

The Indo-Pacific red lionfish, *Pterois volitans* (Pisces: Scorpaenidae), new to Bahamian ichthyofauna

Received: 9 October 2006 / Accepted: 25 October 2006
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Fig. 1 Red lionfish, *Pterois volitans*, ca. 250 mm TL, photographed near Great Sale Cay, Bahamas on 29 July 2006



Fig. 2 Two red lionfish, *Pterois volitans* (172 and 230 mm SL, left and right, respectively), inside a sunken steel barge near Walkers Cay, Bahamas on 3 August 2006. Photograph is correctly aligned; lionfish were oriented upside-down

During late July and early August 2006, four individuals of the Indo-Pacific red lionfish, *Pterois volitans*, were observed at two locations in the Abacos on Little Bahama Bank, Bahamas. Two adults, about 200 and 250 mm total length (TL), were observed in a blue hole (a limestone solution hole) in 5 m of water near Great Sale Cay (26°55.4'N, 78°14.2'W) on 29 July 2006. The larger of the pair was photographed (Fig. 1). On 3 August 2006, two additional adults (Fig. 2), measuring 172 and 230 mm standard length (SL), were collected on a sunken steel barge lying in 5 m of water near Walkers Cay (27°13.2'N, 78°29.9'W). The stomach of the larger captured specimen contained an unidentified crab and fish remains including a parrotfish (*Sparisoma* sp.). The stomach of the smaller specimen contained unidentified fish remains.

On 4 April 2006, Dan Fahy and Richard Spieler collected a 132.2 mm SL specimen of *P. volitans* at Great Exuma Island (23°37.1'N, 75°54.8'W). Stomach contents included one saddled blenny, *Malacoctenus triangulatus*, and a wrasse (*Haliichoeres* sp.). These records, plus additional sightings at Spanish Cay (Abacos), Harbor Island (Eleuthera), Cat Island, and New Providence, relayed to us by divers and fishers, indicate that the species is widespread on Little Bahama and Great Bahama banks.

The red lionfish has invaded shelf waters of the east coast of the US (Whitfield et al. 2002). Our report represents the first documentation of *P. volitans* from the Bahamas, one of the most species-rich ichthyofaunal regions in the western Atlantic (Böhlke and Chaplin 1968).

Acknowledgments We thank Richard Spieler for kindly sharing information on the Exuma specimen and Robert Robins for curatorial assistance.

References

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D. B. Snyder (✉)

Continental Shelf Associates, Inc., 759 Parkway Street, Jupiter, FL 33477, USA
e-mail: dsnyder@conshelf.com

G. H. Burgess

Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, P.O. Box 117800, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA
e-mail: gburgess@flmnh.ufl.edu

Reef sites

Coral Reefs (2006)
DOI 10.1007/s00338-006-0176-8