



For Immediate Release

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1,318 Lionfish Caught in Third Annual Green Turtle Cay Lionfish Derby!

A good time was had by all who participated in the Third Annual Lionfish Derby at Green Turtle Cay, Abaco, Bahamas on June 24th and 25th, 2011. The event was held at the Green Turtle Club, whose sponsorship, along with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Brendals Dive Center, REEF and numerous donors from Palm Beach County, Florida make this one of the most exciting competitions of the summer.

1,318 lionfish were caught in a single day in the waters surrounding this small island resort. These numbers are up from last year's derby of 941, but less than the 1,408 captured during the inaugural event in 2009. Participants and onlookers enjoyed tasty bites of lionfish during the late afternoon scoring part of the Derby and an awards banquet and live music in the evening.

First through Third place cash prizes totaling more than \$5,000.00 were awarded for Most lionfish, Smallest Lionfish and Largest lionfish caught between sunrise and 4:00pm during the derby. In addition to the \$500 prize money for catching the biggest lionfish, a fabulous, custom-built trophy for the largest lionfish was donated and presented by Chris Burdett. Mr. Burdett is an avid diver and frequent visitor to the area who resides in West Palm Beach. His painful encounter three years ago with, at that time the virtually unknown lionfish, sparked the creation of the first Lionfish Derby ever held. All subsequent derbies originated from the Green Turtle Cay Derby, which serves as the model for competitions being held across the Caribbean, Florida and the eastern seaboard.

Derby founder, Bobbie Lindsay, from Palm Beach, Florida, said, "The tournament created here in Green Turtle Cay has been carried forward by our partners at REEF and Simon Fraser University, and has made a significant impact on awareness of the problem, local control of lionfish populations, and introduction of lionfish as an excellent food fish to residents and visitors. REEF and SFU have insured that the education, science and research elements remain in the Derbies, which is critical to understanding how best to manage the invasion."

According to Lad Akins, at REEF, "While we can't stop the lionfish invasion, we can put them on the menu and help reduce populations in specific areas where the economy depends on fishing and/or tourism. During the past month in the Abacos, over 4,300 lionfish have been removed by Derbies in Marsh Harbor and Green Turtle."

The next Lionfish Derby will be held August 12-13th, 2011, at Sailfish Marina on Singer Island, FL. For more information visit <http://www.reef.org/lionfish> and <http://www.lionfishderby.com/> or call (305) 852-0030 or (561) 248-8332.