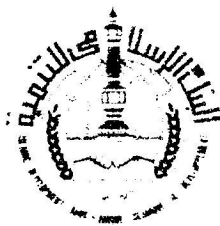
In 1990's upon depletion of the stocks in the east, the fishing fleet shifted towards west and depleted the fragile stocks rapidly. The share of the Lessepsian immigrants increased significantly. Today a very sharp decline in the CPUE is found on all over the fishing grounds. The length of the commercial species reduced. Moreover, species composition has been altered in favour of formerly uncommon, small-sized, low-priced species dominated the fish fauna.

The results of the surveys lead to the conclusion that the ecosystem in the basin represents a very dynamic structure. Four major factors found responsible for the complexity of the ecosystem; i) excess fishing pressure on the stocks, ii) excess land-based nutrient input and consequently eutrophication, iii) lack of Posidonia meadows stabilizing the community structure, iv) Lessepsian immigrants of Indo-Pacific origin.

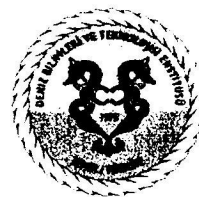
Key words: Fisheries, Time Series, Lessepsian migration, North-eastern Mediterranean



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ABSTRACTS



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