

Lionfish, The Experience in The Bahamas

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Invasion Status

- The first documented sighting of lionfish was in 2004. Estimated to have doubled within the years 2004-2006.
- In 2007, over 70% of sightings reported were of single lionfish. From 2008 to date, observers have been reporting multiple fish at one location.
- “Lionfish were seen everywhere”, “There were too many to count on this reef”, and “Lionfish needed to be shot out before we could fish” (Lionfish Sightings Report, 2008)
- DMR staff (August, 18th, 2010), 20 lionfish removed from a single wreck to facilitate outreach and educational initiatives.
- 2009 lionfish derby in Abaco caught 1,408 lionfish (REEF report). Lionfish tournament in NP collected some 900 lionfish within an 8-10 hour period
- Lionfish are now found on every island group in The Bahamas
- Lionfish are found in a wide variety of marine habitats.

Strategies / Plan

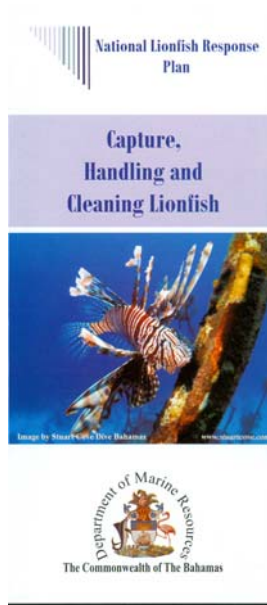
- National Lionfish Response Plan (NLRP) – a collaborative effort that identifies and prioritizes a number of specific activities.
- MTIASIC – 4 Year GEF funded Regional Project on Invasive Species. The Bahamas' focus in on the Lionfish
- GEF- Marine Protected Areas Full Size Project. One component focuses on Lionfish and their control in, and impact on marine protected areas.

Successes



- Have achieved a high level of awareness in stakeholders of the presence of Lionfish, the hazards they present, and that they can be used as food, through Flyers, Demonstrations, Radio, TV, Print Media, Fishing Tournaments.
- Have managed to garner some external resources to address some aspects of the problem.
- Inspired the “invention” of new fishing gear (see <http://safespear.org/>)

Successes



Challenges

1. Size of Archipelago
2. Distribution of Islands
3. Limited resources
4. Early success of potential dangers has worked against the effort to use them as food.
5. Commerce has not yet taken off.
6. Lionfish research not coordinated
7. Other issues remain



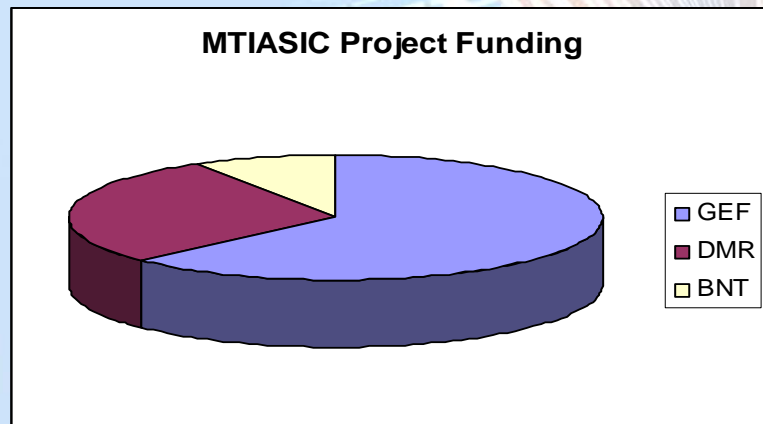
Funding

National Lionfish Response Plan

\$?????

**GEF MPA Project,
(Lionfish Component)**

\$261,000



Total For 4 Years \$466,129

Government and NGOs have limited financial, equipment and human resources.

Needs

- Resources, especially human.
- More needs to be revealed about the impact on the marine ecosystems in The Bahamas, particularly as it impacts incomes and livelihoods – commercial and recreational fishing, diving etc.
- Develop response strategies that do not depend on more! government funds

Conclusion

- We are stuck with them, we cannot give up.
- Research must continue and this must include economics
- Eat them into remission, if not submission!

