



Mediterranean Marine Science

Vol 23, No 3 (2022)

VOL 23, No 3 (2022)



Biochemical composition, nutritional value and socio-economic impacts of the invasive crab Callinectes sapidus Rathbun, 1896 in central Mediterranean Sea

FATEN KHAMASSI, WAFA RJIBA BAHRI, AMIRA MNARI BHOURI, AMANI CHAFFAI, EMNA SOUFI-KECHAOU, RAOUIA GHANEM, JAMILA BEN SOUISSI

doi: <u>10.12681/mms.28878</u>

To cite this article:

Khamassi, F., Rjiba Bahri, W., Mnari Bhouri, A., Chaffai, A., Soufi kechaou, E., Ghanem, R., & Ben Souissi, J. (2022). Biochemical composition, nutritional value and socio-economic impacts of the invasive crab Callinectes sapidus Rathbun, 1896 in central Mediterranean Sea. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, *23*(3), 650–663. https://doi.org/10.12681/mms.28878 Mediterranean Marine Science Indexed in WoS (Web of Science, ISI Thomson) and SCOPUS The journal is available on line at http://www.medit-mar-sc.net www.hcmr.gr DOI: http://doi.org/10.12681/mms.28878

Biochemical composition, nutritional value, and socio-economic impacts of the invasive crab Callinectes sapidus Rathbun, 1896 in central Mediterranean Sea

Faten KHAMASSI¹, Wafa RJIBA BAHRI², Amira MNARI BHOURI³, Amani CHAFFAI², Emna SOUFI-KECHAOU^{1,2}, Raouia GHANEM² and Jamila BEN SOUISSI^{1,2}

¹National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia, University of Carthage, Tunisia

²Biodiversity, Biotechnology and Climate Change Laboratory (LR11ES09), University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia ³Higher School of Health Sciences and Techniques of Monastir, Lab-NAFS, Faculty of Medicine of Monastir, University of Monastir

Corresponding author: Jamila BEN SOUISSI; jbensouissi@yahoo.com

Contributing Editor: Giorgio MANCINELLI

Received: 08 December 2021; Accepted: 01 April 2022; Published online: 15 July 2022

Abstract

The Atlantic crab *Callinectes sapidus* was recently recorded in Tunisia and presents an invasive behavior. This study aims to evaluate its socio-economic impacts on small-scale fisheries and to analyze variations in chemical composition, fatty acids profile, and nutritive value according to sex and edible tissues. Face-to-face surveys revealed a decline in fishermen's income from 15% to as much as 70% related to damages on fishing nets and catches. Captures of *C. sapidus* are increasing compared to the beginning of its occurrence with more than 10 kg/fishing day and low landing prices (0.8-1 US \$/kg). Muscles yield of *Callinectes sapidus* ranged between $36.07 \pm 2.84\%$ and $42.83 \pm 6.53\%$, respectively, for females and males. All the analyzed tissues contained high protein contents (>23%) and particularly the cephalothorax muscles which attained $27.05 \pm 0.16\%$. Fats in muscles range between 2% and 3.69% of the wet weight of the crab. Since total lipid content is below 5%, this new exotic food can be recommended in low fat diets. The fatty acid profile was dominated by the polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) for both sexes and all the analyzed tissues ranging from 9.31% to 15.64%, from 8.74% to 13.78%, and between 6.81% and 9.21% for each acid. All the nutritional indexes of lipids indicated that this decapod could be beneficial for human health.

Keywords: Non-indigenous marine species; Proximate composition; Fatty acids; Nutritional indexes of lipids; Food value chain.

Introduction

Biological invasions have been considered worldwide as a major driver of change in Mediterranean marine biodiversity (Azzurro et al., 2019) and consumer behavior (Nuñez & Simberloff, 2005). In fact, endemic species and traditional marine resources and stocks have decreased and been replaced by Alien Invasive Species (AIS). Firstly, AIS were perceived as a disaster due to their severe economic impacts on fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and human health (Piras et al., 2019). Nevertheless, edible alien species can represent an opportunity for local economies (as a new food resource) and not only a threat to livelihoods (Nuñez et al., 2012). Indeed, the consumption of AIS such as Macrobrachium nipponense (De Haan, 1849 [in De Haan, 1833-1850]), Metapenaeus monoceros (Fabricius, 1798), Penaeus aztecus Ives, 1891, and the lionfish Pterois volitans (Linnaeus, 1758) may represent a good opportunity to improve the socio-economic situation of locals, especially fishermen (Limam et al., 2014; Lavajoo et al., 2018; Castro-González et al., 2019; Kampouris et al., 2021).

Crustacean decapods are among the best-studied marine alien species in Tunisia (Bejaoui *et al.*, 2017; Rjiba-Bahri et *al.*, 2019; Khamassi *et al.*, 2019; Chaffai *et al.*, 2020; Shaeik *et al.*, 2021). Alien portunid crabs are regularly caught and landed by small-scale fisheries in Tunisia since 2015 for *Portunus segnis (P. segnis)* (Forskål, 1775) and later for the Atlantic crab *Callinectes sapidus (C. sapidus)* Rathbun, 1896 (Ben Souissi *et al.*, 2017; Katsanevakis *et al.*, 2020). Despite the high commercial value of these species (Kücükgülmez & Çelik, 2008; Zotti *et al.*, 2016; Bejaoui *et al.*, 2017), few studies concern their biological traits and chemical composition in the southern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea.

Callinectes sapidus is eurythermal and euryhaline crab and can inhabit estuaries, lagoons, and other coastal habitats (Taybi & Mabrouki, 2020). In addition, it exhibits high fecundity and strong swimming capacities. It is considered as an opportunistic and aggressive predator and

displays scavenging and cannibalistic behaviors (Kampouris *et al.*, 2019). Such characteristics have contributed to its establishment and expansion of its distribution range in the Mediterranean Sea since its first record in 1948 in the Northern Adriatic Sea (Galil et *al.*, 2002). *Callinectes sapidus* was firstly introduced in the south-eastern Mediterranean Sea in 2017 in Morocco (Chartosia et *al.*, 2018), and was then introduced in Tunisia (Ben Souissi et *al.*, 2017) and Algeria in 2018 (Benabdi et *al.*, 2019). According to Katsanevakis et *al.* (2014), *C. sapidus* is one of the 100 "worst invasive" alien marine species in the Mediterranean with high impact mainly on ecosystem biodiversity and artisanal fishing activities.

Despite the 2290 km of coastline, seafood consumption remains modest in Tunisia with values of 11.4 kg / year / inhabitant according to FAO (2014) and is limited to coastal towns. Before the development of marketing and distribution circuits for fisheries products as well as cold chains during the 1980s, non-coastal regions consumed salted and dried fish, mainly sardines and anchovies. As usual in North African countries, the culinary traditions in Tunisia are rather oriented towards the consumption of terrestrial animals, especially lamb and camel meats. Even in coastal areas, the range of consumed species was restrained to commercial fishes and cuttlefish (FAO, 2014). Other products such as shellfish and crustaceans (mussel, oyster, and shrimp) are mainly exported or used in local restaurants and hotels, except for the inhabitants of the Kerkennah Islands who have a tradition of consuming native crabs such as Carcinus aestuarii Nardo, 1847.

For this purpose, nutritive value characterization is fundamental to encourage and raise awareness among Tunisian consumers of the nutritional benefits of this new food bioresource that is rich in proteins and essential fatty acids, as well as to facilitate the processing and marketing of *C. sapidus* like the Lessepsian crab *P. segnis* (Khamassi *et al.*, 2019). Since 2017, more than 28 processing units and export companies have been implemented in Tunisia and crab exports increased 100 times between 2015 and 2019 to more than 20 destinations all over the world (GIPP, 2019). The exported quantities reached 3500 tons for more than 12 million euros in 2019 (export price is between 2.5 and $4 \notin$ kg depending on products) (GIPP, 2019).

In light of these considerations, this paper is the first to report the socio-economic impacts of *C. sapidus* on Tunisian small-scale fisheries and to provide nutritive values. For this, meat yield, proximate composition, fatty acids profiles, and nutritional indexes of lipids were determined for all edible tissues.

Materials and Methods

Study area and socio-economic impacts analysis of C. sapidus on local fisheries

Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) is representing a growing area of opportunity and a complementary method for scientific research (Azzurro et al., 2011). To ovoid misidentification between the two species of alien portunids, fresh crab samples were showed to local fishermen. A representative sample of face-to-face interviews was conducted with experienced Tunisian fishermen (of more than 10 years) to assess socio-economic impacts of C. sapidus in the most affected areas in north-eastern coasts of Tunisia (Central Mediterranean Sea). Surveys were carried out on three areas based on the degree of blue crab contamination. Weakly affected (Kalaat Landalous; 37.0523° N, 10.1137°E), moderately affected (Tunis southern lagoon; 36.4738° N, 10.1522° E), and severely impacted (Ghar el Melh; 37. 0806° N, 10.1422° E) (Fig. 1).

The data was collected from fishermen based on their personal declaration. The interview took approximate-



Fig. 1: Study areas (red circle indicates sampling site for biochemical analysis).

ly 30 minutes to complete and was structured into three main sections: socio-demographics of fishermen, characteristics of fishing activity, and economic impacts caused by *C. sapidus* (losses in fishing gears, catch yields, and fish damages; Rjiba-Bahri *et al.*, 2019). Data from these surveys were coded, entered into an Excel database, and then analyzed.

Sampling protocol and determination of crab meat yield

Specimens of C. sapidus were collected from the southern lagoon of Tunis (north-east of Tunisia) during July 2021 with fyke nets of 18 mm mesh size. Samples were then transferred alive to the laboratory to be measured and classified into males and females. Morphometric measurements include carapace width (CW, mm), carapace length (CL, mm), and the total wet weight of the crab (WW, g) (Rjiba-Bahri et al., 2019). Adult crabs were euthanized by thermal shock (-20 °C for 10 min) and divided randomly into three homogeneous groups. After that, hepatopancreas and muscles from the thoracic sterna, claws (chelipeds), and locomotory pereiopods of each group were hand-picked and each was blended separately to homogenize them (Kücükgülmez et al., 2006; Zotti et al., 2016). Each tissue was subsequently weighed to calculate yields (1) and then stored at -20°C for further biochemical analysis.

Tissue yield (%) = $100 \times (TW / WW)$ (1) TW: tissue wet weight (g); WW: total crab wet weight (g)

Proximate composition analysis

Moisture content was determined according to AOAC (2005). Protein content was determined using the Bradford procedure (Bradford, 1976). Total lipids were extracted from analyzed tissues (muscles and hepatopancreas) according to Folch *et al.* (1957). The energy value of the crab was determined based on the percentage of biochemical composition using the following factors: proteins, 4.27 kcal g^{-1} wet weight; lipids, 9.02 kcal g^{-1} wet weight where 1 kcal = 4.184 kJ (FAO, 1989).

Fatty acid profile

After lipid extraction, acid methyl esters were recovered using the Metcalfe *et al.* (1966) methylation method in which boron trifluoride BF₃ is used with methanol (Morrison & Smith, 1964; Moss *et al.*, 1974). For the quantitative analysis of each fatty acid, nonadecanoic acid methyl ester C19:0 Me (Sigma Chemical Co. Ltd) was used as an internal standard. Sample compositions were investigated by HP5890-series II gas chromatograph (Agilent Technologies, California, USA) equipped with flame Ionisation Detector (FID) under the following conditions: the fused silica, capillary column, polar HP Innovax (column: 30 m, 0.25 mm ID, film thickness). The oven temperature was held at 50°C for 1 min then programmed at rate of 5°C/min to 240°C and held isothermal for 4 min. The carrier gas was nitrogen at a flow rate (1.2 ml min⁻¹). The injector and detector temperatures were 250°C and 280°C, respectively. The volume injected was 0.1 μ l of the solution diluted in hexane. The total time of the chromatograph was 30 min (Mnari *et al.*, 2007; Bouhlel *et al.*, 2009).

The identification of fatty acid methyl esters was performed by external standards (Supelco ®, ISO9001-QRS-255) submitted to the same processes of manipulation as the biological samples analyzed (Bouhlel *et al.*, 2009). The values of fatty acids are presented as area percentage of total fatty acids.

Nutritional quality indexes of lipids

Quality indexes of lipids were calculated based on fatty acid composition.

-Atherogenicity index-AI:

 $AI = ((C12:0 + (4 \times C14:0) + (C16:0)) / ((\Sigma n6 + \Sigma n3 + \Sigma MUFA)))$

(Ulbricht & Southgate, 1991)

-Thrombogenicity index-TI:

 $TI = ((C14: 0 + C16: 0 + C18: 0)) / ((0.5 \times \Sigma MUFA) + (0.5 \times \Sigma n6) + (3 \times \Sigma n3) + (0.5 \times \Sigma n6)) + (0.5 \times \Sigma n6) + (0.5 \times \Sigma n6)) + (0.5 \times \Sigma n6) + (0.5 \times \Sigma n$

 $(\Sigma n3/\Sigma n6))$ (Ulbricht & Southgate, 1991)

- *The index of hypocholesterolemic/hypercholesterolemic fatty acids –HH:*

HH = (C18: 1n9 + C18: 2n6 + C18: 3n3 + C20: 4n6 + C20: 5n3 + C22: 5n3 + C22: 6n3)/(C14: 0 + C16: 0)

(Fernandes et al., 2014).

-The ratio PUFA/SFA refers to the ratio between polyunsaturated (PUFA) and saturated fatty acids (SFA). *-The ratio of n3/n6*: Σ n3 PUFA/ Σ n6 PUFA

Statistical analysis

A one-way ANOVA was performed after normal distribution data analysis using the Shapiro-Wilk test and the homogeneity of variance was confirmed by the Levene test. Duncan's multiple range test was assessed to separate differences among means. All statistical analyses were tested at the 0.05 level of probability with the software Statistical Analysis System (SAS 9.1.3, 2002-2003, Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA).

Results

Socio-economic impacts of the invasive crab C. sapidus on local fisheries

Table 1 summarizes the socio-demographic characteristics of interviewed fishermen and highlights a relatively young population involved in artisanal fishing activity, with a level of education not exceeding primary school in 70% of cases. More than 70% of the respondents have

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of fishermen.

Category	Variable	%
	20-39	6
Age (years)	39-59	56
	> 59	38
	Primary school	70
Level of education	Secondary school	28
	University	2
	< 3	28
Household population	3-6	60
	> 6	12
	1-20	16
Fishing experience (years)	> 20	84
	Permanent	98
Fishing activity	Seasonal	2

at least 20 years of fishing experience and three persons in charge have fishing activity as a unique income. All of respondents had unambiguously distinguished *C. sapidus* from *P. segnis* already established in Ghar el Melh. More than 80% of the fishermen confirmed the presence of the Atlantic blue crab over all the fishing areas at depths not exceeding ten meters which confirms the euryhaline character of this species.

Callinectes sapidus catches are increasing (more than 5 kg/ fishing day) (Table 2). In fact, 75% and 100% of the respondents declared more than 5 kg of *C. sapidus* per fishing day respectively in Ghar el Melh and Tunis southern lagoon. However, in Kalaat Landalous, 85% of fishermen captured less than 5 kg for the same species and fishing effort (Table 2). Additionally, Ghar el Melh is considered as a sinister zone invaded by blue crabs where 100% of fishermen asserted a decrease in their mean annual income between 15% and 70%. Only 20% of the interviewees from Kalaat Landlous was not yet affected by crab damages on their fishing gear (Table 2).

Damages concerned the clogging and ripping of both trammel and gillnet (Fig. 2B), which required their renewal for 70% of the interviewees. In addition, the crab spines injured the fishermen when they removed crabs from trammel nets (Fig. 2C). As well as damages to fishing gear, fishermen complained about crab predation on

their catches (Table 2), which comprised various high commercial value species, namely *Sepia officinalis* Linnaeus, 1758, *Sparus aurata* Linnaeus, 1758, *Anguilla anguilla* Linnaeus, 1758, *Solea senegalensis* Kaup, 1858, and *Diplodus sp.* (Fig. 2A). The mutilated catches must be discarded, thereby inducing a decrease in production and fishery value.

Meat yield of C. sapidus

Adult males and females were measured and weighed (Fig. 3). The mean carapace width CW, carapace length CL, and total weight TW of adult specimens were, respectively, 135.38 ± 10.34 mm, 59.75 ± 5.48 mm, and 167.41 ± 34.37 g for females and 134.51 ± 17.09 mm, 62.34 ± 7.17 mm, and 185.19 ± 65.15 g for males. Figure 4 shows the texture of the different edible muscles in *C. sapidus*, namely those of chelipeds (ChM), cephalothorax (ThM), and locomotion pereiopods (LPeM). All tissues yield were higher for male crabs (Fig. 5). Total muscles yields represent $36.07 \pm 2.8\%$ and $42.83 \pm 6.5\%$ respectively for females and males. The thorax muscles yield was the highest, averaging $18.96 \pm 2.26\%$ and $16.06 \pm 1.89\%$ respectively for males and females, followed by chelipeds and locomotion pereiopod muscles yield (17.65)

Table 2. Effects of C. sapidus on mean annual income, fishing gear, and catches.

Percenta	age of interviewed fishermen/ lo	ocality		
Kalaat Landlous	Tunis Southern Lagoon	Ghar El Melh		
(river mouth)	(lagoon)	(sea)		
85	0	25	< 5 kg/fishing day	Cuah aatahaa
15	100	75	> 5 kg/fishing day	Crab catches
50	57	0	No effect	Deeneege in meen
13	43	70	< 50%	Decrease in mean
37	0	30	> 50%	annual income
20	0	0	No effect	Damage to fishing
80	100	100	Clogging & ripping	gear
0	0	0	No damage	
12.5	0	0	Injured	Damage to catches
87.5	100	100	Mutilated	



Fig. 2: Damage caused by the blue crab (scale bar = 2 cm) A: on catches, B: on nets, C: on fishermen.



Fig. 3: Dorsal and ventral views of male (A1, A2) and berried female (B1, B2) of *Callinectes sapidus* collected from Tunis southern lagoon of (scale bars = 2 cm).



Fig. 4: Muscles of C. sapidus A: Cephalothorax muscles; B: Cheliped muscles; C: locomotory pereiopods muscles.



Fig. 5: Muscle and hepatopancreas yields of *C. sapidus.* ChM = cheliped muscles, ThM = cephalothoracic muscles, LPeM = locomotory pereiopod muscles, Total M = total muscles, Hep = Hepatopancreas.

 \pm 5.57% and 6.23 \pm 1.67% for males and 15.73 \pm 3.16% and 4.29 \pm 1.14% for females). For locomotion pereiopods, flesh content was lower than other body structures (4.29 \pm 1.14 and 6.23 \pm 1.67 respectively for females and males); therefore, they were not considered in the biochemical analysis.

Proximate composition

Proximate composition of analyzed tissues for both crab sexes is presented in Table 3. It varies significantly with edible tissue type and sex (P < 0.05). Results showed that moisture was significantly higher in muscles. For protein concentration, no sex difference was reported in

the thoracic muscles or the hepatopancreas, unlike the chelipeds $(23.71 \pm 0.19\% \text{ and } 25.77 \pm 0.14\%$, respectively, for females and males) (Table 3). However, a significant difference between protein content in muscles and brown meat was observed, with higher values in the thoracic muscles (ranging between $26.56 \pm 0.24\%$ and $27.05 \pm 0.16\%$, respectively for females and males). Otherwise, total lipid content was the highest in the hepatopancreas, reaching $12.19 \pm 2.49\%$ but not exceeding $3.69 \pm 1.39\%$ in muscles tissues. Thus, the energy value was significantly higher in the hepatopancreas (P < 0.05) (ranging between 221.5 ± 1.89 and 262.51 ± 23.5 kcal/100 g).

Table 3. I	Proximate	composition	of <i>C</i> .	sapidus ((% wet	weight) ¹ .
		1				0 /

_		Mu	scles	Honotonononoo	SEM	$D \smallsetminus E$
		Cephalothorax	Chelipeds	Hepatopancreas	SEM	P≥F
Moisture	Μ	$67.4\pm0.6^{\rm a}$	$68.7\pm0.9^{\rm a}$	$60\pm2.6^{\rm b}$	1.36	0.006
Moisture	F	$68.8\pm0.3^{\rm a}$	$70.3\pm1.6^{\rm a}$	$63.5\pm0.3^{\rm b}$	0.798	0.002
F -4	Μ	$2.91\pm0.7^{\text{b}}$	$2.86\pm0.94^{\rm b}$	$12.19\pm2.49^{\mathtt{a}}$	1.37	0.004
га	F	$2\pm0.06^{\rm b}$	$3.69 \pm 1.39^{\rm b}$	$7.85\pm0.19^{\rm a}$	0.702	0.002
D ('	Μ	$27.05\pm0.16^{\rm a}$	$25.77 \pm 0.14^{\rm b*}$	$26.07\pm0.08^{\rm b}$	0.108	0.0004
rrotein	F	$26.56\pm0.24^{\mathtt{a}}$	$23.71 \pm 0.19^{\rm b*}$	$26.07\pm0.02^{\mathtt{a}}$	0.152	< 0.0001
Enorgy volue ²	Μ	$180.36\pm6.95^{\mathrm{b}}$	$172.65\pm8.82^{\mathrm{b}}$	$262.51\pm23.5^{\rm a}$	12.81	0.004
Energy value	F	$168.92\pm1.94^{\mathrm{b}}$	$168.84\pm14.08^{\mathrm{b}}$	$221.5\pm1.89^{\mathtt{a}}$	6.901	0.002

¹Data are expressed as mean \pm SD (n = 3); ²Data are expressed as kcal/100g wet weight. Different letters in the same line indicate significant differences between the analyzed tissues. An asterisk * indicates significant difference between sexes.

Fatty acids composition

Fatty acids composition of the different crab edible parts is summarized in Table 4. It was dominated by polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) for both sexes (PUFA/SFA > 1). Muscles contained significantly higher amounts of PUFA (P < 0.05) (Table 4). Among saturated fatty acids (SFA), palmitic and stearic acids (C16:0; C18:0) were predominant (ranging from 4% to 16%) in all analyzed samples with higher values in the hepatopancreas. Significant sex and edible tissue type differences (P < 0.05) in SFA were observed; higher SFA concentrations are recorded in male hepatopancreas (35.76%) (Table 4). Furthermore, monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) were higher in females and in their hepatopancreas tissue (P < 0.05). In fact, oleic acid (C18:1 n9) was the major MUFA in all tissues type (more than 15% in female claw muscles), followed by palmitoleic acid (C16:1 n7; ranging between 2.81±0.33% and 10.87±0.12%) and octadecenoic acid (C18:1n7; ranging between 2.31±0.03% and 2.95±0.29%) (Table 4). Significant differences were observed between the sexes and the analyzed tissues for some MUFA (Table 4). Female thoracic muscles contained higher amounts of C16:1 n7, C18:1 n7, and female hepatopancreas comprised the highest content of C16:1 n7, C18:1 n9, C17:1, and C16:1 n9 (P < 0.05). Moreover, the total PUFA percentage ranged between 36.45% and 43.64% for females and between 37.83% and 44.15% for males. Essential fatty acids, namely eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA, C20:5, n3, ranged from 9.31% to 15.64%), docosahexaenoic acid (DHA, C22:6 n3, ranging between 8.74% and 13.78%), and arachidonic acid (C20:4 n6, ranging between 6.81% and 9.21%) were the most abundant fatty acids in all analyzed tissues. However, the other PUFA (C22:5 n3 and C20:4 n3) did not exceeded 0.35% of the total fatty acids (Table 4). Significant differences between sexes were observed for most PUFA with higher amounts in male tissues (P < 0.05), except for EPA and DHA (Table 4). In addition, muscles contained significantly higher PUFA contents than did the hepatopancreas of both sexes (ranging from 6% to 16% and between 8% and 11%, respectively, for muscles and hepatopancreas) (P < 0.05).

Nutritional quality index of lipids

To estimate the nutritional quality of lipids in C. sapidus, some indexes and ratios have been calculated and are presented in Table 5. All analyzed samples had n3/ n6 PUFA and PUFA/SFA ratios (respectively from 1.74 to 2.41 and between 1.06 and 1.44) that greatly exceeded recommended values. They were significantly higher in muscles (P < 0.05) (Table 5). Moreover, atherogenic and thrombogenic indices (AI and TI) determination is necessary to evaluate the susceptibility of ingested fat from marine products to influence the risk of coronary heart disease. In the present study, AI and TI values for all analyzed samples were considerably below 1 (between 0.29 and 0.38) with no significant difference for TI (Table 5). The obtained cholesterolemic indexes (H/H) were significantly higher in muscles of both sexes (P < 0.05), averaging 2.81 for the brown meat and ranging between 3.58 and 3.8 for muscles.

Discussion

Tunisia is currently experiencing a unique phenomenon: a concomitant biological explosion by two species of blue crab, one a native from the Atlantic Ocean (C. sapidus) and the other an immigrant from the Red Sea (P. segnis). Since its first record in 2017 (Ben Souissi et al., 2017), C. sapidus has expanded its distribution northwards (Katsanevakis et al., 2020). Currently, it is recorded almost ubiquitously along northern coasts of Tunisia with an increasing exponential rate due to shipping activities (Shaeik et al., 2021). Recent research suggested complementary participatory methods aiming for strong collaboration between stakeholders, namely experienced fishermen, to understand the implications of the presence of this crab (Azzurro et al., 2019; Ragkousis et al., 2020). Therefore, the outcomes of this study are important in highlighting the fact that the socio-economic impacts are already noticeable on small-scale fisheries in northern Tunisia in term of losses of catches and of fishing gear (Shaeik et al., 2021). The main consequences were

:		F	emales					Males		
ratty acids	CH	CE	HEP	SEM	P > F	CH	CE	HEP	SEM	P > F
C12:0	$0.85\pm0.20^{\mathrm{a}}$	0.69 ± 0.06^{a}	$0.09\pm0.02^{\mathrm{b}}$	0.11	0.048	0.80 ± 0.2^{a}	$0.43\pm0.12^{ m ab}$	0.13 ± 0.02^{b}	0.11	0.01
C13:0	0.88 ± 0.20	$0.13\pm0.02^*$	1.04 ± 0.6	NS	NS	$1.08\pm0.11^{ m b}$	$1.08\pm0.13^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$1.99\pm0.21^{ m a}$	0.12	0.003
C14:0	$1.13\pm0.14^{\mathrm{a}}$	$0.59\pm0.1^{ m b}$	$0.55\pm0.16^{\rm b}$	0.11	0.017	0.94 ± 0.28	0.89 ± 0.1	0.85 ± 0.14	NS	NS
C15:0	0.42 ± 0.17	0.33 ± 0.13	0.51 ± 0.26	NS	NS	0.51 ± 0.2	0.41 ± 0.16	0.37 ± 0.08	NS	NS
C16:0	14.20 ± 0.56	14.52 ± 0.27	$15.54\pm0.08^*$	NS	NS	$13.20\pm0.14^{\mathrm{b}}$	$13.27\pm0.58^{\rm b}$	$14.89 \pm 0.09^{\rm a*}$	0.26	0.006
C17:0	3.88 ± 0.56	3.30 ± 0.48	2.66 ± 0.46	NS	NS	3.67 ± 0.48	3.05 ± 0.62	3.55 ± 0.62	NS	NS
C18:0	$6.48\pm0.12^{\rm a}$	$6.50\pm0.1^{\mathrm{a}*}$	$4.79\pm0.03^{\mathrm{b}*}$	0.08	< 0.0001	$6.25\pm0.01^{\circ}$	$8.32\pm0.1^{\rm a*}$	$7.54\pm0.28^{\rm b*}$	0.14	0.0001
C20:0	$1.34\pm0.06^{\rm b}$	$1.28\pm0.07^{\rm b}$	$1.66\pm0.03^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.05	0.004	1.41 ± 0.12	1.40 ± 0.19	$1.14\pm0.16^{*}$	NS	NS
C21:0	0.32 ± 0.05	0.37 ± 0.01	0.34 ± 0.01	NS	NS	0.56 ± 0.16	0.61 ± 0.28	0.36 ± 0.07	NS	NS
C22:0	$0.31\pm0.00^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$0.38\pm0.02^{\mathrm{a}}$	$0.40\pm0.02^{\mathrm{a}}$	0.01	0.0158	$0.43\pm0.02^*$	0.38 ± 0.08	0.44 ± 0.03	NS	NS
C23:0	0.39 ± 0.04	0.38 ± 0.03	$0.43\pm0.07^*$	NS	NS	$0.59\pm0.08^{\rm b}$	$0.48\pm0.08^{\rm b}$	$2.09\pm0.23^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.13	0.0002
C24:0	$1.46\pm0.02^{\rm c*}$	$1.86\pm0.06^{\rm b}$	$2.42\pm0.06^{\rm a}$	0.05	< 0.0001	$2.29 \pm 0.01^{\rm a*}$	$1.74\pm0.06^{\mathrm{b}}$	2.41 ± 0.1^{a}	0.05	0.0003
C14:1n9	$1.58\pm0.01^{\mathrm{a}*}$	$1.38\pm0.01^{\mathrm{b}}$	$1.31\pm0.03^\circ$	0.01	< 0.0001	$1.76\pm0.01^*$	1.29 ± 0.22	1.37 ± 0.2	NS	NS
C16:1n9	$0.57\pm0.03^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$0.66\pm0.04^{ m b}$	$1.12\pm0.03^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.03	< 0.0001	$0.78\pm0.05^{\mathrm{a}*}$	$0.68\pm0.2a^{ m b}$	$0.38\pm0.05^{\mathrm{b}*}$	NS	NS
C16:1n7	$3.40\pm0.12^{\mathrm{c}*}$	$4.97\pm0.32^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$10.87\pm0.12^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.22	< 0.0001	$4.34\pm0.13^{\rm b*}$	$2.81\pm0.33^{\mathrm{c}*}$	$6.33\pm0.46^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.09	0.0003
C17:1n8	1.38 ± 0.37	1.47 ± 0.04	$1.09\pm0.32^*$	NS	NS	1.11 ± 0.65	1.28 ± 0.55	$0.35\pm0.09^{*}$	NS	NS
C18:1n7	2.31 ± 0.03	$2.64\pm0.06^*$	2.95 ± 0.29	NS	NS	2.66 ± 0.15	$2.34\pm0.06^{*}$	2.77 ± 1.39	NS	NS
C18:1n9 t	0.67 ± 0.01	0.74 ± 0.13	$0.70\pm0.04^*$	NS	NS	$0.96\pm0.04^{\mathrm{b}}$	$0.93\pm0.12^{\mathrm{b}}$	$1.35\pm0.04^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.06	0.004
C18:1n9 c	15.99 ± 0.33	13.80 ± 0.41	$14.66\pm0.38^*$	NS	NS	13.37 ± 0.25	13.68 ± 0.68	$13.55\pm0.13^*$	NS	NS
C20:1n9	0.23 ± 0.01	0.22 ± 0.03	0.29 ± 0.11	NS	NS	0.40 ± 0.08	0.32 ± 0.12	0.21 ± 0.09	NS	NS
C24:1	0.23 ± 0.07	0.18 ± 0.06	0.13 ± 0.03	NS	NS	$0.22\pm0.09^{\mathrm{ab}}$	$0.48\pm0.15^{\rm a}$	$0.10\pm0.01^{ m b}$	0.08	0.04
C18:2 t c	$0.11\pm0.01^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$0.51\pm0.03^{\mathrm{a}*}$	$0.41\pm0.18^{\rm ab}$	0.09	0.049	$0.27\pm0.06^{*}$	$0.35\pm0.06^{*}$	0.24 ± 0.08	NS	NS
C18:2 c t	$0.45\pm0.13^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$0.69\pm0.08^{ m ab}$	$0.73\pm0.05^{\mathrm{a}}$	NS	NS	$0.98\pm0.01^*$	0.81 ± 0.15	0.91 ± 0.1	NS	NS
C18:2 n6	0.44 ± 0.13	0.37 ± 0.04	$0.29\pm0.01^*$	NS	NS	0.56 ± 0.14	0.42 ± 0.16	$0.47\pm0.07^{*}$	NS	NS
C18:2 t c	$0.05\pm0.01^*$	0.06 ± 0.01	0.41 ± 0.23	NS	NS	$0.09\pm0.02^*$	0.12 ± 0.02	0.12 ± 0.02	NS	NS
C18:2 2t	$0.59\pm0.03^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$0.60 \pm 0.02b$	$1.93\pm0.57^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.25	0.013	$1.01\pm0.1^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$0.77\pm0.13^{ m b}$	$4.02\pm0.42^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.22	< 0.0001
C18:2 c t	$0.70\pm0.00^{\mathrm{c}*}$	$0.97 \pm 0.01b$	$1.81\pm0.04^{\mathrm{a}*}$	0.02	< 0.0001	$0.99\pm0.02^{\rm ab^{\ast}}$	$0.88\pm0.13b$	$1.20\pm0.12^{\mathrm{a}*}$	NS	NS
C18:3 n3	3.97 ± 0.2	3.56 ± 0.07	3.55 ± 0.01	NS	NS	4.53 ± 0.49	3.78 ± 0.16	4.35 ± 0.42	NS	NS
C20:3 n3	0.19 ± 0	0.22 ± 0.01	$0.09\pm0.01^*$	0.03	0.044	0.25 ± 0.08	0.20 ± 0.05	$0.17\pm0.02^*$	NS	NS
C18:4n3	$0.31\pm0.06^{*}$	0.26 ± 0.03	0.35 ± 0.13	NS	NS	$0.60 \pm 0.01^{\mathrm{a}*}$	$0.66\pm0.2^{\mathrm{a}}$	$0.25\pm0.03^{\rm b}$	0.09	0.04
C20:4n6 (ARA)	$7.43\pm0.05^{\mathrm{a}*}$	$7.18\pm0.11^{\rm a}$	$6.86\pm0.07^{ m b}$	0.08	0.007	$9.21\pm0.16^{\mathrm{a}*}$	$7.21\pm0.46^{\mathrm{b}}$	$6.81\pm0.07^{\rm b}$	0.22	0.0005
C20:4n3	$0.09\pm0.01^*$	0.21 ± 0.07	0.14 ± 0.08	NS	NS	$0.23\pm0.05^*$	0.35 ± 0.05	0.26 ± 0.07	NS	NS
C20:5n3(EPA)	$13.83 \pm 0.19^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$15.64\pm0.26^{\rm a}$	$11.06\pm0.44^\circ$	0.28	< 0.0001	$12.58 \pm 0.28^{\mathrm{b}*}$	$15.20\pm0.67^{\rm a}$	$9.31\pm0.79^{\circ}$	0.49	0.0004
C22:5n3	$0.07\pm0.01^*$	0.10 ± 0.02	0.07 ± 0.01	NS	NS	$0.13\pm0.02^*$	0.12 ± 0.05	0.07 ± 0.01	NS	NS
C22:6n3 (DHA)	$13.78 \pm 0.49^{\rm a*}$	$13.27\pm0.45^{\rm a}$	$8.74\pm0.36^{\rm b}$	0.41	0.0002	$11.25 \pm 0.13^{b^*}$	$13.29\pm0.28^{\rm a}$	$9.64\pm0.47^{\circ}$	0.25	0.0002
Σ SFA (%)	31.64 ± 0.54	30.31 ± 0.33	30.43 ± 0.81	NS	NS	31.74 ± 0.15^{b}	$32.04\pm0.25^{\mathrm{b}}$	35.76 ± 0.96^{a}	0.46	0.001
ΣMUFA (%)	$26.35\pm0.31^{\rm b}$	$26.06\pm1.14^{\mathrm{b}}$	$33.12\pm0.63^{\mathrm{a}}$	0.64	0.0004	25.59 ± 0.16	23.80 ± 0.25	26.41 ± 1.53	NS	NS
ΣPUFA (%)	$42.01\pm0.85^{\rm a}$	$43.64\pm0.92^{\rm a}$	$36.45\pm0.22^{\mathrm{b}}$	0.59	0.0003	$42.67\pm0.22^{\mathrm{b}}$	$44.15\pm0.39^{\rm a}$	$37.83\pm0.65^{\circ}$	0.36	< 0.0001
∑n6 (%)	$7.87\pm0.12^{\mathrm{a}}$	$7.55\pm0.19^{\mathrm{a}}$	$7.15\pm0.07^{ m b}$	0.11	0.01	$9.77\pm0.06^{\mathrm{a}}$	$7.63\pm0.31^{ m b}$	$7.27\pm0.12^{\mathrm{b}}$	0.14	< 0.0001
∑n3 (%)	$18.41\pm0.62^{\mathrm{a}}$	$17.62\pm0.39^{\mathrm{a}}$	$12.94\pm0.32^{\mathrm{b}}$	0.37	< 0.0001	$16.99\pm0.3^{\mathrm{b}}$	$18.39\pm0.19^{\rm a}$	$14.76\pm0.04^{\circ}$	0.15	< 0.0001
¹ Data are expressed as mean	a + SD (n = 3) Different	it letters in the same li	ne indicate significa	nt difference	s between the ana	wred tissues for each se	v An acterick * indicates	significant differences b	etween seve	s for each tissue
type. $NS = \text{not significant}$: S.	FA = saturated fatty aci	ds: $MUFA = monouns$	aturated; $PUFA = p_0$	lyunsaturate	d: $EPA = eicosape$	Tyzeu ussues rot caute or itaenoic; $DHA = docose$	hexaenoic; $ARA = arach$	idonic: $CH = Cheliped n$	nuscles: CE =	 Cephalothorax
muscles; $HEP =$ hepatopanc	reas; $SEM =$ standard e	rror of the mean.			- 1					

Table 4. Fatty acids composition of *C. sapidus* (% of total fatty acids)¹.

Table 5. Lipid quality indexes in edible tissues of C. sapidus¹.

	Females				Males			
	СН	СЕ	HEP	<i>P</i> > F	СН	СЕ	НЕР	<i>P</i> > F
w3/w6	$2.34\pm0.04^{\rm a}$	$2.33\pm0.01^{\text{a}}$	$1.81\pm0.03^{\rm b}$	< 0.0001	$1.74\pm0.03^{\circ}$	$2.42\pm0.12^{\rm a}$	$2.03\pm0.03^{\rm b}$	0.0005
PUFA/SFA	$1.33\pm0.05^{\text{b}}$	$1.44\pm0.03^{\text{a}}$	$1.20\pm0.04^{\circ}$	0.004	$1.34\pm0.01^{\rm a}$	$1.38\pm0.02^{\rm a}$	$1.06\pm0.01^{\text{b}}$	< 0.0001
AI	0.37 ± 0.03	0.34 ± 0.02	0.33 ± 0.01	NS	0.34 ± 0.03	0.35 ± 0.02	0.38 ± 0.01	NS
TI	$0.29\pm0.02^{\rm b}$	$0.3\pm0.01^{\text{b}}$	$0.34\pm0.01^{\text{a}}$	0.02	$0.29\pm0.01^{\text{b}}$	$0.31\pm0.01^{\text{b}}$	$0.37\pm0.01^{\rm a}$	0.0004
H/H	$3.63\pm0.22^{\rm a}$	$3.58\pm0.15^{\rm a}$	$2.81\pm0.02^{\text{b}}$	0.005	$3.65\pm0.1^{\rm a}$	$3.8\pm0.05^{\rm a}$	$2.81\pm0.1^{\text{b}}$	0.0001

¹Data are expressed as mean \pm SD (n = 3). Different letters in the same line indicate significant differences between the analyzed tissues for each sex. NS = not significant; CH = Cheliped muscles; CE = Cephalothorax muscles; HEP = Hepatopancreas; AI = Atherogenic index; TI = Thrombogenic index; H/H = Cholesterolemic index.

a decrease in production quantity and quality and an increased frequency of fishing net renewal. Similar impacts of blue crabs were described by Kampouris *et al.* (2019) where the study presented evidence that the invasive crab *C. sapidus* preys on a wide range of species, including economically important fish, mollusks, and crustaceans in the Aegean Sea. In fact, the same scenario has already been observed with *P. segnis* (Khamassi *et al.*, 2019) and also with other invasive decapods, namely the spider crab *L. dubia* H. Milne Edwards, 1834, which caused an alarming shortfall of more than 70% in a single year (Rjiba-Bahri *et al.*, 2019).

To outline an effective management strategy to mitigate ecological and economic impacts of the blue crab in invaded habitats, Mancinelli et al. (2017) presented a SWOT analysis for C. sapidus invasion. This study concluded that crab explosion control can be coordinated with the opportunity to value it as a fishery resource for alimentary and non-alimentary purposes especially as this species seems to be more delicious (Piras et al., 2019). Commercial fisheries of C. sapidus already exist in both native and invaded eastern Mediterranean areas (Turkey) (Piras, 2019). Since the commercial value of crabs depends on their meat yield (Pinheiro et al., 2015), this was evaluated in this study. Sex variations of the meat yield are in agreement with those of Tureli et al. (2000) for the same species but also for other crabs such as Callinectes bocourti A. Milne-Edwards, 1879 [in A. Milne-Edwards, 1873-1880], Portunus pelagicus (Linnaeus, 1758), Ucides cordatus (Linnaeus, 1763), and Cancer pagurus (Linnaeus, 1758) (Tureli et al., 2000; Yomar Hattori et al., 2006; Barrento et al., 2010; Pinheiro et al., 2015), which usually varies with sex and animal maturity (Pinheiro et al., 2015). During the reproductive period, females use more energy than males for vitellogenesis; thus, they have lower weight and meat yield than males (Barrento et al., 2010; Pinheiro et al., 2015). In addition, there is a sexual dimorphism in most crab species: males have bigger claws than females used in copulation process and intraspecific confrontations (Pinheiro et al., 2015; Rjiba-Bahri et al., 2019). Therefore, large male crabs are always selected by fishermen and requested by retailers and restaurant managers (Maulvault et al., 2012; Pinheiro et al., 2015). Compared to C. sapidus caught from Turkish coasts, our analyzed samples had lower flesh contents in both the cephalothorax and chelipeds (total meat yield of Turkish crabs was 57.19% and 66.67%, respectively, for females and males; Yomar Hattori et al., 2006). This could be due to endogenous sources of variations but also meat extraction methods (mechanical vs. manual processes) (Pinheiro et al., 2015). Nevertheless, C. sapidus had higher muscle yield than Portunus pelagicus (29%-41%; Tureli et al., 2000; Wu et al., 2010) and other high commercial value crabs such as Cancer pagurus (total meat yield ranged between 22% and 24%) and Chionoecetes opilio (O. Fabricius, 1788) (30%) (Barrento et al., 2010). Also, several studies associated crabmeat yield with body structure and feeding habits (Taylor et al., 2000). Some brachyuran species, which mainly feed on bivalves, contain higher meat content in their chelipeds (Taylor et al., 2000; Yomar Hattori et al., 2006). Moreover, meat yield of the cephalothorax may vary with the morphology and size of thoracomere chambers (small cavities covering the muscle tissue inside the carapace and separated by endophragmal exoskeleton): large thoracomeres with thin and easily breakable septa facilitate meat removal thereby increasing the meat yield (Taylor et al., 2000; Yomar Hattori et al., 2006; Pinheiro et al., 2015). For locomotory pereiopods, flesh content was lower than other body structure in C. sapidus, similar to results found for most crabs except the spider crab Chionoecetes sp. (muscle contents were similar in claws and locomotory pereiopods) (Yomar Hattori et al., 2006).

The determination of the Atlantic blue crab meat yield could be very useful for crab producers in Tunisia especially as this species had not been investigated prior to this study, unlike the invasive Lessepsian crab P. segnis (GIPP, 2019). It is recommended for processing industries that crab abdomen muscles should be sold as vacuum packed or canned crabmeat and the whole claws can be marketed frozen in vacuum packs. In fact, processed crabmeat (frozen or canned) has a higher commercial value and an extended shelf-life than the fresh crabmeat. For the remaining body parts (pereiopods, hepatopancreas, and shells), they can serve as protein and mineral resources in pet food or aquatic feed ingredients but also for chitosan extraction (Yomar Hattori et al., 2006). Therefore, this invasive crab might represent an alternative source for Tunisian fishermen to improve their livelihoods and decrease the recorded negative socio-economic impacts.

Several studies considered only crustacean muscles as edible tissue (Maulvault et al., 2012; Ayas, 2016; Bejaoui et al., 2017). However, the brown meat (hepatopancreas and gonads) is also highly appreciated in Asia, Canada, and southern Europe for its specific aroma and texture (Barrento et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2010) despite the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) advisories to limit consumption (European Commission, 2011). Even in Tunisia, there are specific culinary habits in southern regions (Sfax and the archipelago of Kerkennah) which have recipes based on cuttlefish hepatopancreas. Therefore, knowing the biochemical analysis and the comparison of the different edible tissues is essential. Results showed significant differences between sexes and tissue samples. Similar variations were found with the same species in Turkish waters and other crabs such as *Cancer pagurus* and Portunus segnis (Kücükgülmez et al., 2006; Barrento et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2010; Ayas, 2016; Bejaoui et al., 2017). Comparable moisture contents were found with crabs from Turkish lagoons (65-69%) (Maulvault et al., 2012), whereas higher percentages were reported for the same species in Italian lagoons (Zotti et al., 2016). This relatively high moisture content is essential for crab stabilization during movement. However, strict sanitary measures must be taken during storage and conditioning of crabs, to minimize spoilage.

Similar protein contents in female muscles were reported by (Maulvault et al., 2012) (26.5-29.6%), but lower percentages were noted for the same species in Turkish and Italian waters (14.71%-24.33%) (Tureli et al., 2000; Kücükgülmez & Çelik, 2008; Zotti et al., 2016). In addition, many other species contained lower protein concentrations for both sexes and their tissues (muscles and hepatopancreas), namely Carcinus aestuarii (11.514 ± 0.637%), Scylla serrata (Forskål, 1775) (11–12%), Portunus segnis (2.4-3.0%), and Portunus pelagicus (8.4-18.4%) (Wu et al., 2010; Bejaoui et al., 2017). The studied invasive crab has higher protein and lipid contents compared to other decapods of great commercial value, namely Penaeus kerathurus (Forskål, 1775), Penaeus aztecus Ives, 1891, Homarus gammarus (Linnaeus, 1758), Nephrops norvegicus (Linnaeus, 1758), Aristeus antennatus (Risso, 1816), and Palinurus elephas (J.C. Fabricius, 1787) (Rosa & Nunes, 2003; Barrento et al., 2009; Zlatanos et al., 2009; Limam et al., 2014; Kampouris et al., 2021). Protein and fat percentages varied from 15.6% to 21.7% and from 0.15% to 2.1%, respectively, of wet weights of these species.

Protein variations can be influenced by species, physiological stage, and environmental conditions (Kücükgülmez & Çelik, 2008; Barrento *et al.*, 2010). Compared to some important commercial fish species (*Sparus aurata, Dicentrarchus labrax* (Linnaeus, 1758), wild-caught *Diplodus sargus* L., and *Sciaena umbra* L.) but also other conventional protein sources including poultry (28%), beef meat (26%), fish (15-20%), eggs (12.35%), and milk (8.15%), the invasive blue crab had higher protein concentrations (Ozden & Erken, 2007; Bejaoui *et al.*, 2017; Kouroupakis *et al.*, 2019).

Regular protein intake is essential for human survival

and demand for high quality proteins has increased. To provide this, marine resources are more intensively exploited since they have better digestibility (Kücükgülmez *et al.*, 2006; Bejaoui *et al.*, 2017). Crabs are an excellent protein source especially for children and pregnant and lactating women and may be considered as a "food of the future" in Tunisia. In this context, chelipeds and cephalothorax muscles of *C. sapidus* can provide ca. 50% of the recommended daily protein intake for a person (50–60 g for an individual weighing between 60 and 70 kg (FAO/ WHO/UNU, 1985). In fact, Kücükgülmez & Çelik (2008) reported that 50 g of *C. sapidus* meat can provide the recommended daily essential amino acids requirement for an adult as stipulated by the World Health Organization (WHO) (FAO/WHO/UNU, 1985).

Furthermore, lipid content was the highest in the hepatopancreas and is responsible for the aroma and creamy texture of the brown meat. Several studies have reported similar results for the same species (Kücükgülmez *et al.*, 2006), but also other crabs (*Cancer pagurus* by Barrento *et al.*, 2010), whereas higher lipid content was found in muscles of *Portunus segnis* in Tunisia (9–11%; Bejaoui *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, *C. sapidus* can be recommended like most crustaceans in low fat diets since it provides less than 25% of energy from fat content (Barrento *et al.*, 2010).

Given that muscle is a structural tissue, it contains high protein and poor lipid percentage (Barrento et al., 2010). However, the hepatopancreas is a multifunction organ responsible for the absorption and storage of lipids and cholesterol metabolism (Barrento et al., 2010). Overall, C. sapidus represented a similar fatty acid profile to that of other marine crabs (Kücükgülmez & Celik, 2008; Barrento et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2010; Bejaoui et al., 2017). It was dominated by the PUFA which is in accordance with other studies on blue crabs (Wu et al., 2010; Maulvault et al., 2012; Ayas, 2016; Bejaoui et al., 2017. The highest MUFA content in the hepatopancreatic tissue is a characteristic of the Decapoda (Barrento et al., 2010); this may be related to the importance of MUFA in sexual maturation and larval development (Maulvault et al., 2012). Similar EPA and DHA percentages were reported in muscles of C. sapidus sampled in Turkish lagoons (Maulvault et al., 2012; Ayas, 2016). However, lower contents were noted for Portunus segnis marketed in Tunisia (2.9-7.6%; Bejaoui et al., 2017). In addition to crab species, the food supply sources strongly affect PUFA composition of marine invertebrates. In fact, aquatic ecosystems are considered as the main source of EPA and DHA production in the biosphere through microalgal species (Bejaoui et al., 2017).

Crabs are known to have a low proportion of SFA and represent a good source of omega 3 PUFA (EPA and DHA) and arachidonic fatty acid (ARA; C20:4 n6). PUFA are considered essential for humans especially fetuses, infants, adolescents, and pregnant or lactating women (Maulvault *et al.*, 2012). They are the major components of cell membrane phospholipids and are predominant in the central nervous system. However, humans are not able to synthesize them, so they must be supplied through the diet (Maulvault *et al.*, 2012). *Callinectes sapidus* muscles represented higher ARA, EPA and DHA concentrations than did the hepatopancreas, since EPA is a structural component of cell membranes in muscles (Wu *et al.*, 2010). These essential fatty acids are known to prevent cardiovascular diseases, some forms of diabetes, and joint inflammation (Bejaoui *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, crab muscles seem to be the healthiest option for human consumption; however, brown crab meat may cause heavy metal poisoning, especially cadmium (European Commission, 2011).

To estimate the nutritional quality of the lipid fraction, some indexes and ratios have been cited as excellent to compare different tissues and species (Ulbricht & Southgate, 1991; UKDH, 1994; Fernandes et al., 2014). The importance of a balanced PUFAs intake has been recognized by health organizations throughout the world and now there is a consensus that the PUFA/SFA and n3/ n6 ratios are important. The consumption of foods with higher concentrations of SFA and n6 rather than PUFA and n3 has greater risk of many inflammatory and cardiovascular diseases (Maulvault et al., 2012). The FAO/ WHO and the United Kingdom Department of Health recommended a maximum dietary ratio of n6/n3 = 4 (recommended n3/n6 PUFA ratio must be at least between 0.1 and 0.2) and a minimum value of the PUFA/SFA ratio of 0.45 and considers higher ratios more beneficial for human health (UKDH, 1994). In this study, all the analyzed tissues for both sexes showed n3/n6 PUFA and PUFA/SFA ratios that greatly exceeded the recommended minimum values. Compared to the same species sampled from Akyatan lagoon and Hurma strait in Turkey (Maulvault et al., 2012), C. sapidus from Tunisian waters is of higher quality regarding n3/n6 PUFA ratios (ranging between 1.29 and 2.24). In addition, abdomen muscles seem to have better nutritional value than the Lessepsian blue crab newly exploited in Tunisia (1.78 and 1.65; 1.13 and 1.23 respectively for n3/n6 and PUFA/SFA ratios values for males and females) (Bejaoui et al., 2017). Furthermore, AI and TI indicate the potential for stimulating platelet aggregation (Ghaeni et al., 2013). The TI tends to form clots in the blood vessels. Additionally, AI reflects the relationship between saturated and unsaturated fatty acids: proatherogenic fatty acids favor the adhesion of lipids to cells of the immunological and circulatory system versus anti-atherogenic FA inhibiting the aggregation of plaques, decreasing the levels of cholesterol and phospholipids, therefore preventing the appearance of micro and macro-coronary diseases. Both indexes must be lower than 1 to prevent heart diseases (Ulbricht & Southgate, 1991). In this context, our results show that edible tissues of C. sapidus, especially muscles, can be considered as appropriate for human consumption.

Lower AI and TI were found for *Cancer pagurus* (Barrento *et al.*, 2010) and this may be related to species, maturity, sex, season of capture, and nutrient composition of the diet. Nevertheless, higher indices were confirmed for some fishes such *as Sardinella aurita* Valenciennes, 1847 (AI = 0.9 and TI = 0.3), *Merluccius merluccius* (Linnaeus, 1758) (AI = 0.6 and TI = 0.3), *Crangon crangon*

(Linnaeus, 1758) (A I=1.35), and *Raja clavata* Linnaeus, 1758 (AI = 2.37) (Ghaeni *et al.*, 2013). In addition, other food items like lamb chops (AI = 1.00 and TI = 1.33), raw minced beef (AI = 0.72 and TI = 1.27), and chicken (AI = 0.5 and TI = 0.95) presented higher indices (Ulbricht & Southgate, 1991).

Finally, there is another essential indicator ratio for evaluating the nutritional value and the healthiness of foods, which is the hypocholesterolemic and hypercholesterolemic fatty acid ratio (H/H) (Fernandes et al., 2014). This additional index considers the specific effects of fatty acids on cholesterol metabolism, thus greater H/H values are more beneficial for human health (Fernandes et al., 2014). The obtained cholesterolemic indexes (H/H) in blue crab were higher than those found in other common food sources namely chicken, rabbit, and beef (respectively 1.8, 1.2, and 1.8; Dal Bosco et al., 2001; Attia et al., 2017). The investigated crab meat was better for retarding atherosclerosis than rabbit meat, well known as low fat food source. All the calculated nutritional indexes of fatty acids profile, namely PUFA/SFA, n3/n6, AI, TI as well as H/H ratios, indicates that the edible tissues of the invasive crab C. sapidus are beneficial for human health. As most of biological invasions occur due to anthropogenic vectors and may negatively influence the invaded ecosystems, they are considered as biological pollution (Katsanevakis et al., 2020). Different approaches have been used to control NIS, and their consumption has been applied previously but has recently surged in popularity among governmental and scientific communities (Nuñez et al., 2012; Leone, 2020). The exponential growth rate of the world population will lead to food shortages and resource scarcity. Hence, the challenge is to explore new marine food resources, e.g., invasive species. Eating AIS is also a possible way to improve the economic situation of local fishing sectors (Mancinelli et al., 2017; Lavajoo et al., 2018; Castro-González et al., 2019).

For this, food preferences and culinary traditions are changing with better acceptability of new foods like crabs whose consumption was initially limited in Tunisia to only the archipelago of Kerkennah. Note that the Tunisian consumer is currently turning more and more towards fishery products of exotic origins. This change in eating behavior is stimulated by several tasting events organized at a local scale, as part of the national strategy for the control and promotion of exotic marine species. At a regional level, promoting campaigns of NIS consumption, namely "Eat Those Invasives", "Eat Lionfish" were carried out (Nuñez et al., 2012). In addition, online and printed cookbooks supporting the use of NIS as meal components, were published by Franke (2007) and Leone (2020). This can be beneficial for all participants (scientists, government, and fishermen) since it increases awareness of NIS, assists in early detection, and may boost local economy (Nuñez et al., 2012).

Several studies have highlighted the high nutritive value of Mediterranean blue crab meat; however blue crab exploitation initiatives are extremely limited. Tunisia, the main hotspot for *P. segnis and C. sapidus* in the Mediterranean, was the first country to be concerned by

this biological explosion and has implemented a national plan for promoting fishing and marketing of the blue swimming crab. Therefore, several tasting campaigns and cooking shows were organized in Tunisia during various national and international events to promote this new product and encourage its consumption. These initiatives were at the origin of new commercial dynamics and new jobs, and mitigated blue swimming crab damage. Therefore, biological explosion turned from being a threat to an opportunity. Tunisian initiatives to manage this bioinvasion can be considered as a case study to be followed at a Mediterranean scale. However, crab stock assessment is required for the sustainability of this new fishery and the implementation of an appropriate value chain.

Funding information

This work was supported by the Interreg project Italy-Tunisia financed by the European Union (Grant agreement: BLEU-ADAPT_IS_3.1_021- CUP: B74I19001090002).

References

- AOAC (Association of Official Agricultural Chemists), 2005. Methods of Analysis of AOAC International, 18th Ed. Latimer, G., Horwitz, W. (Eds). AOAC International, Gaithersburg, MD, USA, 3000 pp.
- Attia, Y.A., Al Harthi, M.A., Korish, M.A., Shiboob, M.M., 2017. Fatty acid and cholesterol profiles, hypocholesterolemic, atherogenic, and thrombogenic incides of broiler meat in the retail market. *Lipids in health and disease*, 16, 1-11.
- Ayas, D., 2016. The Effects of Season and Sex on the Nutritional Quality of Muscle Types of Blue Crab Callinectes sapidus (Rathbun, 1896) and Swimming Crab Portunus segnis (Forskal, 1775). Natural Engineering Sciences, 1, 1-14.
- Azzurro, E., Moshella, P., Maynou, F., 2011. Tracking signals of change in Mediterranean fish diversity based on local ecological knowledge. *PLOS ONE*, 6 (9), e24885.
- Azzurro, E., Sbragaglia, V., Cerri, J., Bariche, M., Bolognini, L. *et al.*, 2019. Climate change and biological invasions are rapidly reshuffling species distribution, restructuring the biological communities of many ecosystems of Mediterranean fishes: A large-scale survey based on local ecological knowledge. *Global Change Biology*, 25(8), 2779-2792.
- Barrento, S., Marques, A., Teixeira, B., Vaz-Pires, P., Nunes, M.L., 2009. Nutritional Quality of the Edible Tissues of European Lobster *Homarus gammarus* and American Lobster *Homarus americanus. Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, 57, 3645-3652.
- Barrento, S., Marques, A., Teixeira, B., Mendes, R., Bandarra, N. et al., 2010. Chemical composition, cholesterol, fatty acid and amino acid in two populations of brown crab Cancer pagurus: Ecological and human health implications. Journal of Food Composition Analysis, 23, 716-725.
- Bejaoui, S., Ghribi, F., Hatira, S., Chetoui, I., Rebah, I. *et al.*, 2017. First Investigation in the Biochemical Analysis of the

Invasive Crab Portunus segnis from Tunisian Waters. Journal of American Oil Chemistry Society, 94, 673-682.

- Benabdi, M., Belmahi, A.E., Grimes, S., 2019. First record of the Atlantic blue crab *Callinectes sapidus* Rathbun, 1896 (Decapoda: Brachyura: Portunidae) in Algerian coastal waters (southwestern Mediterranean). *BioInvasion Records*, 8 (1), 119-122.
- Ben Souissi, J., Abidi, A., Ounifi-Ben Amor, K., Chaffai, A., Rifi, M. et al., 2017. Nouvelle invasion du golfe de Gabes par un crabe bleu d'origine atlantique : première occurrence de Callinectes sapidus Rathbun, 1896 en Tunisie (méditerranée centrale). In Proceedings of XVII^{èmes} Journées Tunisiennes des Sciences de la Mer. Kerkennah, Sfax, Tunisia, 17-21 December, ATSMer, Tunisia.
- Bouhlel, I., Mnari, A., Cherif, I., Hammami, M., El Cafsi, M. et al., 2009. Fatty acids in muscles, liver and gonads in *Diplodus annularis* from the Tunisian coasts. *Cahiers de Biologie Marine*, 50, 223-229.
- Bradford, M., 1976. A rapid and sensitive method for quantification of microgram quantities of proteins using the principal of protein dye binding. *Analytic Biochemistry*, 72, 248-254.
- Castro-González, M.I., Caballero-Vázquez, J.A., Guerra-Infante, F.M., López-Hurtado, M., 2019. Analysis of the chemical composition of the lionfish *Pterois volitans* as a food strategy for its control. *Latin American Journal of Aquatic Research*, 47, 841-844.
- Chaffai, A., Rjiba-Bahri, W., Abidi, A., Denis, F., Ben Souissi, J., 2020. Trophic habits of the invasive crab *Libinia dubia* H. Milne Edwards, 1834 from the Gulf of Gabès (Tunisia). *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 21 (2), 420-432.
- Chartosia, N., Anastasiadis, D., Bazairi, H., Crocetta, F., Deidun, H., *et al.*, 2018. New Mediterranean Biodiversity Records (July 2018). *Mediterranean Marin Science*, 19 (2), 398-415.
- Dal Bosco, A.D., Castellini, C., Bernardini, M., 2001. Nutritional quality of rabbit meat as affected by cooking procedure and dietary vitamin. *European Journal of Food Sciences*, 66, 1047-1051.
- European Commission, 2011. Consumption of brown crab. Information note, European Commission, 2 pp.
- FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), 1989. *Yield and nutritional value of the commercially more important fish species*. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper, No. 309, 187 pp.
- FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), 2014. Vue Générale Du Secteur Aquacole National Tunisia. FAO, 11 pp.
- FAO/WHO/UNU, 1985. Energy and protein requirements. Report of a joint FAO/WHO/UNU Expert Consultation, Technical Report Series, No 724, 206 pp.
- Fernandes, C.E., Da Silva, M.A., Vasconcelos, M., De Almeida Ribeiro, L.A., Sarubbo, S.A.C. *et al.*, 2014. Nutritional and lipid profiles in marine fish species from Brasil. *Food Chemistry*, 160, 67-71.
- Folch, J., Lees, M., Sloane-Stanley, G.H., 1957. A simple method for the isolation and purification of total lipids from animal tissues. *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, 226, 497-509.
- Franke, J.M., 2007. The invasive species cookbook: conservation through gastronomy. Bradford street Press, Wauwato-

sa, WI, 111 pp.

- Galil, B., Froglia, C., Noel, P., 2002. Crustaceans: decapods and stomatopods. p. 1-192. In: *CIESM Atlas of Exotic Species in the Mediterranean*. Briand, F. (Ed.). CIESM Publishers, Monaco.
- GIPP (Groupement Interprofessionnel des Produits de la Pêche), 2019. Le crabe bleu en Tunisie. Ministère de l'agriculture, de la pêche et des ressources en eaux, Tunisie, 57 pp.
- Ghaeni, M., Ghahfarokhi, KN., Zaheri, L., 2013. Fatty Acids Profile, Atherogenic (IA) and Thrombogenic (IT) Health Lipid Indices in *Leiognathus bindus* and *Upeneus sulphureus. Journal of Marine Science: Research & Development*, 3, 138.
- Kampouris, T.E, Porter J.S., Sanderson, W.G., 2019. Callinectes sapidus Rathburn, 1896 (Brachyura: Portunidae): An assessment on its diet and foraging behavior, Thermaikos Gulf, NW Aegean Sea, Greece: Evidence for ecological and economic impacts. Crustacean Research, 48, 23-37.
- Kampouris, T.E., Asimaki, A., Klaoudatos, D., Exadactylos, A., Karapanagiotidis, I.T. *et al.*, 2021. Nutritional Quality of the European Spiny Lobster *Palinurus elephas* (J.C. Fabricius, 1787) (Achelata, Palinuridae) and the Non-Indigenous Northern Brown Shrimp *Penaeus aztecus* Ives, 1891 (Dendrobranchiata, Penaeidae). *Foods*, 10 (10), 2480.
- Katsanevakis, S., Wallentinus, I., Zenetos, A., Leppäkoski, E., Çinar, M.E. *et al.*, 2014. Impacts of marine invasive alien species on ecosystem services and biodiversity: a pan-European review. *Aquatic Invasions*, 9, 391-423.
- Katsanevakis, S., Poursanidis, D., Hoffman, R., Rizgalla, J., Rothman, S. *et al.*, 2020. Unpublished Mediterranean records of marine alien and cryptogenic species. *BioInvasion Records*, 9, 165-182.
- Khamassi, F., Ghanem, R., Khamassi, S., Dhifallah, F., Ben Souissi. J., 2019. Socio economic impacts of the Alien Invasive Crab Portunus segnis (Forskål, 1775) in the Gulf of Gabès (Tunisia). p. 253. In 42 ^{ème} congrès de la Commission Internationale pour l'Exploration Scientifique de la Méditerranée (CIESM), Cascais, Portugal, 7-11 October 2019. CIESM, Monaco.
- Kouroupakis, E., Grigorakis, K., Vardali, S., Ilia, V., Batjakas, I. et al., 2019) Evaluation of the fillet quality of wild-caught white sea bream (*Diplodus sargus* L.) and brown meagre (*Sciaena umbra* L.) captured from the Aegean Sea. Mediterranean Marine Science, 20 (2), 373-379. Kücükgülmez, AM., Çelik, M., 2008. Aminoacid composition of blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) from the North Eastern Mediterranean. Journal of applied Biological Sciences, 2, 39-42.
- Kücükgülmez, AM., Çelik, M., Yanar, Y., Ersoy, B., Çikrikçi, M., 2006. Proximate composition and mineral contents of the blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) breast meat, claw meat and hepatopancreas. *International Journal of Food Sciences and Technologies*, 41, 1023-1026.
- Lavajoo, F., Biuki, N.A., Khanipour, A., Mirzajani, A., Akbarzadeh, A., 2018. An Invasive Shrimp Species, *Machrobrachium nipponense*, in Anzali Wetland Demonstrated a Potential Source for Commercial Fishing. *Journal of Aquatic Food Product Technology*, 27, 975-985.
- Leone, A., 2020. *European Jellyfish Cookbook*. CNR Edizioni, Piazzale Aldo Moro, Roma, 55 pp.

Limam, Z., Sadok, S., 2014. Effects of season and site of catch

on the biochemical composition of the muscle and by-products of *Penaeus kerathurus* and *Metapenaeus monoceros* from Tunisian coasts. *Cahiers de Biologie Marine*, 55, 379-388.

- Mancinelli, G., Chainho, P., Cilenti, L., Falco, S., Kapiris, K. et al., 2017. On the Atlantic blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus* Rathbun 1896) in southern European coastal waters: time to turn a threat into a resource? *Fisheries Research*, 194, 1-8.
- Maulvault, A.L., Lourenço, P., Carvalho, H.M., Nunes, M.L., Marques, A., 2012. Nutritional quality and safety of cooked edible crab (*Cancer pagurus*). *Food Chemistry*, 133, 277-83.
- Metcalfe, L. D., Schmitz, A. A., Pelka, J. R., 1966. BF3- methanol procedure for rapid quantitative preparation of methyl esters from lipids. *Analytic Chemistry*, 38, 514-515.
- Mnari, A., Bouhlel, I., Chraief, I., Hammami, M., Romdhane, M.S. *et al.*, 2007. Fatty acids in muscles and liver of Tunisian wild and farmed gilthead sea bream, *Sparus aurata*. *Food Chemistry*, 100, 1393-1397.
- Morrison, W.R., Smith, L.M., 1964. Preparation of fatty acid methyl esters and dimethylacetals from lipids with boron fluoride-methanol. *Journal of Lipid Research*, 5, 600-608.
- Moss, C.W., Lambert, M.A., Merwin, W.H., 1974. Comparison of rapid methods for analysis of bacterial fatty acids. *Jour*nal of Applied Microbiology, 28, 80-85.
- Nuñez, M.A., Simberloff, D. 2005. Invasive species and the cultural keystone species concept. *Ecological Society*, 10, 1-4.
- Nuñez, M.A., Kuebbing, S., Dimarco, R.D., Simberloff, D., 2012. Invasive Species: to eat or not to eat, that is the question. *Conservation Letters*, 5, 334-341.
- Ozden, O., Erken, N., 2007. Comparison of biochemical composition of three aqua cultured fishes (*Dicentrarchus labrax, Sparus aurata, Dentex dentex*), *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*, 59, 545-557.
- Pinheiro, M.A.A., Souza, C.A., Borba, H., 2015. Meat yield of the mangrove crab, *Ucides cordatus* (linnaeus, 1763) (Crustacea, Brachyura). *Boletim do Instituto de Pesca Sao Paulo*, 41, 43-56.
- Piras, P., Esposito, G., Meloni, D., 2019. On the occurrence of the blue crab *Callinectes sapidus* (Rathbun, 1896) in Sardinian coastal habitats (Italy): a present threat or a future resource for the regional fishery sector? *BioInvasion Records*, 8, 134-141.
- Ragkousis, M., Abdelali, N., Azzurro, E., Badreddine, A., Bariche, M., *et al.*, 2020. New alien Mediterranean biodiversity records. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 21 (3), 631-652.
- Rjiba-Bahri, W., Khamassi, F., Soufi Kechaou, E., Chaffai, A., Ben Souissi, J., 2019. Morphological and biological traits, exoskeleton biochemistry and socio-economic impacts of the alien invasive crab *Libinia dubia* H. Milne Edwards, 1834 from the Tunisian coast (central Mediterranean). *Thalassas*, 1-13.
- Rosa, R., Nunes, M.L., 2003. Nutritional quality of red shrimp, Aristeus antennatus (Risso), pink shrimp, Parapenaeus longirostris (Lucas), and Norway lobster, Nephrops norvegicus (Linnaeus). Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture, 84, 89-94.
- Shaeik, M., El Zrelli, R., Crocetta, F., Mansour, L., Rabaoui, L., 2021. On the occurrence of three exotic decapods, *Callinectes sapidus* (Portunidae), *Portunus segnis* (Portunidae),

and *Trachysalambria palaestinensis* (Penaeidae), in northern Tunisia, with updates on the distribution of the two invasive portunids in the Mediterranean Sea. *BioInvasion Records*, 10 (1), 158-169.

- Taybi, A.F., Mabrouki, Y., 2020. The American blue crab Callinectes sapidus Rathbun, 1896 (Crustacea: Decapoda: Portunidae) is rapidly expanding through the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. Thalassas, 36, 267-271.
- Taylor, G.M., Palmer, A.R., Barton, A.C., 2000. Variation in safety factor of claws within and among six species of Cancer crabs. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 70, 37-62.
- Tureli, C., Celik, M., Erdem, U., 2000. Comparison of meat composition and yield of blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus* RATHBUN, 1896) and sand crab (*Portunus pelagicus* LINNE, 1758) caught in Iskenderun Bay, Northeast Mediterranean. *Turkish Journal of Veterinary and Animal Sciences*, 24, 195-203.
- Ulbricht, T.L.V., Southgate, D.A.T., 1991. Coronary heart disease, seven dietary factors. *Lancet*, 338, 982-992.
- UKDH (United Kingdom Department of Health), 1994. *Nutritional aspects of cardiovascular disease*. Report on Health and Social Subjects, HMSO, No. 46, 186 pp.

- Williams, A.B., 1984. The swimming crabs of the genus Callinectes (Decapoda: Portunidae). Fish Base NOAA, 72(3), 685-79.
- Wu, X., Zhou, B., Cheng, Y., Zeng, C., Wang, C. *et al.*, 2010. Comparison of gender differences in biochemical composition and nutritional value of various edible parts of the blue swimmer crab. *Journal of Food Composition Analysis*, 23, 154-159.
- Yomar Hattori, G., Bruno Sampaio-Sant, A., Amaro-Pinheiro, A., 2006. Meat yield of *Callinectes bocourti* A. Milne Edwards, 1879 (Crustacea, Portunidae) in Iguape, São Paulo, Brazil, *Investigaciones marinas*, 34, 231-236.
- Zotti, M., Del Coco, L., De Pascali, S.A., Migoni, D., Vizzini, S. et al., 2016. Comparative analysis of the proximate and elemental composition of the blue crab Callinectes sapidus, the warty crab Eriphia verrucosa, and the edible crab Cancer pagurus. Heliyon, 2, 1-15.
- Zlatanos, S., Laskaridis, K., Sagredos, A., 2009. Determination of proximate composition, fatty acid content and amino acid profile of five lesser-common sea organisms from the Mediterranean Sea. *International Journal of Food Science* & *Technology*, 44, 1590-1594.