

Red List of

# Mediterranean Endemic Freshwater Fish



## Key Facts

- ❑ Rivers and other freshwater bodies provide primary resources (water and fisheries) to people, but they are also irreplaceable habitats for thousands of species of animals and plants.
- ❑ 253 endemic fish species occur in the Mediterranean basin. These fishes are unique to the Mediterranean and do not exist anywhere else – if they disappear from the Mediterranean region, this component of the world natural heritage is lost forever.
- ❑ 56% of the endemic freshwater fish in the Mediterranean basin are threatened with extinction.
- ❑ Water pollution and water extraction are the two greatest current threats to the future of Mediterranean endemic fish. The increasing prevalence of droughts exacerbates these threats.
- ❑ A number of sites have been identified as regionally important for endemism and as centres of threatened species.
- ❑ Biodiversity considerations should be included in any development and management planning, especially for dams and irrigation projects.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

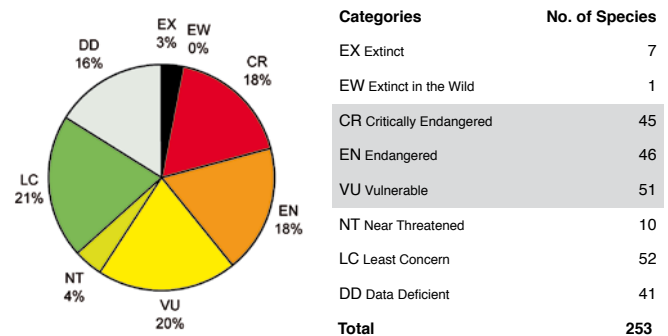
# Conservation Status Assessment

Out of the 253 species assessed, seven species are extinct and one is extinct in the wild, and 56% are threatened, of which 18% are Critically Endangered, 18% Endangered and 20% Vulnerable.

## Success story

The **Gizani** *Ladigesocypris ghigii* is a tiny (10-12 cm long) fish endemic to Rhodes Island, Greece, that is strongly dependent on rainfall and water management to survive. It has been subject of a LIFE-Nature project with the objective of improving its threatened status. The initiative integrated the study of its geographic range, habitat preferences, genetics and threats. Conservation actions carried out included construction of information centres for visitors, an artificial breeding programme and an action plan for the species. As a result of these efforts, the species is generally stable and was assessed as "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List.

Summary of conservation status for all endemic freshwater fish of the Mediterranean basin (2008)



## Main Threats

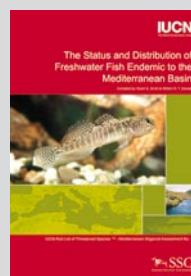
Water pollution and extraction constitute the most important threats to freshwater fish, together with the increasing likelihood of droughts. Endemic species are often restricted to one river system and their dispersal may be limited by the construction of dams. Invasive species are also a cause of threat, as they may deplete native species, compete with them for limited resources, or spread new diseases.

## Conservation Actions

Integrated River Basin Management seeks to combine freshwater ecosystem conservation and sustainable management of water resources. Educational and research programmes promoted by governments and other organizations are a priority to ensure that the Mediterranean's precious freshwater resources are sustainability managed now and for future generations.

## For More Information

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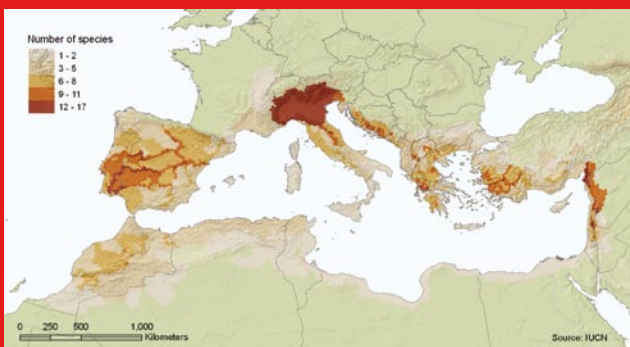
**The Status and Distribution of Freshwater Fish Endemic to the Mediterranean Basin.**

Download the report in English, French or Spanish from the Publications section.

[www.iucnmed.org](http://www.iucnmed.org)

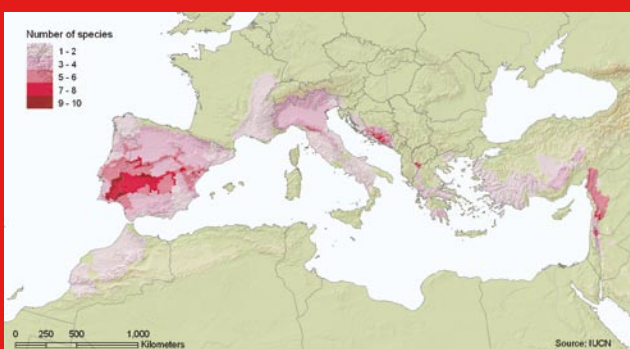
## Species Richness

Numerous endemic freshwater fish species are found in northern Italy, southern Spain and Portugal, Turkey and Israel.



Species richness of endemic freshwater fish in the Mediterranean basin.

The greatest concentration of threatened endemic Mediterranean freshwater fish is in the Lower Guadiana river in southern Spain and Portugal (home to 11 species of endemic fish), the lower Orontes in south west Turkey and Lake Kinneret in Israel.



Species richness of threatened endemic freshwater fish in the Mediterranean basin.

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