

# Programme Objectives

The Lionfish Programme objectives are to:

- ◆ Educate Jamaican fishermen on this invasive alien species.
- ◆ Train Jamaican fishermen in the safe handling and cleaning of the Lionfish.
- ◆ Conduct scientific research to guide the management of the species.
- ◆ Help create a market for this species thereby providing economic benefit for fishermen.
- ◆ Help to control the Lionfish invasion and preserve Jamaica's fisheries by killing the Lionfish when encountered.



## BENEFITS

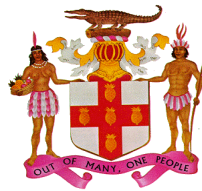
The benefits of being involved with the Lionfish programme include:

- ◆ A greater understanding of our fisheries
- ◆ Training on safe handling and preparation of the Lionfish for consumption
- ◆ Prevention of accidental injury from the fish's venomous spines.
- ◆ The conservation, preservation and protection of Jamaica's coral reef and other animals which use the reef (fish, sea turtles etc.).
- ◆ Improved economic potential through the sale of the fish for consumption.

The Lionfish Programme is an initiative of the Lionfish Subcommittee that is comprised of The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, National Environment and Planning Agency, Food for the Poor, University of the West Indies, Jamaica Fishermen Co-op Union Ltd., Culinary Federation of Jamaica, Fisheries Advisory Board, Improving Jamaica's Agricultural Productivity Project; Jamaica Tourist Board and the Tourism Product and Development Company. The programme in addition to consumption aims to sensitize, educate, and train Jamaicans and in particular fishermen on this invasive alien species.

The Lionfish is not only edible but is also a tasty fish. The creation of a market for the consumption of the fish is being encouraged in an effort to control their population.

If left unchecked this species will result in serious environmental and economic damage to Jamaica's already degraded fisheries.



Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries



Canadian International Development Agency



National Environment and Planning Agency



Discovery Bay Marine Lab  
Centre for Marine Sciences  
University of the West Indies

# The Lionfish Invasion



*“Eat a Lionfish and save at least 20 juvenile fish a day.”*

All Photos © Nakhle Hado/Food For The Poor

## The Lionfish Invasion

The Lionfish is a member of the Scorpionfish family and is originally from the Indo-Pacific Ocean and the Red Sea.

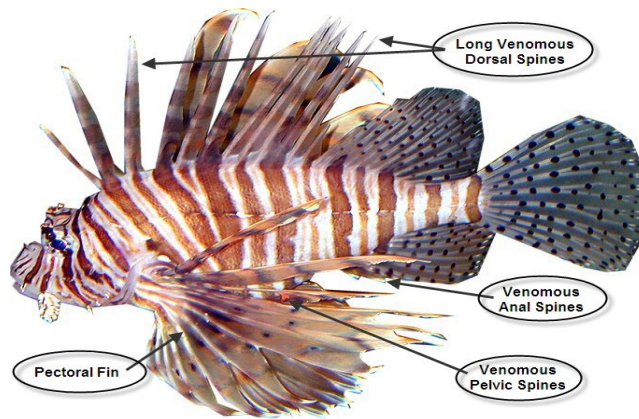
The Lionfish is not native to the Caribbean and was first identified several years ago. It has been speculated that this introduction may have occurred when Hurricane Andrew destroyed an aquarium in Florida in 1992.

The sizes likely to be seen vary but in the Caribbean, they grow up to 55 cm (approximately 2 feet) in length.

Usually, Lionfish are not aggressive towards humans. They have venomous spines that are used purely for defense. It should be noted that while their stings are not likely to be fatal, they are very painful.

Lionfish are voracious predators and one Lionfish may eat more than 30,000 juvenile fish per year.

In Jamaica, the Lionfish has no aggressive natural predators. They are fast growing and are able to outgrow native species with whom they compete for food and space. This causes a threat to our reef fish population.



## Handling & Cleaning Lionfish

The proper way to handle Lionfish is  
**ALWAYS CAREFULLY!!**

To prepare the Lionfish you will need heavy gloves to prevent being stung by the spines, scissors, fish scaler and a sharp knife:

- ◆ **Wearing gloves**, begin removing all spines by cutting above or into the flesh along each side of the row of spines moving from the tail to the head with the scissors.
- ◆ Remove the scales using a fish scaler or a knife
- ◆ Gut and wash the fish under running water.
- ◆ You can also remove the head or fillet the Lionfish. Safely dispose of spines so they do not present a hazard to others. Cook in the normal fashion at high temperatures.



## First Aid Procedures

If you are stung by a Lionfish:

- ◆ Check for and remove any obvious pieces of the spines left in the wound.
- ◆ Hot water, as hot as one can tolerate (not more than 100-110°F), should be applied directly to the wound for 20 to 30 minutes. While at sea, hot water is accessible via the jet on the outboard engine of the boat. Repeat if pain returns.
- ◆ Over the counter painkillers can also be considered for additional pain relief.

If pain and swelling persist seek medical attention as some people are more susceptible (allergic) to venom than others.

