

*Pterois volitans* (Linnaeus 1758)  
Red Lionfish  
and  
*Pterois miles* (Bennett 1828)  
Devil Firefish



Photo by J. Randall, Bishop Museum

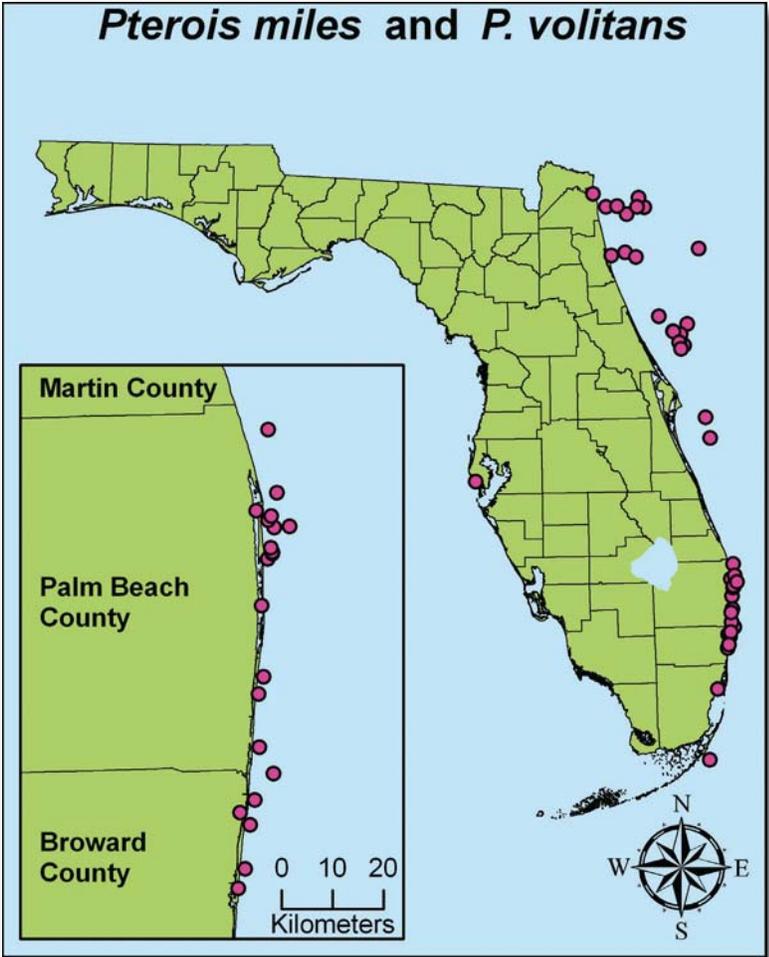
**Identification:** The Red Lionfish and the Devil Firefish are sister species identifiable to the species level by meristics only at extreme ranges of their native habitats (Hamner et al. 2007). The Red Lionfish and Devil Firefish have strong vertical banding that extends the entire length of the body. Tips of the long spines can be white in color. Dorsal and anal fins are transparent with dark spots. Pectoral fins are large with dark spots. Coloration can be variable depending on size and habitat, and can range from dark black to deep red. The head contains fleshy appendages with large tentacles above the eyes (Morris and Freshwater 2008). Dorsal fin XIII (9-11), anal fin III (6-7).

**Similar Species:** No similar-appearing Atlantic species has the prominent body barring characteristic of lionfish. Searobins (Family Triglidae) have similarly large pectoral fins but lack the maroon coloration and striping patterns of lionfish.

**Native Range:** The species are widely distributed throughout the western Pacific from southern Japan to Micronesia, Australia, and the Philippines. *Pterois volitans* occurs throughout most of Oceania (including the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia and Fiji) east to French Polynesia. *Pterois miles* is from the Indian Ocean and Red Sea, although its range extends to Sumatra.

**Ecology:** Lionfishes inhabit shallow and deep reefs, preferring areas of high structural complexity. The diet consists primarily of fishes and some invertebrates. Lionfishes are pair spawners, and release two gelatinous egg balls during each spawning event. Spawning can occur multiple times per month during the spawning season that extends throughout the calendar year. Lionfishes have become established in the Western North Atlantic and Caribbean over the last decade, representing one of the most rapid marine fish invasions recorded to date.

**Nonindigenous Occurrences:** Lionfishes are widespread from the Caribbean to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Juveniles are found north of Cape Hatteras, but do not overwinter (Kimball et al. 2004).



Scorpaenidae (scorpionfishes)