

**USING THE DIVE INDUSTRY AS A TOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL LIONFISH
MANAGEMENT IN BONAIRE
USO DE LA INDUSTRIA DE BUCEO COMO HERRAMIENTA PARA LA GESTIÓN
EXITOSA DEL LIONFISH EN BONAIRE
UTILISATION DE L'INDUSTRIE PLONGE BOUTEILLE COMME UN OUTIL DE GESTION
[AVEC DU SUCCÈS] DE LIONFISH À BONAIRE**

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In Bonaire the first lionfish was reported in October 2009. Within six months lionfish had spread throughout the entire perimeter of the island. Bonaire had introduced a plan for lionfish control in advance of the first sighting that included dive industry participation with lionfish workshops. The control program implemented in Bonaire began with recreational diver sightings and removal of lionfish by the marine park staff and a campaign about the importance of removal. New legislation in September 2010 approved the use of ELF's (short range tools) and 400 were distributed to trained volunteers.

One important aspect of the Bonaire program was a close working relationship between the dive industry and resource managers. Additionally, dive centers offered Lionfish Hunter courses which generated income and kept a constant recruitment of new volunteers.

To boost enthusiasm and show appreciation to its dedicated volunteers, the marine park offered periodic lionfish derbies in the no-diving reserves. Although some hunters sell lionfish for profit at local restaurants, most of the volunteers are residents and hunt lionfish to help the reef and have fresh fish to eat at home.

A successful derby and lionfish tasting event was organized in November 2014, which created more awareness and demand for lionfish as a culinary choice with the local people.

Diver control of lionfish in Bonaire resulted in a decreased relative density at shallower depths but remained stable at greater depths. This suggests that controlling lionfish densities in deeper waters is the next step for Bonaire's strategy of lionfish control.

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