

Best Practices and Regional Strategies for Control of Invasive Lionfish

KEY WORDS: Lionfish, *Pterois volitans/miles*, management practices

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Las Mejores Prácticas y Estrategias para la Eliminación y Control del Invasor Pez Leon

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pez Leon, *Pterois volitans/miles*, mejores prácticas

Les meilleures pratiques et stratégies pour l'élimination et le contrôle d'un envahisseur, la Rascasse volante

MOTS CLÉS: Rascasse volante, *Pterois volitans/miles*, meilleures pratiques

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Indo-Pacific lionfish (*Pterois volitans/miles*) have successfully invaded western Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico waters, and are the first non-native marine fish to become established in the region. Lionfish have spread rapidly and recent studies indicate that, without intervention, the ecological and economic impacts of this venomous, predatory invader could be severe. With little to no infrastructure allocated to marine invasions, many countries in the Caribbean region have struggled to address the invasion and minimize its impacts to local marine systems. The Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) working closely with NOAA, the USGS, and Simon Fraser University (SFU) has been working to transfer knowledge, build capacity, and help develop response plans throughout the region. These programs, conducted to date in 11 countries around the region, serve to increase awareness, disseminate accurate information on lionfish biology, ecology and impacts, incorporate hands on training in removal and handling techniques, and assist with impact study design. While there has been much demand and utility in developing local capacity, a broader perspective and increased communication at the regional level was needed.

In August 2010, the International Coral Reef Initiative, in partnership with REEF, NOAA, Mexico, and France, organized a two day workshop in Cancun, Mexico, bringing together over 40 representatives from 20 countries, states and territories in the invaded range. Goals of the workshop were to establish a regional framework for communication and cooperative action. A key outcome of the workshop was establishment of an international writing team directed to develop a best practices document for addressing the lionfish invasion. This workshop represents the first effort to facilitate region-wide approaches for dealing with marine invasions.



Figure 1. Local workshop locations.

Figure 2. Regional workshop participants

Figure 3. Workshop key issues