Divers Can Help Keys’ Ocean Ecosystem and ‘Take a Bite Out of Lionfish’ During REEF’s Upper Keys Derby

FLORIDA KEYS — Divers can help preserve the Florida Keys' native reef fish populations during the fun, socially distanced Reef Environmental Education Foundation 2020...

By Dive Training
August 21, 2020

- **LO RIDA KEYS** — Divers can help preserve the Florida Keys' native reef fish populations during the fun, socially distanced Reef Environmental Education Foundation 2020 Lionfish Derby. Scheduled Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 10-13, the derby challenges participants to capture and remove as many non-native lionfish as possible from Keys waters.

This year, COVID-19 restrictions have forced organizers of the annual competition to modify the derby to minimize potential exposure to or spread of the virus. However, divers...
to have two full days to capture lionfish and maximize their effectiveness in the removal
this invasive predator from Keys reefs.

vers vie for prize money including first- through third-place awards for capturing the
əst lionfish, the largest and the smallest. New this year are two divisions in the “most
fish” category: Reef Defenders and Apex Predators. The latter is the more competitive
d prize monies are higher.

iring early-bird registration on or before Aug. 30, teams of two to four people can
gister online for only $50 per team. Registrations on or before Sept. 6 are $75 per team
late registrations by the final deadline of 4 p.m. Sept 10 are $100 per team. All
istrants receive a 2020 Lionfish Derby rash guard. The first 40 paid participants also
ceive a derby hat.

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r a decade REEF has joined the Florida Keys National Marine
ctuary and the Keyswide re community to provide hands-on opportunities for “citizen
ents.” These sustainability-focused individuals actively remove the invasive, voracious species that was
uced to Florida waters during the 1980s, lessening the pressure on existing reef fish
ystems and providing a healthy new food source for human consumption.

though commonly served as ceviche or sushi, lionfish filets can be prepared like any other
h and have been likened to halibut or grouper in texture and flavor.

ent information: reef.org/events/2020-upper-keys-lionfish-derby or 305-852-0030
sida Keys visitor information: fla-keys.com or 1-800-FLA-KEYS
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