

- Lionfish (*Pterois volitans/miles*) are the least toxic member of the Scorpionfish family and are native to Indo-Pacific waters.
- Lionfish were most likely introduced into the Atlantic via the aquarium trade, i.e. aquarists releasing their lionfish into the wild.
- Lionfish feed on juvenile snapper, grouper, grunts, other juvenile reef fish and invertebrates.
- Native reef predators have been shown to avoid eating lionfish in the lab and few have been caught with lionfish in their stomachs.
- Lionfish are voracious predators. One specimen was collected with about 20 fish in its stomach.
- Mature female lionfish can reproduce multiple times per season, releasing 2 egg sacs, each with tens of thousands of eggs, each time.

Lionfish populations in the Bahamas and the Carolinas are almost 5 times those in their native range. These huge numbers, combined with their high feeding rates, enable lionfish to decimate native reef fish populations, which decreases prey available to native predators. With fewer juvenile fish to grow into adults, not only will fisheries decline, so will the entire reef ecosystem.

## IF YOU SEE A LIONFISH CONTACT

Vanessa McDonough: 305-230-1144 ext 027  
 Vanessa\_McDonough@nps.gov

or

NPS SFCN @ 305 252 0347

## AND PASS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON

- Date and time
- Location and depth - note GPS coordinates if you can!
- Number and size of lionfish
- Habitat it was on: patch reef, rubble, sand, artificial structure, etc.
- Behavior of fish: feeding, hiding, hovering, swimming, etc.

Take pictures!



Gut contents show us what lionfish are eating.

If possible, avoid handling or contacting lionfish. If you have removed a lionfish from the water, do not release it back into the ocean. We would like the body for analysis. Call us to arrange a drop-off/pick-up. If a fish transfer is not possible - please contact us to share the requested data.

# DEFEND YOUR OCEAN!



## REPORT LIONFISH SIGHTINGS AND SAVE THE ECOSYSTEM!

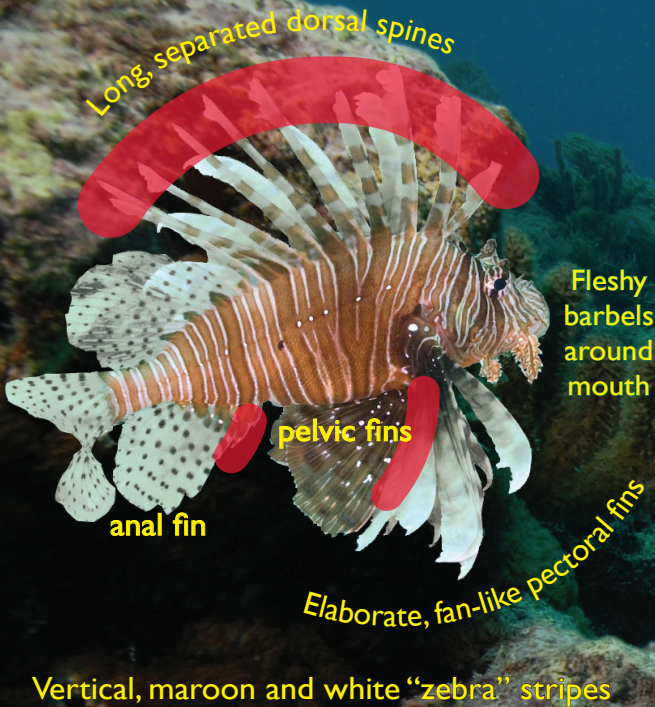


## LIONFISH FACTS

Brought to you by  
 Biscayne National Park  
 and the National Park Service's  
 South Florida/Caribbean Network



## LIONFISH CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY THEIR



Lionfish are most active at dawn and dusk, when they emerge from the shelter of the reef to hunt. Juveniles tend to congregate in small groups while adults are more solitary in nature. Lionfish protect themselves with venomous spines located on their dorsal, pelvic, and anal fins. Though they tend to hide within structure during the day, the lionfish captured in Biscayne National Park have been found resting in relatively plain view.

## FIRST AID FOR LIONFISH STINGS

Lionfish have 18 venomous spines on their bodies. Highlighted in red, to the left are the 13 dorsal fin spines, 2 pelvic fin spines, and 3 anal fin spines you should watch out for. A sting can cause extreme pain, swelling, numbness, nausea, and even paralysis.

### IF YOU ARE STUNG BY A LIONFISH:

- **Immerse the wound in hot water - around 103°F. DO NOT burn yourself!** This will deactivate the venom and relieve the pain. If you are at sea, your best source of hot water may be the outflow of seawater cooling your engine.



- **Get medical attention as soon as possible!** You may have spine fragments in your skin or a serious reaction to the venom.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Biscayne National Park is asking you to report all lionfish sightings. With the information you provide we can quickly respond and remove the lionfish from the site. Many successful eradication missions have already been carried out based on reports from local divers and fishers.



Lionfish are bold predators, capable of learning. Once a lionfish has dodged a spear, they become wary of divers and therefore, much harder to capture. Biscayne National Park recommends leaving the capture of lionfish to trained staff [the best method is finessing them into a net].



Whether you end up with a lionfish on your hook or spear, or as the highlight of your dive, any data you pass on to us will be invaluable to keeping Biscayne National Park and the Atlantic free from this volatile predator.



PLEASE KEEP THIS PAMPHLET ON THE WATER WITH YOU AND REFER TO THE BACK PANEL IF YOU MEET ANY LIONFISH.