

National Lionfish Response Plan

The College of The Bahamas Marine and Environmental Studies Institute in collaboration with The Department of Marine Resources has initiated a long-term National Lionfish Response Plan that entails:

- 1) Developing invasion policies and regulations,
- 2) Building research and information management,
- 3) Building outreach and educational initiatives, and
- 4) Financing and identifying resources.

You can help by:

- ◇ Reporting lionfish sightings @ www.bahamas.gov.bs
- ◇ Bringing in captured lionfish for research to DMR or COB-MESI.
- ◇ Killing ANY and ALL lionfish encountered when capable.
- ◇ Telling others about lionfish.
- ◇ **START EATING LIONFISH!!!!**



Image by Stuart Cove Dive Bahamas www.stuartcove.com



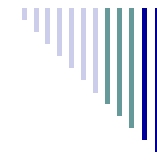
Partners



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National Lionfish Response Plan

Capture, Handling and Cleaning Lionfish



Image by Stuart Cove Dive Bahamas www.stuartcove.com

Capturing Lionfish

Lionfish are slow moving fish and often found stationary. This allows them to be relatively easily captured.

There are two (2) methods commonly used in capturing lionfish; netting and spearing.

Pairs of clear fine meshed hand held nets are used for capturing lionfish. Position the first net behind the fish, while using the second net to chase the fish into the other.

In spearing, a Hawaiian sling can be used, however, a pole spear with a paralyzer-tip is safer as it prevents the fish from sliding back along the spear.

For research purposes, netting is the preferred method as it preserves the specimen and allows the fish to be killed in a humane manner.

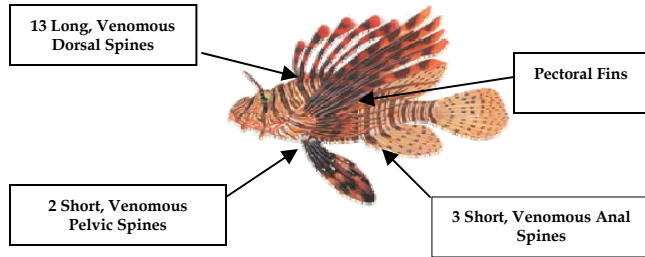
Lionfish may sometimes be taken by hook and line.



Images by Stuart Cove Dive Bahamas www.stuartcove.com



Paralyzer-tip for pole spears.



Handling Lionfish

The only proper way to handle lionfish is **CAREFULLY!!** Heavy gloves should be worn at all times when handling lionfish. This will also protect your hands from the irritation the fleshy tentacles on the head may cause. Hold the fish by its head to avoid all spines.

Cleaning Lionfish

The spines to be most mindful of are the long dorsal spines along the back of the fish. Begin removing the dorsal spines by cutting into the flesh along each side of the row of spines moving towards the tail. (see photo). After loosening the spines pry them off completely (see photo to the right).



Image by DMR

Remove the anal and pelvic spines (see diagram on opposite page) by cutting from the base and remove the cartilaginous ventral fins. These are not venomous. The scales on the



Image by DMR

Lionfish are quite small and easily removed in the usual way. Fillet the fish as usual.



Image by Stuart Cove Dive Bahamas www.stuartcove.com



Image by DMR

With smaller fish, it would be simpler to remove the spines by snipping them with kitchen

shears or clippers.

First Aid Procedures

Should you be stuck by a venomous spine, you should seek medical attention **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!**

Check for any obvious pieces of spine left in the wound. Pre-treatment includes applying heat to the wound to prevent the venom from spreading. Hot water, as hot as one can tolerate (not more than 100—110°F), should be applied directly to the wound for 15 to 20 minutes or an instant heat pack. Repeat if pain returns. Since envenomation is so painful, over-the-counter painkillers should also be taken for additional pain relief.



While offshore, hot water is accessible via a jet on the outboard engine.