



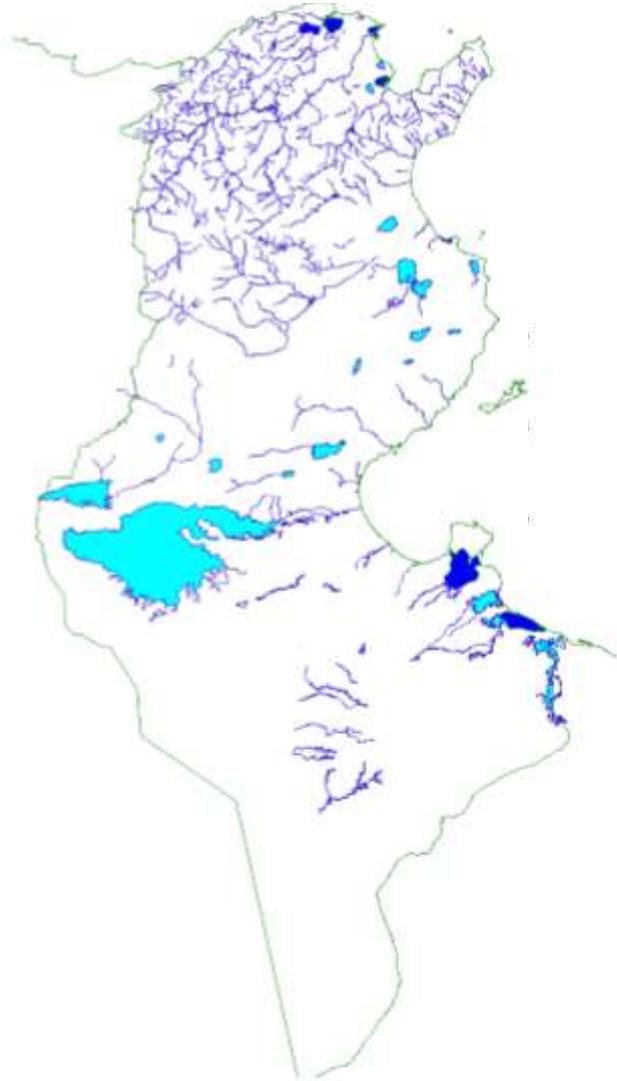
# European eel status in Tunisia

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# Presentation of Tunisia

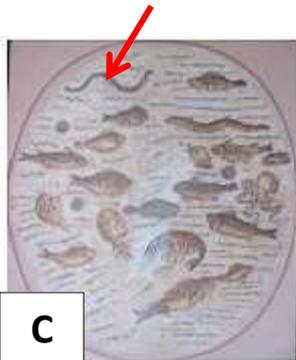


- Central location in the Mediterranean

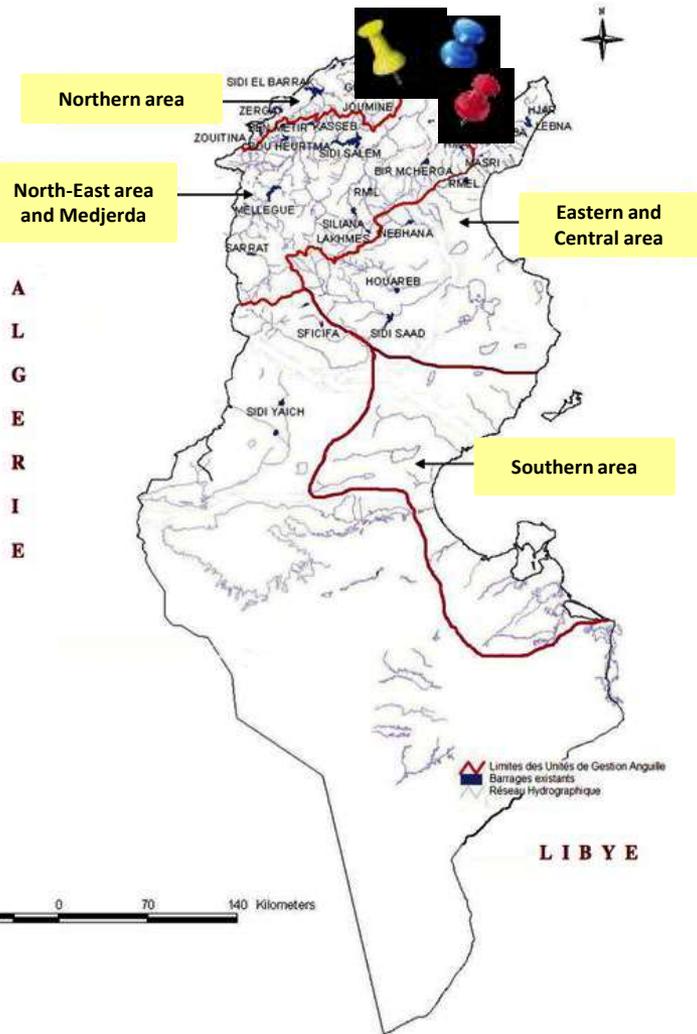
- Coastline of 1300 km long

- 1347 wetlands including 7 lagoons (105000 ha)

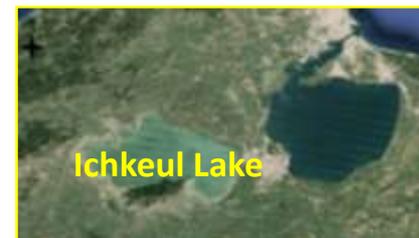
# Some history...



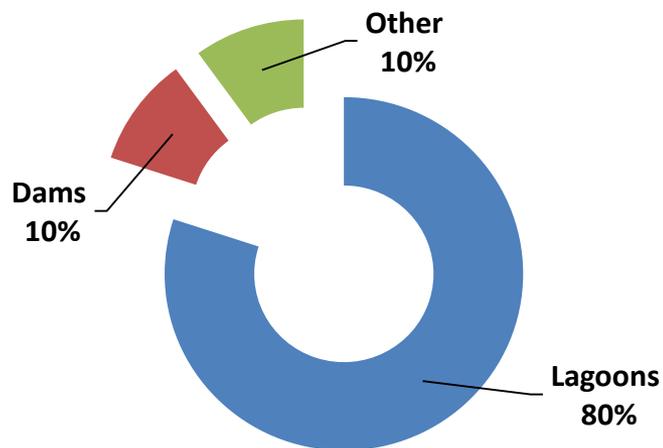
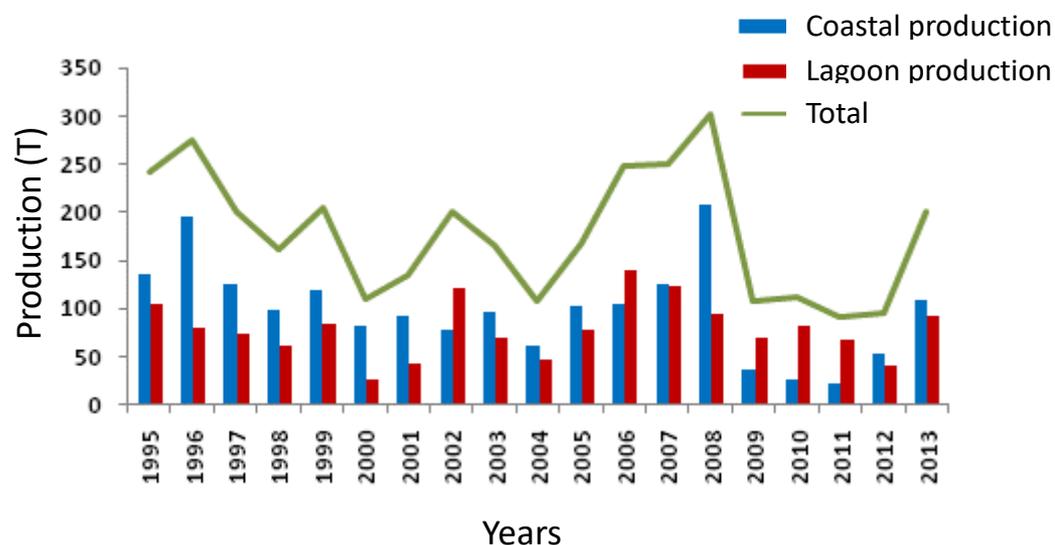
# Eel distribution in Tunisia



- Eels are recorded around all the inland and marine waters in Tunisia.
- Potential habitats cover about 950 000 ha of water surface (DGPA, 2010).
- Especially present in Northern lagoons: Tunis Lake (Tunis), Ghar El Melh Lagoon and Ichkeul Lake (Bizerta).



# Eel production in Tunisia



Data from Fisheries and Aquaculture Department- Ministry of Agriculture

- Coastal production is higher than in lagoons **WRONG!**
- In reality, eels are bycatch in coastal fishery → confusion between species (Moray and Conger)
- Lagoon production represents 80% et varies between 28T (2000) and 140T (2006) depending on the alternation of drought and heavy precipitation periods
- Fishing targets silver eels during the migration period using net barrier “capetchades”
- Dams contribute with an average of 16 T (1995-2013)

# Breeding and restocking

- The seeding of Tunisian dams by glass eels was recommended by the GTZ project (Losse *et al.*, 1991).
  - Between 1991 and 2008, glass eels were collected from Medjerda Wadi and spilled into the dams to support local fisheries.
  - Two breeding units were set up to support the restocking program:
    - ✓ In Boumhel el Bassatine (Project FAO/TCP/TUN/3001)
    - ✓ In Tabarka (Project AIDE/COSPE/TUN/8047)
- ➔ These programs have been abandoned to protect this species

# Eel trading in Tunisia: locally

- The eel is very little consumed by the Tunisians who dislike its serpentiform and sticky aspect.
- Only in sfax (in the South), locals love it salty and accompanied with a typical sauce "chermoula" the 1st day of Aid al Fitr.



- However, eels are among the most expensive freshwater fish in the market
- It is proposed the most frequently frozen, rarely alive with fairly high prices (12 DT ~ 5 USD/Kg).

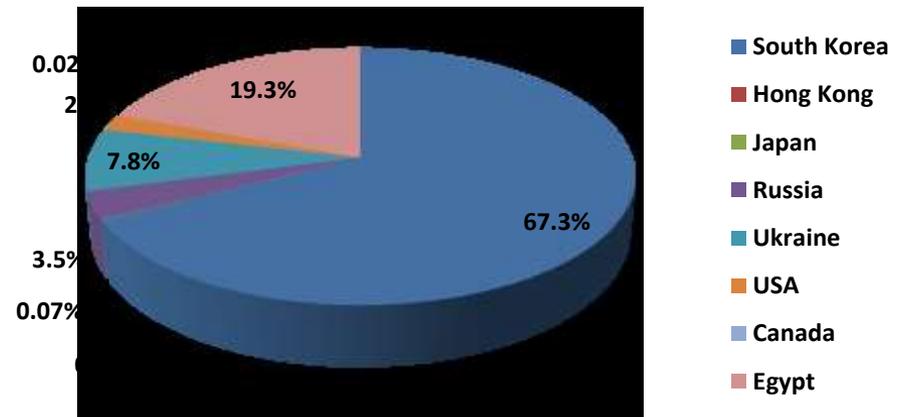
# Eel trading in Tunisia: export

- Before to the entry into force of the CITES text, Tunisia was the largest exporter of eels to the EU, after Norway (Crook, 2010).
- The catches were mainly for export in one of three forms: live, fresh or frozen; mainly to Italy, France and Spain at prices between 10 and 12 DT / Kg (~ 6 to 7 USD / Kg; GFCM, 2014).



- Since 2009, the export of eels has been subject to CITES regulations.
- An annual quota of 135 T was granted to Tunisia.

• Nowadays, Tunisian eel is exported mainly to South Korea (57 T on average between 2014 and 2016) at 19 DT / Kg on average .



Data from Fisheries and Aquaculture Department- Ministry of Agriculture

# Regulation

Eel fishing in Tunisia is subject to certain regulations:

- The minimum size of mesh used is 10 mm for square meshes, 15 mm for triangular and 40 mm for gillnets authorized in dams (Orders of 20 September 1994 and 28 September 1995)
- The minimum market size is fixed at 30 cm (Order of 28 September 1995)
- Below this size, its transport, sale, storage, processing or use as bait is prohibited (Law No. 94-13 of 31 January 1994)
- Eel fishery in Ghar El Melh Lagoon is subject to authorization for fishermen and the number of fisheries is fixed by decision of the competent authority (Articles 57, 58 and 59 of the Order of 28 September 1995)
- Fishing (including eels) in dams, streams and freshwater areas is prohibited from March 1 to April 30 of each year to respect the biological recovery of certain species (Order of 20 September 1994)
- The export is subject to a permit issued by CITES through the General Directorate of Forests (Ministry of Agriculture) within the limit of the annual quota authorized

# Management plan

- Although it is not concerned by the EU regulation of 2007, Tunisia has drawn up its Eel Management Plan in 2010, being well aware that it is essential to protect this critically endangered species throughout its geographical range



- In parallel, Tunisia participated in two research programs (CMCU / INSTM / Cemagref) and ProEel and two PhD theses were supported (2014 and 2016) and helped to provide information on characterization, health status and escapement of Tunisian eel populations.

# What's next?

A new project in partnership with the FAO In the framework of the Copemed II "Stock status of the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) in Tunisia" will begin in October 2017 with the aim of stock assessment of eels (glass eels, yellow and silver eels) in the main production sites of the species in Tunisia.



Thank you for your  
attention



# Come to visit Tunisia

