



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Tournament Kicks Off This Weekend

The Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Tournament will kick off this Thursday at 7:00pm with a Captain's Safety Meeting at AJ's Seafood and Oyster bar in Destin. Tournament hours begin at first light on Friday morning and continue until Sunday at 11am. Sunday will be a day of lionfish overload. The tournament is expecting record numbers of lionfish as hunters bring in their fish to AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar on the Harbor boardwalk to be counted by tournament staff.

The public is invited to the Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Tournament and Lionfish Removal and Awareness Day Festival, hosted by the Emerald Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The Festival hours are Saturday and Sunday from 10am-5pm. The festival will include educational booths about lionfish and marine related topics, fillet demonstrations, conservation organizations, artists, and other non-profit and commercial vendors. The lionfish tournament count station will open from 3:00 – 6:00 on Friday and Saturday afternoon, and 7:00am – 11:00am on Sunday. The awards ceremony will be on Sunday afternoon after all the lionfish are counted. Come early and watch thousands of lionfish come in. Participating teams who bring in the most lionfish will be awarded a staggering \$10,000 for first place. Additionally, teams can win \$5,000 for the largest lionfish, and \$5,000 for the smallest lionfish.

The Pre-Tournament, which started in February, has already removed over 5,000 lionfish - shattering records from previous years. Emerald Coast Open officials expect this weekend's main tournament to produce record numbers.

For more information, visit EmeraldCoastOpen.com or Facebook.com/EmeraldCoastOpen

For information about Lionfish Removal and Awareness Day, visit FWCReefRangers.com