

Please provide the following details on the origin of this report

Contracting Party

LEBANON

National Focal Point

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Submission

Signature of officer responsible for
submitting national report:


Berj Hatjian Ph.D
Director General

Date of submission: 4/10/2000

Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report

The preparation of the report was preceded by interviews with several stakeholders from the various government and non-governmental agencies. The Biodiversity Focal Point at the Ministry of Environment (Ms. L. Samaha) provided all documentations available at the Ministry on alien species in Lebanon. These were limited to two studies commissioned by the MOE to national scientists on alien birds (G. Jaradi) and alien algae (Bitar, G) in Lebanon. Several officers in the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr. F. Asmar, Pature and Public Gardens Department Head; Mr. O. Boulos, Terrestrial and Marine Hunting Department Head; Mr. F. Mnayar, Agricultural Export and Import Monitoring Unit Head in Quarantine office) were consulted regarding laws regulating the introduction of alien species to Lebanon or whether there was any information available at the Ministry regarding the actual introduction of alien species to the country. Interviews were also conducted at the Lebanese National Research Council (LNCSR) with Dr. G. Tohme (President of the Executive Committee) and Dr. M. Hamze (President of the LNCSR) regarding past and future national research on alien species in Lebanon. Two NGOs concerned with Environmental issues (Dr. A. Darwish, GreenLine and Mr. M. AbiGhanem, AFDC) were interviewed regarding the involvement or knowledge of any documentation or issues related to alien species by their respective NGOs, or any other NGO that they might be aware of. Finally national scientists were also interviewed on an independent basis (Dr. S. Hrawi (Reptiles) , Mr. N. Nemr (Arthropods).

Article 8h Alien species

1. What is the relative priority afforded to implementation of this Article and the associated decisions by your country?
a) High **b) Medium** c) Low

2. To what extent are the resources available adequate for meeting the obligations and recommendations made?
a) Good b) Adequate **c) Limiting** d) Severely limiting

3. Has your country identified alien species introduced?
a) no
b) only major species of concern
c) a comprehensive system tracks introductions

4. Has your country developed national policies for addressing issues related to alien invasive species?
a) no
b) yes – as part of a national biodiversity strategy (please give details below)
c) yes – as a separate strategy (please give details below)

5. Has your country assessed the risks posed to ecosystems, habitats or species by the introduction of these alien species?
a) no
b) only some alien species of concern have been assessed
c) most alien species have been assessed

6. Has your country undertaken measures to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species?
a) no measures
b) some measures in place
c) potential measures under review
d) comprehensive measures in place

Decision IV/1 Report and recommendations of the third meeting of SBSTTA

7. Is your country collaborating in the development of projects at national, regional, sub-regional and international levels to address the issue of alien species?
a) little or no action
b) discussion on potential projects under way
c) active development of new projects

8. Does your national strategy and action plan address the issue of alien species?
a) no
b) yes – limited extent
c) yes – significant extent

Case-studies

9. Has your country submitted case-studies on the prevention of introduction, control, and eradication of alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species, in response to the call by the fourth meeting of SBSTTA?

- a) no – please indicate below whether this is due to a lack of available case-studies or for other reasons
- b) yes – please give below any views you may have on the usefulness of the preparation of case-studies for developing a better biological understanding of the problem and/or better management responses.

10. How many case-studies are available that could be used to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding alien species in your country?

- a) none
- b) 1-2 – limited understanding**
- c) >2 – significant information available

Transboundary issues

11. Are known alien invasive species in your country also a problem in neighboring or biogeographically-similar countries?

- a) not known**
- b) none
- c) a few – but in general alien invasive species problems are specific
- d) more than a few - in general we share common problems with other countries

12. Is your country collaborating in the development of policies and programmes at regional, sub-regional or international levels to harmonise measures for prevention and control of alien invasive species?

- a) little or no action**
- b) discussion on potential collaboration underway
- c) development of collaborative approaches for a limited number of species
- d) consistent approach and strategy used for all common problems

Further comments

The survey with the different individuals representing government and non-governmental organizations revealed that very little work has been done to identify or control the impact of alien species in Lebanon.

Only few species of major concern to some scientists have been studied. These include three algae species, one of which is considered to be a threat to our indigenous marine species: *Styopodium zonale*. There aren't, however, any scientific publications on the risk assessment of this species in Lebanon even though it is considered by some specialists to be a real threat.

The other species also mentioned as alien are the birds "*Alectoris graeca*" and "*Alectoris rufa*". These species are being introduced to Lebanon for hunting purposes and released into the wild. Both species are considered as an actual threat to the native bird "*Alectoris chukar*". The ministry of environment is in the process of taking necessary measures to stop their introduction but no official law has yet been drafted regarding this issue.

A detailed study has also been conducted on one insect species "*Liriomyza huidobrensis*" which was introduced to Lebanon in 1990 through the introduction of exotic ornamental plants to Lebanon. This insect is known to cause major economic damage on many ornamental plants as well as many crops, and is considered to be invasive in other surrounding countries namely Syria and Israel. No appropriate measures have been taken in Lebanon to stop its introduction or to control it.

Only one law has been decreed in 12 September 1995 to stop the introduction of alien species and this law specifically prohibits the introduction of any Cedar seeds and seedlings. The law was put forth in response to the uncontrolled introduction of trees from the *Cedrus* genus through the ornamental industry.

Several fish species were introduced in the past by the ministry of agriculture. These are *Salmo trutta* introduced since 1962, *Salmo irrideus* since 1958 and *Salmo fontinalis* since 1964. These species are thought to be naturalized and not to pose any threat to the ecosystem or other native fish species.

There are no apparent current plans by the government to collaborate with other countries in the development of projects addressing the issue of alien species or in the development of measures for the prevention and control of alien species.

Finally with respect to research prospects, no funding has been made available to local scientists, nor has there been enough emphasis by government agencies to encourage or guide national scientific experts into the needs of the country in this field.

In Conclusion there seems to be a general lack of awareness among all interviewed parties, including government agencies, non-governmental agencies and scientists, except for individual cases, on the importance of alien species in terms of their impact on the environment and their potential ability to compete with the indigenous biological diversity of the country.

N.B: Detailed information on the above mentioned alien species (birds, algae and insect) will be sent to the Secretariat of the Convention in response to the letter of the Executive Secretary dated 13 June 2000 requesting all parties to submit any available case studies on the main thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention