



DISCOVERY DIVE WORLD

"Your Adventure Starts Here!"

Robert Provost
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21 May 2015

Office of Governor Rick Scott
State of Florida, The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott,

My name is Robert Provost. I am military veteran and Scuba Diving Center business owner. I am writing you today to ask for your support for a program that targets the reduction of the Lionfish population that is threatening the health of our fisheries in the great state of Florida.

The Emerald Coast Reef Association has proposed a win-win, cost-effective pilot program that motivates the solitary group of qualified personnel that can remove these voracious predators from our shoreline waters... our spear fishermen. Offering native tags in exchange for Lionfish heads has benefits on multiple levels and, as of today, is the only proposal that guarantees a reduction in the their population. Here are the salient points.

Localized Lionfish removal tournaments are labor-intensive and unsustainable. This cost-free program, contrarily, is year-round and will recruit and profoundly motivate spear fishermen to remove Lionfish. Experienced divers will shift their focus to this conservation cause and new divers will be motivated to seek training to continue the sport with the promise of contributing to the overall good of our fisheries as well as personal benefit as they earn the coveted tags. With 31 years of experience spearfishing, my primary goal has been to find the prized species for harvest. This program shifts the paradigm completely and motivates targeting Lionfish, which requires specific, new and different equipment than traditional spearfishing. Significant time, energy and cost go into each offshore trip. This program is the persuasive element required to shift mindsets and redirect attention to these predators. Businesses like mine will benefit due to an increased interest in the sport of scuba diving and spearfishing, as it motivates them to spend time and energy on this particular species. Clearly the hook and line fishing industry will reap benefits as our local species are left alone to spawn and mature without the looming predatory threat inherently present with the exploding population of Lionfish.

Our inherent normalcy bias wants us to believe that if we do nothing, everything will continue to be fine, as it has been in the past. The facts and my intellect shout a different story. I urge you to take steps now before these unchallenged predators create a real crisis for our commercial and recreational fishermen. Imagine a future Florida where we celebrate the sighting of a Red Snapper and grasp at the idea that someday fishing will again be popular on our coastlines. We can do something today to diminish that gruesome possibility. I respectfully urge you to support this pilot program and continue to invest smart dollars in researching a long-term, final solution to their final eradication.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Robert Provost
Robert Provost
President, EaglePro Enterprises, Inc.
dba: Discovery Dive World