



Lionfish

Pterois volitans

Characteristics

- * Body is white or cream colored with red to reddish-brown vertical stripes; stripes can be wide or thin
- * Numerous long, venomous spines (dorsal and anal)
- * Adults can grow to 15 in (38cm) and weigh 2.6 lb (1.2 kg)

Habitat

- * Along U.S. east coast, waters of 13.8°–24.4°N
- * Depth range of 33-575 ft (10-175 m)
- * Hides in unexposed places at daytime, often with head down and nearly immobile

Known Distribution

- * Adults: North Carolina to Florida; established and reproducing along the southeast United States coast
- * Juveniles: New York, North Carolina, and Bermuda
- * Native to coral reefs of Indian and western Pacific Oceans

Impacts

- * Feeds on a wide variety of smaller fish, shrimp, and crabs
- * Venomous spines can injure people



Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*)

Credit: Jens Petersen



Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*)

Credit: J. Morris, NOAA NOS

