The lionfish is a native of the Indian and Pacific Oceans that has invaded the waters of the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Ocean. It has no natural predators in the aforementioned waters, which makes it a dangerous predator in or reefs.

Reproduction

- It reaches sexual maturity before its first year of life and it spawns in pairs (i.e. as the female lays the eggs, the male fertilizes them).
- It reproduces all year long, approximately every 4 days.
- The eggs are kept together in a gelatinous mass that is dispersed by superficial oceanic currents.
- Their larvae are pelagic (of the open sea) and spend up to 30 days suspended in the currents.

Feeding Habits

- They are carnivorous; they prey on more than 56 species of fish and invertebrates.
- One of the invertebrates that they consume is the cleaner shrimp; this species is of great importance for our reefs.
- It is capable of consuming prey that is bigger than half its body size. They can consume up to 4.5 pounds of prey per hectare per day.
- They have consumed up to 90% of fish in highly invaded areas.

Can I Eat Lionfish?

Yes, before cooking it, carefully remove the poisonous spines. By consuming lionfish, we help to reduce its population. Refer to the special edition of Fuete y verguilla, published in 2011 (only available in Spanish).

Access sauce recipes to accompany lionfish, which were created by Puerto Rican Chef Giovanna Huyke, through: http://fueteyverguilla.wordpress.com. Look for the magazine at: http://www.seagrantpr.org.

Size of Lionfish

- Average: 9 - 10 inches
- Maximum: 17 inches

The Following Species of Commercial Importance are Consumed During Their Juvenile Stage by the Lionfish:

- Lane snapper: Lutjanus synagris
- Trunkfish: Lactophrys bicaudalis
- White grunt: Haemulon plumieri
- Yellowtail snapper: Ocyurus chysurus
- Queen parrotfish: Scarus vetula
- Spotted goatfish: Pseudupeneus maculatus
- Bluestriped grunt: Haemulon sciurus
- Red hind: Epinephelus guttatus

Procedure to Follow in Case of an Accident with a Lionfish:

- Check the affected area.
- Thoroughly clean the affected area removing any spines or tissue.
- Place the affected area in warm water (not boiling).
- Use antiseptics or antibiotics in order to prevent secondary infections.
- Seek medical assistance.

If You Come into Contact with the Dorsal, Anal, and/or Pelvic Spines You May Experience the Following Symptoms:

- Pain and inflammation in the affected area
- Sensitivity at contact
- Difficulty breathing
- Perspiration
- Nausea

Author: Noemí Peña Alvarado
Translation: Odette M. Ortiz Mercado
Art by: Alexis Rivera Miura
Edited by: Cristina D. Olán Martínez
Translation by: Odette M. Ortiz Mercado
Written by: Noemí Peña Alvarado
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