



Facts About The Lionfish

Lionfish are not native to the Gulf of Mexico. They originate from the Indo-Pacific, and it is believed that they spread into the Gulf after they were released by aquarium owners in South Florida. Lionfish began showing up in the northern gulf area in 2010, and had fully infested most natural and artificial reefs by late 2012.

- Possess 13 dorsal, 2 pelvic, and 3 anal spines that are venomous and can cause a very painful stick if not handled carefully
- No natural predators in our area.
- Known to eat native fish and crustaceans in very large quantities
- Capable of releasing up to 20,000 eggs every 4 days

Adult lionfish in the Gulf of Mexico average 8 inches long, and just over one-half pound in weight. The largest lionfish recorded in the Gulf of Mexico was 16.5 inches long. The world record lionfish (captured in SE Florida) was 18.5 inches long. There have been unverified reports of larger fish being shot in U.S. waters. Lionfish are typically white, with maroon stripes, but they have the ability to shift colors over time, and it's not unusual to find specimens that are almost black.