



# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Reef Builder's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Lionfish Round-Up

**Stuart, FL – (April 26, 2015)** - Martin County's Artificial Reef Program in conjunction with the MCAC Reef Fund will hold the 5th Annual Lionfish Roundup scheduled for May 30, 2015, at the Jupiter Pointe Marina.

"It's hard to believe that we are 5 years into the Lionfish Invasion battle here on the Treasure Coast," says Kathy Fitzpatrick, of Martin County's Coastal Engineering Department. "We began our efforts in the early part of the known invasion and what began as an eradication effort, has turned to a management and control effort. It's unfortunate, that the lionfish are here to stay and to date our best efforts can only limit their damage to our marine ecosystem. Every removal effort is necessary and today it's our best defense against this extremely invasive aggressor."

"The inaugural year of the Round-up we removed 145 fish, with the largest fish being 14" in length and the smallest being 5". In year four, we removed 512 fish with the largest being 16.75" and the smallest being 5.5". This is a trend that is consistent with all of the efforts throughout the state of Florida," says Fitzpatrick.

"Sustained local removal efforts such as the Reef Builder's Lionfish Roundup and other removal events have been shown to keep lionfish populations down and have a positive impact on native habitat," said Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission spokeswoman Amanda Nalley. "We applaud the efforts of others to help control the lionfish population and encourage divers to participate and remove lionfish whenever they can."

Diving begins at 7:00am on May 30, with fish tallying, music, arts & craft vendors, Lionfish tasting and awards party taking place at Jupiter Pointe Marina (18753 SE Federal Highway in Jupiter) from 12pm to 6pm on the day of the tournament. Cash prizes will be awarded including Smallest \$250; Largest \$250; Most-Team \$500 and

Most-Individual \$500. There will be a mandatory “Diver’s Briefing” at 6:00pm on Friday, May 29, at Jupiter Pointe Marina. The cost to participate is \$50 per diver or \$150 for a team of four divers, and all proceeds benefit the Martin County Artificial Reef Program.

For more information, please visit our web-site [www.McLionfish.com](http://www.McLionfish.com), or contact us at (772) 223-1684 / [info@mclionfish.com](mailto:info@mclionfish.com)