

Press Release



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IUCN MedMIS

“IUCN MedMIS”: The system for reporting, monitoring and detecting early the presence of lionfish in the Mediterranean has been completed and put into operation



The lionfish *Pterois miles*, is an alien (of Indo-Pacific origin), invasive species of fish that invaded the Cypriot marine waters, through the Suez Canal, and continues to spread more widely into the Mediterranean. It affects the ecosystems it invades and can cause negative socio-economic impacts.

It is reproducing rapidly and in the Mediterranean no predator has yet been identified. It competes and consumes mainly native fish and invertebrates found in the marine area of Cyprus, including species of commercial value, having the potential result of disruption of local biodiversity and fishing stocks.

Although it is not an aggressive fish, it carries stiff, venomous spines for defence, increasing the chance to accidentally sting humans. If these spines are removed, the fish is edible, very tasty and nutritious! Their soft, non-venomous fins can be used to create jewellery and artwork.





The “RELIONMED-Life” project (2017 - 2021), with the title “Preventing a LIONfish invasion in the MEDiterranean through early response and targeted REmoval (LIFE16 NAT/CY/000832),” aims to monitor and control the population of the lionfish in Cyprus, through removal actions with the help of trained volunteer divers and through its economic exploitation by the local market, so that its removals will be economically sustainable in the future.

Five partners participate in the "RELIONMED-Life": the "University of Cyprus" (project coordinator, through the "Laboratory of Ecology and Biodiversity" of the "Department of Biological Sciences"), the "Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab" (scientific coordinator of the project), the "ENALIA PHYSIS - Environmental Research Centre", the "Marine Biology and Ecology Research Centre" of the "University of Plymouth" and the "Department of Fisheries and Marine Research". The project is being carried out with the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union / www.ec.europa.eu/life that concerns the management and the protection of the natural environment and biodiversity.



Increasing numbers of lionfish around Cyprus created the need to create a platform that allows scientists to monitor their abundance and distribution in the area so that we can control their populations and their negative effects. Moreover, the “Removal Action Teams (RATs)” have been created, who are volunteer divers trained by the project to assist in removing lionfish from the sea. The “IUCN MedMIS” is a pre-existing tool that has been updated to help now monitor the lionfish

populations. Based on the reports made on this portal by citizens who are active at sea, specific areas with increasing numbers of lionfish are targeted for removals.



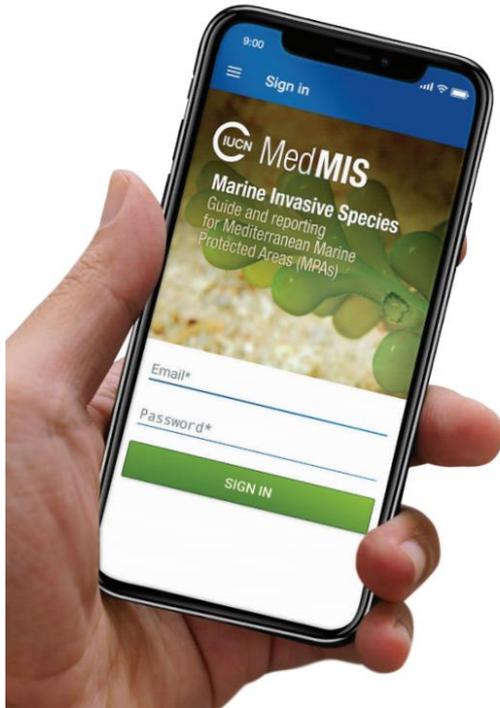
You too can report the presence of lionfish through this portal and help in tackling their invasion in the area. “IUCN MedMIS” is a free online portal, also available as a smart phone application, which allows users to report the presence of “Marine Invasive Species” in the Mediterranean. It hosts the “Lionfish Portal”, created by the “RELIONMED-Life” project, which focuses on the monitoring of lionfish. “IUCN MedMIS” is available in Greek, English,

French and Spanish.

The lionfish can be found at different depths and in different types of substrata, but it seems to prefer rocky substrata and sea grass. It does not attack, but it carries stiff, venomous spines for defence. "RELIONMED-Life" has informed amateur and professional fishermen and divers about the dangers, the ways of catching lionfish and the ways of safe handling of the species.



Πανεπιστήμιο
Κύπρου



**Download the application
and report
lionfish sightings.**

Help us to control it.



IUCN MedMIS



To use the “IUCN MedMIS”, get informed about lionfish and to report its presence in order to help in its monitoring, visit the website www.iucn-medmis.org or download the smart phone application (from the “App Store” / “Google play”). Help control it.

We need your support! Everyone can help!

For more information about the “RELIONMED-Life” and the lionfish: www.relionmed.eu



DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES
AND MARINE RESEARCH (DFMR)

End of announcement