

New records for benthic species in Arabian Gulf – The importance of biodiversity monitoring in a world of bio invasion

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Abstract

Recent research by marine scientists has indicated that marine ecosystems are in a state of change with ever increasing numbers of species invading marine regions. The spread of these aliens appears to be mainly through the expulsion of ballast water or through direct bio-introduction. Simultaneously, many marine areas are in a process of defaunation particularly in regions influenced by anthropogenic factors. This is resulting in irreversible changes to biodiversity, with the disappearance of endemic species and increased numbers of invading species. Marine habitats are currently losing species before they have been identified. Qatar University is addressing this problem with a comprehensive biodiversity-monitoring program. Preliminary surveys for the region have resulted in first descriptions for nine species; 1 benthic Ctenophora, 2 Nudibranchia, 1 Pontoniinae, 1 hermit crab, 2 brachyuran crab and 2 Holothuria. The majority of these species have been identified as bio-invasers from other marine eco-regions with 1 species new to science and 1 possible meta-population.

Biography

Ebrahim Al-Ansari is one of Qatar's most renowned Oceanographers. He has worked on the marine benthic biodiversity interface and the oceanographic influence on species diversity of the region for over 20 years and has several high impact publications as a result.

Ibrahim Al-Maslamani is one of Qatar's most renowned marine biologists. He has worked on the marine benthic biodiversity of the region for over 15 years and has several high impact publications as a result.

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