

Nonnative Lionfish

have invaded Florida waters, posing a significant threat to our native wildlife and habitat. You are Florida's primary means of control. Be the predator and remove lionfish from Florida waters whenever you can.

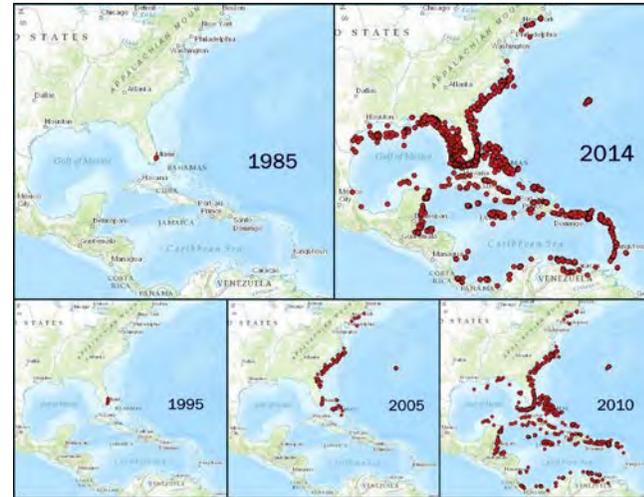


Report Lionfish Sightings

Report sightings by downloading the Report Florida Lionfish App on your smart device or by visiting MyFWC.com/Fishing and clicking on "Saltwater," "Recreational Regulations" and "Lionfish."



History of Invasion / Ecological Threat



Maps courtesy of USGS

Lionfish (*Pterois volitans* and *P. miles*) were introduced to the coastal waters of southern Florida about 30 years ago. It is unknown how the first release into our waters occurred but it likely was an aquarium release of some kind. Though sometimes blamed, it is unlikely a release from ballast water was the culprit, as very little shipping from the lionfish's native range to our water occurs without the exchange of ballast water beforehand. In recent years, lionfish populations have rapidly grown and spread throughout the Caribbean, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The lionfish invasion has the potential to significantly alter the population dynamics of our native marine species, impacting recreational and commercial fishing and the overall economy of Florida. You can help control lionfish by removing every one you see.

Lionfish control efforts, including regulatory changes and outreach and education, have been a priority for Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Visit MyFWC.com/Fishing and click on "Saltwater," "Recreational Regulations" and "Lionfish" to learn more about recent efforts.

Have a lionfish event?

Submit event name, date, time, location and contact information to Saltwater@MyFWC.com.

The logo on the front of this brochure is interactive. To bring the logo to life, download and open the free Aurasma app from the App Store or Google Play.



Tap the ▲ icon at the bottom of the screen. Search for the

"MyFWCMarine" channel. 🔍 Click the circle to

follow the channel. 📍 Tap this icon. 📱 Center Lionfish logo on screen and watch until it comes to life. Shortcut: <http://auras.ma/s/1z7ai> on your smart device.

Search MyFWC on Social Media



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

MyFWC.com

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Unless marked, all photos by FWC

Lionfish



Be the Predator!

Bring this logo to life!
See back.



Photo courtesy of Jason Arnold; art by FWC

Lionfish Facts

- Lionfish are slow moving and relatively easy to capture with dip nets or spears
- Currently have no significant predators in the Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico
- Consume a wide variety of fish and invertebrates
- Can tolerate a wide range of temperatures, salinities and depths
- Have 18 venomous spines that can cause painful wounds
- Are not aggressive and use their venomous spines only for defense
- Can exceed 18 inches in length, but most are less than 15 inches
- Have free floating egg masses that are distributed by ocean currents
- Can release up to 30,000 eggs per spawn
- Spines are not hollow like snake fangs. Instead, venomous glandular tissue is housed in grooves along the spine
- Stalk predators and often use their fins to herd prey into a corner
- Able to consume prey that are more than half of their own length



What You Can Do

Harvest by recreational and commercial divers is currently the best means of controlling lionfish and minimizing unwanted ecological impacts. Please safely remove lionfish whenever possible and consider participating in lionfish derbies and tournaments.



Photo courtesy of Jason Arnold

Lionfish can be speared, caught in hand-held nets or caught on hook and line.

There are no minimum size limits, closed seasons or bag limits for recreational or commercial harvest, and a recreational fishing license is not required to harvest lionfish when using dip nets, pole spears, Hawaiian slings or any spearing device designed and marketed exclusively for lionfish.

Care should be taken when spear fishing so that the spears do not damage reefs.

The practice of feeding lionfish to other predatory species while diving should be avoided because it is dangerous and illegal in state waters.

Food Quality

Lionfish are commonly used as a food fish in many parts of the world and are considered to be of excellent quality by most who have tried it. When cooked, lionfish fillets are firm, white and flaky with a very mild non-fishy taste that is comparable to flounder, black sea bass or hogfish. Lionfish can be substituted in recipes for other non-oily fish and can be fried, broiled, baked, steamed or poached. While the spines of lionfish do contain venomous tissue, the flesh of a lionfish is not venomous or poisonous. A few Florida restaurants are now serving limited amounts of commercially harvested lionfish.



Handling

Filleting a lionfish is similar to filleting any other type of fish, with the exception of using caution to avoid the spines located along the dorsal, pelvic and anal fins.



If you put the fish on its side, you can easily hold the fish by the gill plates without getting stuck. Another option is to wear puncture-resistant gloves. Some also choose to cut the spines off prior to filleting. Use care when doing this as the venomous glandular tissue located within the grooves of the spines are present even at the spine's base.

It is important to note that even fish that have been on ice can still cause painful injuries.

Treat stings by immersing the wound in hot (not scalding) water for 30 to 90 minutes and seek medical attention if necessary.