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NEWSLETTER

The transfer of species from one area to another is a worldwide phenomenon known since ancient times. For example, the common pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), named after the river Phasis in Transcaucasia, was brought to Greece by the ancient Greeks around 1300 B.C.

Domesticated or wild animal and plant species were introduced for food (e.g., game), for their ornamental value, or as pets. Nowadays, globalization, the newly developed means of transportation as well as the increase in people's income have enabled the transportation of goods from all parts of the world, even the most remote ones.



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Non-native species that are introduced by human activity, whether it be deliberate or accidental, can potentially expand their natural distribution range and are referred to as alien or introduced species.



Aerial photo of Nestos River

In addition, a significant part of these introduced species manages to adapt to their new environment and expand rapidly displaying a highly competitive behavior. Thus, they are denominated as invasive alien species (IAS). Unfortunately, we hardly can find regions around the globe without any invasive alien species.

Their presence has impacted dramatically on all different levels of ecosystems. Subsequently, their expansion puts the

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native species viability at risk and they are particularly threatening those within the most vulnerable habitats (e.g. wetland habitats).

The European Union has funded the project IASON (Invasive Alien Species Observatory and Network Development for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts in Black Sea Deltaic Protected Areas, BSB - 1121) in order to record and monitor the most dangerous invasive alien species occurring in Deltas of Black Sea basin. During field excursions to the area surrounding Nestos delta, out of the thirteen alien species that were recorded, six were considered to present an invasive behavior and were surveyed extensively (*Acer negundo*, *Ailanthus altissima*, *Amorpha fruticosa*, *Phytolacca americana*, *Robinia pseudoacacia* and *Solanum elaeagnifolium*).

The impacts of IAS occurring in the Nestos area are still relatively low, although locally extensive. *Amorpha fruticosa* presents the highest negative impact, as its invasion is highly aggressive. In addition to *Amorpha fruticosa*, the fastest and most competitive invaders according to evidence are *Acer negundo* and *Robinia pseudoacacia*. Both of them are expected to strongly and negatively affect this specific habitat in the long term.

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Amorha fruticosa dense scrub in Nestos Delta area

The results of the field surveys regarding the invasive alien species in the Nestos area were published in the international journal *Phyton* (Tsiftsis & Merou 2023) and can form the basis for studying the impacts of these plant species on the natural and semi-natural ecosystems of the area.

Reference

Tsiftsis, S. & Merou, T. 2023. First inventory of the invasive alien plant species along Nestos River (East Macedonia, NE Greece). – *Phyton* (Horn, Austria) 62–63: 75–86.

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