



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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4th Annual MCAC Reef Fund Lionfish Round-Up Makes a Difference

Stuart, FL – (July 18, 2014) — The MCAC Reef Fund Committee hosted its 4th Annual Lionfish Round-Up in conjunction with the 8th Annual Reef Builders Fishing Tournament this past weekend. Thirty eight divers captured 512 Lionfish Round-Up during this one day event. “We consider this Round-Up to be a success,” said Kathy FitzPatrick, Martin County’s Coastal Engineer. “We more than doubled the number of lionfish harvest from our 2013 event. This may indicate that local lionfish population is increasing. It definitely indicates that the local divers commitment to controlling this problem is strong.”

Stuart Scuba brought in 104 lionfish to take home the award for Most Lionfish by a Team. Most Lionfish by an Individual honors went to Gabriel Arrington with 61 fish. The Largest Lionfish award went to team FishRulesApp.com with a 16.75” giant and the smallest lionfish was captured by Uncle Jacks Kids. The smallest fish measured less than 5.5”.

For this one day event, the Florida Park Service allowed divers to harvest lionfish from the St. Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park. After being measured, the majority of the lionfish measured were turned over to Jeff Beal of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Scientists from FWC’s Fish and Wildlife research Institute will study the fish to help determine how we can keep this invasive species from decimating our natural reef habitats. “Due to the increase in numbers from this years’ effort, we plan to

hold additional events focused on the impacts from lionfish in our area and how local divers can assist with research and management efforts. I believe that we still have a chance to curb the invasion of this non-native species, we will need to be aggressive with our approach,” says FitzPatrick. Check McLionfish.com for event schedules

It is important to remember that though this is an edible, invasive species that needs to be controlled, they must be handled with care due to their toxic dorsal and pectoral fins. Visit your local dive shop for proper instructions and equipment. Removal of any species from a Florida State Park or Marine Sanctuary (such as Peck Lake Reef) is strictly prohibited without special permitting from the State of Florida.