



Lionfish Challenge 2022



Rules and Harvester Instructions

Outline

The Lionfish Challenge is a summer-long lionfish tournament open to participants from anywhere within the state of Florida. The tournament is completely free to enter and is open to participants of all ages. The goal of The Challenge is to encourage and reward recreational and commercial divers to remove lionfish from Florida waters.

The Challenge is split into two divisions to cater to both commercial and recreational divers. Participants in each division compete with each other to harvest the most aggregate lionfish or most pounds of lionfish throughout the duration of the tournament. Prizes are awarded in tiers to encourage harvest even for those who cannot compete to win. The more lionfish you harvest, the more prizes you win! Grand prizes are awarded to the top 3 competitors in each division. Once you reach Tier 1, you are automatically entered into our monthly raffles.

Timeline

- May 20, 2022 through September 6, 2022
**The Challenge typically ends on Labor Day; we have decided to extend the tournament until the day AFTER Labor Day this year to accommodate those who may be diving that day

Registration

- Participants must pre-register for the tournament at FWCReefRangers.com. You will be given a registration number upon successful completion- please keep this number for your records.
- Participants may only qualify for one category (recreational or commercial).
 - Participants with an active Saltwater Products License **and** commercial lionfish sales within the last year must register for the commercial category.
- After registering, you may begin harvesting lionfish.

How to Submit Your Catch

Instructions for Commercial Divers:

- After harvesting your lionfish, sell them to a licensed wholesale dealer and get a copy of your trip ticket verifying the commercial sale. Contact us for a list of wholesale dealers currently purchasing lionfish.

- After obtaining your trip ticket, complete a Commercial Trip Ticket Submission
 - Trip ticket submission is completed through an online form on our website (similar to the form you filled out when registering for the Challenge).
 - The online form will ask you information about when and where your lionfish were harvested and will ask you to upload a copy of your trip ticket
 - You may submit either a photo, scanned copy, or online screen grab of your trip ticket

Things to note:

- Please complete an online submission form for each trip ticket
- Only lionfish sales with species code 460 will be accepted
- Lionfish sold with tails removed are NOT eligible for this competition. If we have reason to believe a participant is selling fish with tails previously removed, they will be disqualified from competing.

Instructions for Recreational Divers:

- After harvesting your lionfish, remove tails leaving a bit of meat attached and place in a plastic sandwich bag(s)
- Label bag(s) with harvester name, phone number, date of harvest and number of tails
- Bring tails and a tail verification form to a local Checkpoint for verification of harvest
 - The Checkpoint will count your tails, sign your verification form, and return the form to you.
 - Checkpoints will keep the tails for our records.
 - Checkpoint locations and verification forms can be found on our website: www.FWCReefRangers.com
- After verifying your tails at a Checkpoint, you may complete a Recreational Tail Submission.
 - Tail submission is completed through an online form on our website (similar to the form you filled out when registering for the Challenge).
 - The online form will ask you information about when and where your lionfish were harvested and will ask you to upload a copy of your completed verification form.
 - You may submit either a photo or a scanned copy of your completed verification form.

Things to note:

- Please complete one verification form and one online submission form for each trip you take -- if you harvest lionfish 5 times throughout the tournament, please complete 5 verification forms and 5 online submissions.

- Please do not bring any smelly fish to your Checkpoint. Checkpoints have the right to deny any rotten or otherwise uncountable tails!
- Please keep all verification forms until the 2022 Lionfish Challenge as ended

Prizes

Tiered Prizes

Prizes will be awarded in a tiered fashion- the more lionfish you submit, the more prizes you receive! The requirements for each tier are as follows (Note- more information on prizes will be announced later)

- Tier 1- Harvest 25 lionfish (recreational category) or 25 lbs of lionfish (commercial category)
- Tier 2- Harvest 100 lionfish (recreational category) or 250 lbs of lionfish (commercial category)
- Tier 3- Harvest 300 lionfish (recreational category) or 500 lbs of lionfish (commercial category)
- Tier 4- Harvest 600 lionfish (recreational category) or 1000 lbs of lionfish (commercial category)

Resource-based Incentives

Those who reach Tier 1 will be awarded a commemorative 2022 Lionfish Challenge Coin. This coin allows the harvester to retain 1 extra spiny lobster each day during the 2022 Sport Season (July 27th and 28th, 2022)

- Harvester **must** have 2022 commemorative coin in possession to harvest and possess extra spiny lobster.
- Only 1 coin may be used per harvester.
- Coins from previous years are not eligible for the 2022 Sport Season.

Raffle Prizes

Harvesters who reach Tier 1 before the raffle drawing date are automatically entered into the raffles

- Harvesters can only win one raffle prize during the 2022 Lionfish Challenge.
- Raffle prizes will be announced as items are donated
- Raffle drawing dates:
 - June 3rd- 2 winners
 - July 1st – 4 winners
 - August 12th – 4 winners

- September 2nd – 2 winners

Prize Mailing Dates

- June 6th
- June 20th
- July 6th
- July 18th
- August 1st
- August 15th
- August 29th
- September 12th

Grand Prizes

Grand prizes will be awarded to the top three competitors in each division.

- 1st place in each division (Commercial Champion or Lionfish King/Queen) will receive:
 - A custom lionfish trophy created by a Florida-based artist
 - 1st pick at one of 3 grand prizes (grand prizes will be announced at a later date)
 - Recognition at an awards ceremony and on Reef Ranger's website and social media platforms
- 2nd place in each division will receive:
 - 2nd pick at one of 3 grand prizes
- 3rd place in each division will receive:
 - 3rd pick at one of 3 grand prizes

Fair Tournament Rules and Expectations:

- The FWC is aware that this competition has gotten extremely competitive over the past several years and we want to emphasize dive safety to all of our participants. While removing lionfish is important, **no fish or prize is worth your life**. Reports of unsafe activity are taken very seriously, and if we have reason to believe a participant is acting unsafely or putting themselves in danger, that participant will be removed from the competition.
- Stockpiling tails from fish harvested before the beginning of the tournament is grounds for immediate removal from the competition.
- Any lionfish sold to a wholesale dealer with tails previously removed are not eligible for this competition. If we find out that you are competing as a recreational diver but still selling your lionfish harvest, or you are removing tails and giving them to your recreational buddy to submit, all parties will be removed from the tournament.
- There will be a zero-tolerance policy this year for any participants suspected of diving unsafely or competing unfairly.