Abstract

Two subspecies of Indo-Pacific lionfish, (*Pterois volitans* and *Pterois miles* Family Scorpaenidae) are the first invasive marine fish that are spreading rapidly throughout the Western Atlantic and Caribbean waters (Schofield 2010, S117-S122). The lionfish were introduced to Florida waters in the mid 1980's; however, little is known about the lionfish population and the long-term effects this non-native carnivore will have on our native reefs. Despite increased awareness among wildlife and marine professionals, the public remains in the dark about the ever-growing lionfish populations in the on Western Atlantic reefs. Through a case study of the Story Map model this project utilizes the spatial data revealing chronological factors of the lionfish population growth and spread throughout the entire Western Atlantic. This study is designed for informing the lay citizen and inspiring them to act. The Story Map model is a public interactive web platform, or portal into the story of the lionfish. Using a Story Map, this project seeks to raise public awareness of the rising populations of lionfish in Florida coastal waters. The primary goal of this thesis is to inspire individuals through the Story Map to get involved their coastal communities. The Story Map combines interactive maps and high definition media to communicate the lionfish population growth as well as how the lionfish have affected the communities. This effective use of a Story Map is highly adaptable and the purpose can change as the focus of the invasive lionfish changes too. This Story Map model is simple, highly flexible, and can rely exclusively on public data. This thesis is a call to the public to increase awareness and involvement to aid our native Atlantic and Caribbean reefs against this invasive species.