

Why this Plan?

This pilot program motivates people to aggressively target the lionfish EVERY time they dive. Because the motivator is fish, this proposal will provide measurable results at almost zero cost to the FL Taxpayers. It's financially sustainable...that's very important! Thousands of reefs will be cleaned, year-round. This will make a Huge Impact!

Why won't other methods be as successful as this plan?

Derbies/Tournaments:

- Divers will wait to harvest large populations of lionfish until the tournament to improve their chances of winning. This could be months or a year or more. **During this time, lionfish are releasing eggs every 2-4 days.**
- Derbies are work intensive and sporadic
- Funding bounties provided by derbies is unsustainable-**Donor Fatigue** ([inc. taxpayers!](#))

It is wrong to expect private businesses to repeatedly fund fishery management when the FWC has an annual budget exceeding \$300 MILLION dollars and a viable plan that does not depend on businesses or taxpayers to continually donate their hard earned money to support derbies & removal grants.

Commercialization:

- A female lionfish is sexually mature at 7", a male at 4", but a lionfish isn't commercially valuable until it is around 13-15 inches. **This encourages divers to place profit over protecting our fishery.**
- Anytime you place a monetary value on a fish, those who profit will *fiercely* protect their profits.

Adopt-a-Reef

Just like the adopt-a-highway program, uncompensated volunteers will lose interest, when they are spending their time and hard earned money, as soon as they discover their efforts will never be enough. (**Volunteer Fatigue**)

Identifying and saving just specific reefs

Imagine saving 50 buildings in your City and allowing all other buildings to be destroyed. Can we realistically expect those saved 50 buildings to provide shelter and food for all the displaced people? Well, we can't save a few reefs and expect to save the fishery either. This idea puts **BIG Grants (YOUR TAXES)** into the hands of a few people and their efforts won't make an appreciable dent in the lionfish population.

Please show your support for this Pilot Program!

The FWC Commissioners were given a copy of this plan at the April 2015 Commission meeting.

The Emerald Coast Reef Association is asking you to show your support for this proposal by visiting our website and submitting your vote of support.

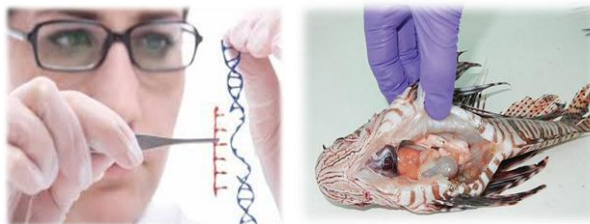
Please go here and register your vote supporting this pilot program:

www.ecreef.org

Next, please forward the link to everyone in your circle of family and friends and ask them to support this proposal too.

Only one signature per person, Thank You!!!

This population control plan is only part of the answer. We must also encourage our tax funded scientists to search for an environmentally safe eradication method.



If you would like to learn safe lionfish hunting and handling techniques or more about the lionfish crisis and how it began, ECRA provides FREE lionfish educational workshops and presentations, to groups of 20+. (FL Panhandle)

Contact: candy@valp.net

Thank you for your time to read our brochure. If you would like to join us in the effort to save our fishery, contact us, we love our volunteers!



www.ecreef.org

Please Support this Pilot Program REWARD Proposal

100 Lionfish Heads



Earns You:

10 Native Fish Tags

Good in-or-out of season!

ECRA is a 501 c3 non-profit dedicated to improving the fishery in the Gulf of Mexico by providing habitat & evaluating the effectiveness of Artificial Reefs and protecting our native fishery from predation by invasive species.
Donations to ECRA are Tax Deductable

Why Aggressive, Year-round Population Control is Critical

- Lionfish have NO natural predators in our local waters.
- Lionfish Reach Sexual Maturity at 1 yr.
- A mature female lionfish can reproduce every 2-4 days releasing 2+ million eggs per year.
- LF egg sacks contain venom which discourages predation by our native species.
- Lionfish are known to consume over 56 species of fish and invertebrates including economically significant fish such as: Red Snapper, Groupers, Triggers & Lobsters.
- Lionfish have voracious appetites. A single mature LF can eat 65 of our native fish in a single feeding.
- They can reduce other prey fish levels by 90%
- LF can eat prey exceeding ½ their body length.



Above Photo presented at the 2013 FWC LF Summit by REEF®

The offspring capability of a single breeding female

Yr 1- a single female LF releases 2 million eggs*

Yr 2- 1 million and 1LF release 2 million eggs each

Yr 3- 1 trillion, 1 million and 1 LF release 2M eggs each

*Assuming ½ eggs are female & high egg survivability.



This Photo was taken by Scott Bartel just 3 years after a single lionfish was spotted off the coast of Pensacola. Notice the absence of native fish!

What are the Control Possibilities of this Pilot Program?

This pilot program is designed to remove **25,000 lionfish from the Florida Panhandle in 2 years, or less.**

What would that mean for our native fishery?

This would remove 25,000,000,000 (Billion) lionfish eggs, that will not be reproducing the following year!

# LF Removed	#LF Eggs Removed
100	100,000,000
1,000	1,000,000,000
10,000	10,000,000,000
25,000	25,000,000,000

By removing 25 Thousand lionfish we would also be **SAVING 1.6 MILLION, or more,** of our native fish from predation by this voracious fish each month!

What is the cost of the 2 year pilot program?

The ONLY cost to the FWC would be for the cost of fish tags. 500 each of the following 5 native fish species: Red Snapper, Red Grouper, Gag Grouper, Triggerfish and Amberjack.

This 2 year Pilot Program would include 6 Panhandle Counties from Escambia to Gulf County. Any diver could participate.

Jim Estes, the Deputy Director of the FWC Division of Marine Fishery Management said the number of fish needed to run this pilot program was **“biologically insignificant”**. This pilot program **would not** harm the native fish population and **would NOT** cause shorter fishing seasons for any sector.

The Emerald Coast Reef Association has volunteered to run the pilot program at no other cost to the FWC or tax payers, for two years! We need strong public support this pilot program. Visit www.ecreef.org to cast a support vote!

Lionfish Population Control Pilot Program - How it works:

Participation Information

- Participation is voluntary and divers accept all liability for their boating, diving, lionfish killing and handling activities.
- Remove 100 lionfish from the Gulf of Mexico.
- LF may be removed from State or Federal waters
- To qualify for native 10 tags, you must turn in 100 lionfish heads to the same turn-in location.
- At the turn in, there will be a form that records your catch and the tags issued to you.
- **For 100 LF heads, you will be issued 2 tags for each of the following native species: Red Snapper, Red Grouper, Gag Grouper, Grey Triggerfish and Greater Amberjack.**
- Native Fish tags ONLY valid in State Waters
- **You MUST have a FL fishing License to use the fish tags.**
- Tags must be secured between the mouth and gill of the native fish before placing in cooler.
- Any participant caught with out-of-season or above-the-bag limit of native fish that do not have the tags secured will be subject to ticketing, fines and will be barred from further participation in the program.
- Tags good in-or-out of season. In season, you may take up to 2 extra fish of each species only. Out of season, you may take a maximum of 2 of each species per dive trip.
- **There is NO limit to the number of lionfish you may turn-in! Every 100 LF = 10 tags!**
- Divers agree to have their names and photos posted online to help promote the program’s success.

LF Turn-in Information

You MUST follow the simple turn-in procedures

- Keep lionfish heads on ice or in the freezer before bringing them to the collection location. **Rotten, stinky heads will NOT be accepted.** (No exceptions!)
- Cleanly cut the heads off and place them in a Ziploc bag so they will lay flat, in a single layer and label the bag with your name.
- There is a minimum of 25 fish for each turn-in visit. You may keep heads frozen in your freezer until you have enough to turn-in.