Regional Lionfish Strategy Workshop
Cancun, 25 to 28 August 2010

French West Indies Strategy
St Martin, St Barthélémy, Guadeloupe, Martinique

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Different status for each island in terms of
Self-government, area, marine protection level, fishing and
diving activities

Artisanal fishing gear on coastal area: Fish traps, gill and
trammel nets leading to overfishing

Increase of spearfishing

Eventual predators, big groupers and sharks, have
disappeared (excepted in local places)
First fish reported in St Martin on july 20th 2010
3 fishes have already been reported on the french part of the island
Habitat : rock and sand , size <3.9 inch
2 have been removed a few days later
Invasion status evolution

Arrival date forecasting (communication planning)
Lionfish larvae dispersion regarding to the currents in the leeward islands passage

http://oceancurrents.rsmas.miami.edu/caribbean/caribbean.html
A Common control strategy for the FWI including:

Regional coordination
• IUCN French committee / Fr ministry / Spaw-RAC workshop on alien species including lionfish (Guadeloupe, 2009)
• Identifying focus points and implementing a network (University, marine park manager, DIREN, Non-profit organization)

Communication
• Organization of regional information meeting with local marine users
• Broadcasting « wanted » posters on each island with local focus points phone numbers
• Organization of press conferences on each island
• Broadcasting of a note about envenomation issues for local emergency and medical staff
A Common control strategy for the FWI including:

Lionfish population control
- Delivering special authorizations for scuba fishing
- Purchase and distribution of underwater collection tools (hand nets & gloves) to authorized persons

Lionfish data collect
- Dedicated GIS in the FWI
- Collection form (location, size,…) stomach content and tissue sampling
- Reporting information to Carribean networks (NAS) and SPAW-RAC

Next step
- Implementing an Eat it! strategy
Successes

• 2 on 3 reported fishes captured in St Martin (distribution of location tag needed)
• Good feedback on communication strategy
• Relationship with the Marine Park of Sint-Marteen
• Wide-ranging habitats described
• Diving spots are concentrated in Martinique on Caribbean shore
• Removal operations won’t be possible all around the island
• Knowledge lack about near-shore hydrodynamism (local larvae dispersion trajectory)
• Biological control by native predators (if any) impossible
Opportunity of extra fundings for invasive alien species issues but must be anticipated (need other country experience)
Ready to face the beginning of the invasion

No experience to share as the invasion is just beginning

But many questions:

How to target eradication efforts (what percentage of suitable habitat should be monitored?)

Way to develop a commercial fishing of Pterois in case of population explosion. Risky? Has fish traps dedicated to this species been studied?

What about Lionfish tournament and spearfishing encouragement? Ciguatera poisoning risk?

What about State responsibility in case of serious envenomation during removal operations?