

CIESM Congress Session : Exotic species - fluxes and vectors across seas

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Moderator's Synthesis

One of the most pressing issues relative to management of new species introductions is uncertainty in our knowledge to assign individual introductions not only to vectors, but even to responsible pathways. Such an uncertainty is also relevant for Mediterranean Sea introductions, and relates to invasions through the Suez Canal (is the invasion vector the canal itself or shipping occurring via the canal).

Although prevention should be in focus in reducing the risk of new introductions in the marine realm, and so the management focus should be invasion vectors, knowing the source of the species is of vital importance. This knowledge may help to better identify the habitat requirements / tolerance limits, suggest the likely invasion vector(s), and design more appropriate mitigation measures. But the deeper we look in the past, the less we know on the origin of non-native species. Therefore, knowing the species origin will play a crucial role for more recent and also future introductions.

The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments will enter into force in September 2017. Thus, one of the vectors for major species introductions globally will be managed very soon. However, although ship hull fouling has been proven to be an essential invasion vector, no regulation or voluntary guidelines exist for it. This should be considered as an important gap in reducing the risk for new species introductions currently.

