

STATE OF FLORIDA
FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Order No. EO 18-20

2018 Lionfish Challenge

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission of the State of Florida, acting under the authority of Article IV, Section 9, of the Florida Constitution, and acting through its Executive Director under Paragraph 22 of the Delegations of Authority, hereby authorizes registered participants in the 2018 Lionfish Challenge who have harvested, and verified their harvest via an FWC-approved method, at least 25 recreationally-harvested lionfish or 25 pounds of commercially-harvested lionfish during the qualifying period to harvest one spiny lobster in addition to that allowed by the recreational bag limit each day during the 2018 spiny lobster sport season, July 25-26. This opportunity is hereby created to encourage public involvement in lionfish removal and reward successful lionfish harvesters around the state.

The authorized recreational harvest of spiny lobster during the 2018 two-day sport season is as follows:

1. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in 68B-24.004, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), a registered participant in the 2018 Lionfish Challenge who harvests and reports at least 25 recreationally-harvested lionfish or 25 pounds of commercially-harvested lionfish between May 19, 2018, and July 24, 2018, is allowed to harvest no more than one spiny lobster per day in addition to that allowed by the recreational bag limit during the 2018 two-day sport season, July 25–26, 2018. All other persons are subject to the recreational bag and possession limits as specified in 68B-24.004, F.A.C.
2. For registered participants who harvest and report 25 or more recreationally-harvested lionfish or at least 25 pounds of commercially-harvested lionfish during the qualifying period:
 - a. Except in Monroe County and in Biscayne National Park, during the first day of the two-day sport season, no recreational harvester shall harvest more than 13 spiny lobster, or possess more than 13 spiny lobster whether on or off the waters of the state. During the second day of the two-day sport season, no recreational harvester shall harvest or possess while in or on state waters more than 13 spiny lobster or possess more than 26 spiny lobster once such harvester has landed and departed state waters.
 - b. In Monroe County and in Biscayne National Park, during the first day of the two-day sport season, no recreational harvester shall harvest more than 7 spiny lobster, or possess more than 7 spiny lobster whether on or off the waters of the state. During the second day of the two-day sport season, no recreational harvester shall harvest or possess while in or on state waters more than 7 spiny lobster or possess more than 14 spiny lobster once such harvester has landed and departed state waters.

3. FWC-approved methods of verifying harvest during the 2018 Lionfish Challenge include submitting a photo of lionfish harvested recreationally or a photo of commercial trip ticket(s) documenting lionfish harvest, including all required information, or by submitting lionfish harvest at an FWC-attended tournament. Requirements for photo submissions can be located on the Commission's website at the following link: <http://www.myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/lionfish/challenge/>. FWC will issue each harvester that qualifies for this opportunity a commemorative 2018 Lionfish Challenge coin confirming their qualifying lionfish harvest.
4. Each harvester in possession of spiny lobster, either on or off the water, in excess of that allowed by the recreational bag limit specified in 68B-24, F.A.C., must also be in possession of a 2018 Lionfish Challenge coin demonstrating qualifying lionfish harvest.
 - a. Qualifying lionfish must be harvested and reported prior to harvest of a spiny lobster in addition to that allowed under the recreational bag limit specified in 68B-24.004, F.A.C.
 - b. The qualifying period to harvest one spiny lobster in addition to that allowed by the recreational bag limit each day during the 2018 spiny lobster sport season is May 19, 2018, through July 24, 2018.
 - c. A 2018 Lionfish Challenge coin may be used to harvest a single lobster in addition to that allowed under the recreational bag limit per day.
5. All other rules of the Commission relating to the lobster sport season (68B-24, F.A.C.) and lionfish (68B-5.006, F.A.C.) shall remain in effect.
6. This order shall take effect at 12:01 A.M. on July 25, 2018 and expire at 12:01 A.M. on July 27, 2018.

Specific Authority:
Law Implemented:

Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution
Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution and
120.81(5), Florida Statutes



Given under my hand and seal of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on this 16th day of May 2018.

Thomas H. Egan

Eric Sutton
Executive Director

Attest: *Hunter Butler*
Agency Clerk