

## **2018 Lionfish Challenge:**

### **Harvesting Florida's Non-Native Fish Offers Rewards**

#### ***Lionfish Removal and Awareness Day, May 19; Challenge runs through Sept. 3***

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., May 15, 2018 – Sign up now for the 2018 Lionfish Challenge and you could win up to \$5,000 while helping rid Florida's waters of non-native [lionfish](#). The competition starts this Saturday, May 19. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) urges Sunshine State divers and anglers to register now at [MyFWC.com/Lionfish](http://MyFWC.com/Lionfish). Once signed up, participants will have through Labor Day, Sept. 3, to enter catches via photo or by submitting tails to checkpoints located at select dive shops and FWC offices.

Participants who harvest FWC-tagged lionfish will receive a customized Lionfish Control Team long-sleeve performance fishing gear shirt. The first tagged lionfish that is removed from each of the 50 reefs will be eligible for monetary or product-based rewards.

Native to the Indo-Pacific and believed to have entered Florida waters from an aquarium release, lionfish are now established along the southeast coast of the U.S., Caribbean, and across the Gulf of Mexico. Due to its venomous spines, the invasive species has few predators and can negatively impact native fish and reef habitats.

In addition to the [BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water](#) which donated \$5,000 toward the effort, support for the program also comes from the American Sportfishing Association, Yamaha, National Marine Manufacturers Association, Coastal Conservation Association of Florida, the Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County, Dive Rite, Narked Scuba, and Lionator Pole Spears.

Visit [myfwc.com/lionfish](http://myfwc.com/lionfish) for more information.

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