



# THE DIVE SLATE

## *Lionfish Prowls Caribbean*

A maroon-striped marauder with venomous spikes is rapidly multiplying in the Caribbean's warm waters, swallowing native species, stinging divers and generally [wreaking havoc on an ecologically delicate region](#).

The red lionfish, a tropical native of the Indian and Pacific oceans that probably escaped from a Florida fish tank, is showing up everywhere — from the

coasts of Cuba and Hispaniola to Little Cayman's pristine Bloody Bay Wall, one of the region's prime destinations for divers.

Wherever it appears, the adaptable predator corners fish and

crustaceans up to half its size with its billowy fins and sucks them down in one violent gulp.

"This may very well become the most devastating marine invasion in history," said Mark Hixon, an Oregon State University marine ecology expert who compared lionfish to a plague of locusts.

"There is probably no way to stop the invasion completely."

Northern Caribbean islands have sounded the alarm, encouraging fishermen to capture lionfish and divers to report them for eradication.

"I think at the best they will have a huge impact on reef fish, and at the worst will result in the disappearance of most reef fish," said Bruce Purdy, a veteran dive operator who has helped the marine

conservation group REEF with expeditions tracking the invasion. Researchers believe lionfish were introduced into the Atlantic in 1992, when Hurricane Andrew shattered a private aquarium and six of them spilled into Miami's Biscayne Bay, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

They are not aggressive toward

humans, and their sting is not fatal. Researchers are scrambling to figure out what will eat the menacing beauties in their new Caribbean home, experimenting with predators such as sharks, moray eels — and



even humans.

Adventurous eaters describe the taste of lionfish filets as resembling halibut. But so far, they are a tough sell. One predator that will eat lionfish is grouper, which are rare in the lionfish's natural Southeast-Asian habitat.

Containing the spread of the lionfish is an uphill fight. As lionfish colonize more territory in the Caribbean, they feed on grazing fish that keep seaweed from overwhelming coral reefs already buffeted by climate change, pollution and other environmental pressures.

Andy Dehart said: "If we start losing these smaller reef fish as food to the lionfish ... we could be in a whirlwind for bad things coming to the reef ecosystem."

### WE ARE MOVING !!

Scuba Technologies is moving to 1310 W. Market Street in Johnson City. Many of the veteran divers will recognize this address as the location of the old dive shop. We are currently installing a compressor and remodeling the shop so as they say, "Pardon our dust" as we expand to better serve our clients and customers.

### September Bonaire Trip

**When:** Sept 13th - 20th, 2008

**Where:** Sand Dollar Condos

**What:** World Class Diving



As mentioned in our last newsletter, there was a possibility we would run another trip to Bonaire in September. Well that possibility has become reality now. We will be staying at [Sand Dollar](#) and diving with [Bonaire Dive & Adventure](#). Currently we have room for one more but this is low season for Bonaire and it is highly possible to add some extra rooms. Prices vary of course depending on the size of the condos but give us a call and we can see what we can work out. [Airfare](#) is \$744 roundtrip from TriCities as of this writing. (Requires layover night in Atlanta on return trip.)



## dan facts

Practical dive safety tips for divers.

### What is PDE?

With Project Dive Exploration, the most extensive study of recreational diving ever conducted, DAN seeks to record dive profiles and produce statistically accurate analyses of those dive profiles, diver characteristics and diver behavior.

**As of June 1, DAN has collected more than 133,000 dive profiles.**

### Study objectives include:

- Documenting the condition of the diver 48 hours after the dive series;
- Documenting a diver's health changes, whether dive-related or not;
- Using statistical analysis and modeling to study the link between diving and health effects;
- Developing flexible, low-risk decompression procedures for multilevel, multiday or repetitive diving; and
- Studying the effects of flying after diving.

### Send DAN Your Dive Profiles

All certified divers with a Level 2 or 3 dive computers can participate in PDE and send dive profiles directly to DAN using special software. Contact DAN or visit [www.DiversAlertNetwork.org](http://www.DiversAlertNetwork.org) for more information.

Help DAN make diving safer for all divers. PDE is another example of "Divers Helping Divers." For other information about dive safety and membership benefits, call 1-800-446-2671 or 1-919-684-2948 ext. 260

DAN is a nonprofit dive safety organization dedicated to the safety and health of recreational scuba divers. DAN operates a 24-hour diving emergency hotline for injured divers and a diving medical information line.

**DAN Medical Information Line:  
+1-919-684-2948 ext. 222**

[www.DiversAlertNetwork.org](http://www.DiversAlertNetwork.org)

**Divers Helping Divers™**



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DAN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

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Scuba Technologies

*"preparing extraordinary people for extraordinary experiences"*

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