

**Joint ESENIAS and DIAS Scientific Conference
2022 and 11th ESENIAS Workshop**

**Invasive alien species under conditions of
global crisis**

13 – 15 November 2022

Book of Abstracts

Demre, Antalya, Türkiye

2022



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Fish population on Belcista wetland - risk assessment, prevention and management

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Belcista wetland, 20 km distance from Ohrid Lake, is a relict remnant of the ancient Desaret Lake, which existed in this area since the Pliocene. The present investigation is a part of a detailed study entitled - „Ecological status of fish population in Belcista wetland”.

Belcista wetland (Blue swamps) is the largest wetland habitat in R. North Macedonia and it is the habitat to many species of flora and fauna. This region hosts an endemic freshwater species of the Balcan Peninsula, Ohrid minnows (*Pelagus minutus*), which is threatened by habitat loss.

There are intention of artificial introduction of salmonid fishes in Belcista wetland to develop the recreative fishery and turism in this area. Introduction and spread of salmonids is a great risk factor to survilence the ohrid minnows (*Pelagus minutus*).

One of the biggest pressures and threats to habitats and species is the modification (the drainage) of the wetland. In the last decades of 20-th century more melioratuve works have been carried out, so that the surface of the wetland has to been significantly reduced. Recently, many efforts are being made to prevent the hydrological modification of the wetland.

Perspective on Belcista wetland is his promotion as protected area – Park of nature in the future.

Key words: Belcista wetland, fish population, Ohrid minnows (*Pelagus minutus*).