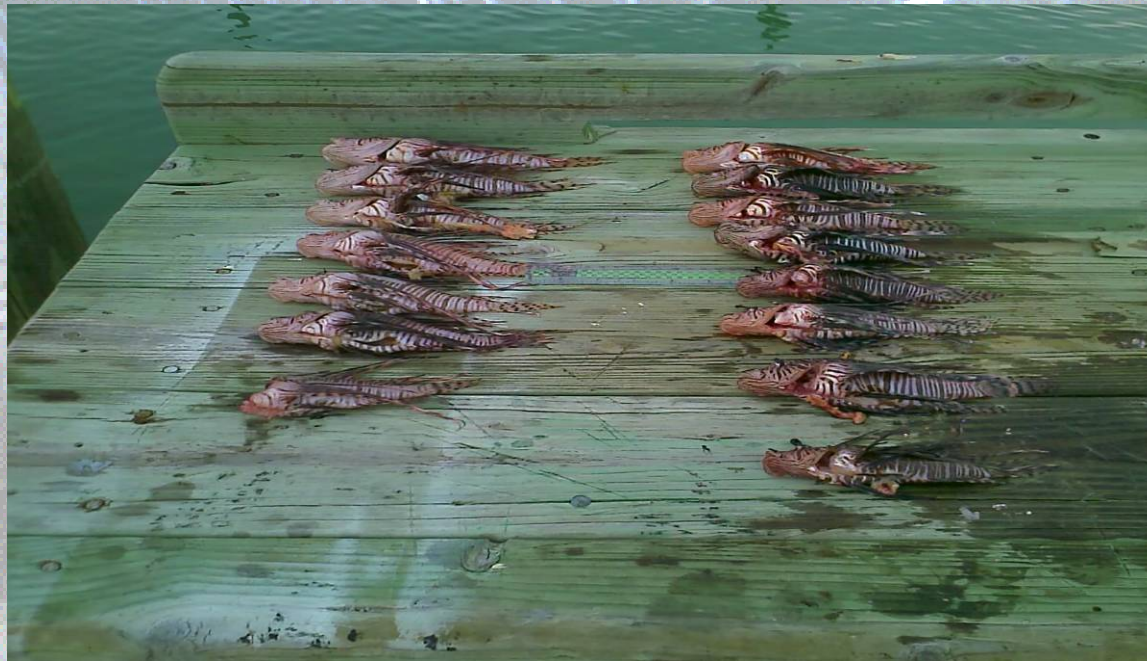


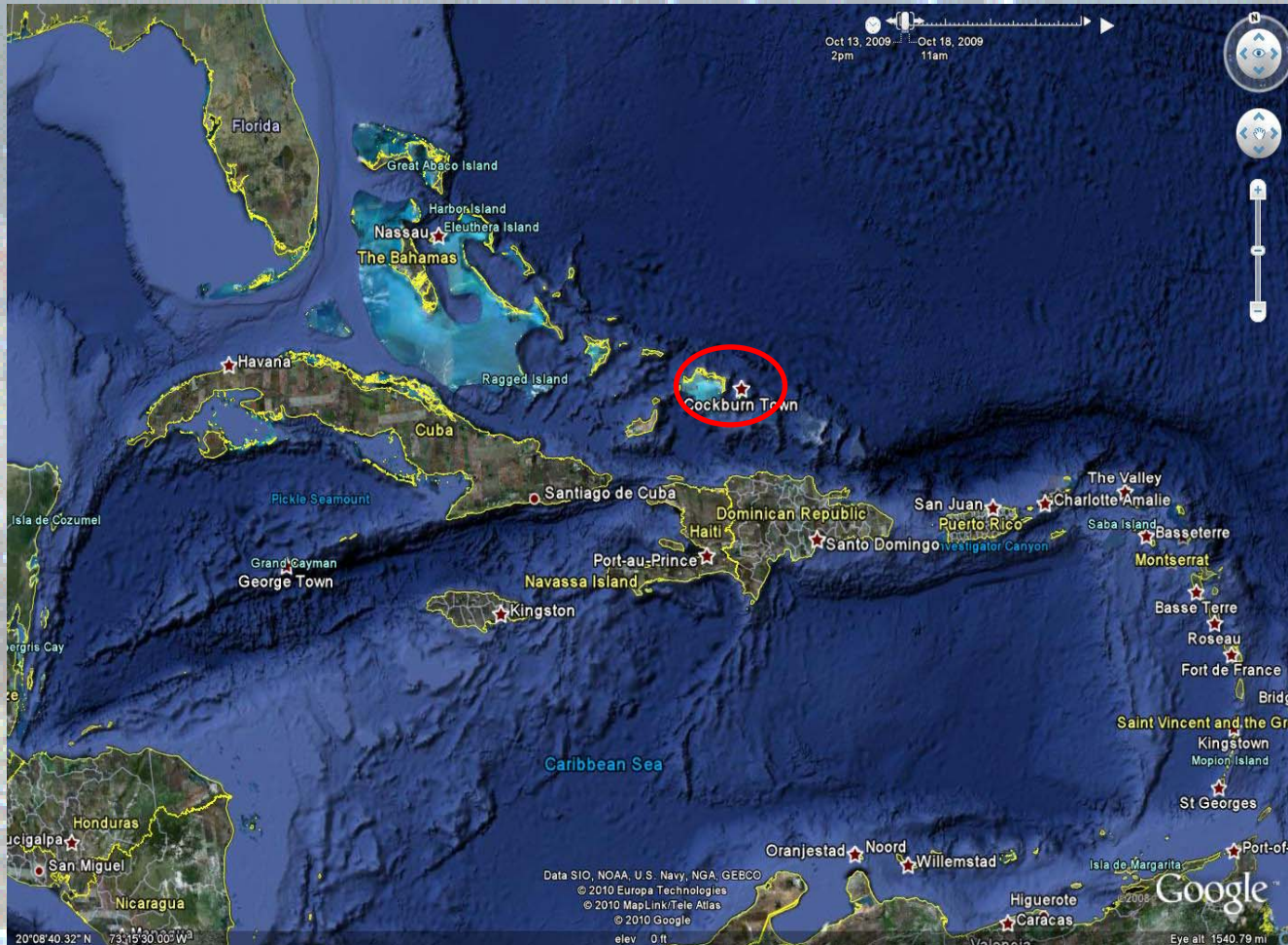
Lionfish in the Turks and Caicos Islands?? Really



Presented by Marlon Hibbert
Department of Environment & Coastal Resources

Invasion Status?

- First recorded in 2006.
- Now found in all Islands
- All habitats.
- >4,000
- Stopped counting



Strategies/Plan

Catch them if we can, eat them too.



- There is no formal written national strategy.
- The focus has been on awareness and active capture.
- Focus on protected areas and local fishing grounds.
- Future is to get them on every menu in the islands.
- Written ongoing formal project.

WANTED!
FOR INVADING TERRITORIAL WATERS & PREYING ON NATIVE FISH

The Red Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*)
Often seen hiding under ledges, coral heads, rocks and within crevices in shallow and deep water

Description: Red-and-White Zebra Stripes with long, showy pectoral fins
Size: 11.8 to 16 inches (30 to 26 cm) **Weight:** Up to 2.6 lbs (1.2 kg)
Diet: Just about anything that can fit in their mouths

Special Feature: Possesses 18 venomous needle-like dorsal fins plus venomous anal and pectoral fins!
A sting from a lionfish is extremely painful and can cause nausea and breathing difficulties, but is rarely fatal.
If stung immerse area in hot (bearable) water for 30-90mins and seek medical treatment immediately!

Please report sightings/captures to the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources:
Provinciales-941-5122 Grand Turk-946-2901 South Caicos-946-3306

CURB THE LIONFISH INVASION

IDENTIFIERS

1. Scientific name: *Pterois volitans*
2. General description: distinctive red, white and black vertical stripes. Body spines (dorsal, anal and pectoral) are long and pointed.
3. Average (maximum) length: up to 16 inches
4. Size: 11.8 to 16 inches (30 to 26 cm) **Weight:** up to 2.6 lbs (1.2 kg)
5. What do lionfish like to eat? Just about anything that will fit into their mouths.
6. When hunting they come prey using their long fins and they use their spines to stab the prey alive.
7. Lionfish do most of their hunting at night. During the day, look for them under rocks, coral heads, crevices and in shallow or deep water.
8. Lionfish do not live in the tropical Indo-Pacific region of the world.
9. Due to its recent introduction, the lionfish will live in invasive areas in the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea regions. There are theories to determine the exact native sources such as Guadalupe.
10. Kill Lionfish! Kill Lionfish! Kill Lionfish! Kill Lionfish!

A lionfish's sting is usually not fatal to humans. If stung, immerse a person with extreme pain, possibly headaches, vomiting and breathing difficulties.

A common treatment is soaking the affected area in hot "bearable" water (no more than 114° F or 45° C) for 30-90 mins.

Seek medical attention as soon as possible!

Use EXTREME caution in any attempt to capture or observe lionfish!

Please contact the Department of Environment & Coastal Resources (941) 5122 for further information or to report sightings/captures.
Provinciales-941-5122
Grand Turk-946-2901
South Caicos-946-3306
E-mail: saibarn@ecr.gov.bs

Successes



- Not like this! No.
- Local dive masters enthusiastic, licensing, media Coverage, corporate willingness.
- Public meetings, willing volunteers. Several Training sessions.
- Some later surveys have shown reduced numbers In targeted areas.



Challenges

- Awareness? Seriousness of the threat (no longer potential)
- Social resistance.
- Legislation –existing regulations
On spearfishing.



Funding

- No budgetary allocation.
- Creative sourcing a.k.a begging? Sorry meant marketing?
- JNCC (Cayman, BVI and TCI shared a pot of £60,000).
- Corporate sponsors

Needs-where to start?

- A better way to capture them? Nets frustrating some.
- Funding ?
- Dedicated officers.
- Greater buy in from fishermen, markets for the fish.

LION FISH TOURNAMENT

RULES:

- The first person to reach 3000 lionfish wins the prize!!!
- You **MUST** be over 18years old and in possession of a valid fishing license if not a Belonger.
- Fishing in National Parks is strictly prohibited.
- The use of Scuba is not allowed. No illegal means of capture should be used, this includes noxious substances, spear guns.
- All sizes of lionfish are eligible.
- Fish must either be taken to the fish plants or DECR offices for official count.
- You must register at the plants or at the DECR offices island wide.

1st Prize \$3,000

Do you think you have what it takes to catch the most lionfish?

For more info call the DECR:
 P.O. Box 11177 South Caicos 948-3396
 Grand Turk 948-3963

Conclusion

- Eradication no, control yes, but we all have to do it (regionally).
- INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS EFFORTS.
- MORE REGIONAL COMMUNICATION

Places to eat Lionfish Cuisine

Some Facts about Lionfish:

1. It is an invasive species from the Pacific
2. It threatens fish diversity by eating other native juvenile species and other animals.
3. A sting from lionfish is extremely painful & may cause nausea & breathing difficulties but rarely fatal.
4. You can eat it, why not try at the restaurant indicated below

What can you do to help?

1. If you see a lionfish, please report to the DECR.
2. Are you a scuba diver? get trained to capture lionfish.
3. Lionfish Catching Training is available on request at DECR.
4. Support local restaurants that serve the lionfish.

Special Lionfish Dishes are available at the following Restaurants:

Y **lemon**
Smokey's on the Bay

For more information, please contact:
 Department of Environment & Coastal Resources (DECR)

DECR-Providenciales Tel. No. 941-5122
 DECR-Grand Turk Tel. No. 948-3881
 DECR-South Caicos Tel. No. 948-3700
 Email: antoinette@decrr.gov.jm
 Website: www.environment.jm

D.E.C.R.