

Lionfish control and management in the Cayman Islands: seven years on, lessons learned

Control de pez león y la gestión en las Cayman Islands: siete años después, las lecciones aprendidas

Lionfish contrôle et de gestion dans les Cayman Islands: sept ans après, les leçons apprises

The first lionfish (LF) was sighted in the Cayman Islands in February 2008. Thereafter, the management strategy for the Department of Environment (DOE), has been primarily concentrated on removal efforts and public education. Having restrictive local marine conservation laws, training and licensing programs had to be developed before the public was allowed to participate in removal efforts. In March 2009, with public participation and assistance from Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF), the DOE launched its LF control program. Cullers were licensed to use nets initially, however in late 2010 specific DOE issued spears were issued to some participants in the removal program. Additionally, cullers were required to report catch. To date over 400 individuals and 30 dive companies have been licensed to use spears across the three Cayman Islands. In September 2010, LF tournaments were started to further engage the public in removal efforts. Furthermore, in 2014, LF removal efforts were commercialized, with a company being licensed to harvest the invasive LF for export.

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