

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Top Two Lionfish Researchers, from NOAA and REEF, coming to Bermuda to help confront the lionfish invasion

Bermuda – October 1, 2012 - The Ocean Support Foundation and its partner organizations are hosting a two-day workshop on Tuesday October 9th and Wednesday October 10th at the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo for key stakeholders as well as an evening presentation that will be open to the public on Wednesday October 10th at 7:00pm, also at the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo.

The two-day workshop and evening lecture will feature two of the top lionfish researchers in the Western Atlantic, Dr. James Morris, Jr. from NOAA* and Mr. Lad Akins of REEF*.

The public presentation will cover the most up to date lionfish information from across the Atlantic and summarize the results of the two-day workshop. Dr. Morris will chronicle the lionfish invasion in the Atlantic and Mr. Akins will speak to how citizen volunteers are making an impact on the lionfish invasion.

Tickets are free for the evening event but are limited. They are on a first come, first served basis and must be reserved in advance by emailing: lionfish@oceansupport.org. Tickets must be picked up at the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum, and Zoo in advance of the Wednesday night program and no tickets will be available at the door. Ticket holders will be notified by email when tickets will be available for pick up.

The two-day workshop is designed to help Bermuda develop a long-range lionfish control program. Dr. Morris and Mr. Akins have led similar workshops in numerous jurisdictions across the Caribbean, Mexico, and Florida.

Attending the workshop will be representatives from a coalition of government departments, science and environmental organizations, the Marine Resources Board, the Bermuda National Trust, the Tourism Commission, commercial fishermen, dive shop operators, divers, and other key stakeholders from across the island.

The Ocean Support Foundation believes that this workshop will be critical in developing solutions to deal with the destruction that lionfish will have on the island's marine resources. Left unchecked, the lionfish invasion will seriously impact our commercial fishing industry, tourism, and other sectors of the economy.

The workshops and evening presentation are hosted by the Ocean Support Foundation with support from - Bermuda Zoological Society (BZS), Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF), Atlantic Conservation Partnership (ACP), Mr. James Gibbons, and Dr. David Saul.

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Ocean Support Foundation, Bermuda.

*Dr. James A Morris, Jr. is an Ecologist, from the Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research, National Ocean Service, NOAA. His research focuses on coastal marine ecology with expertise in invasive species and marine aquaculture. He has recently documented the

biology and ecology of invasive lionfish and worked with jurisdictions throughout the Caribbean, Mexico, and South Florida to help develop lionfish control programs.

*Lad Akins is the Director of Special Projects for the Reef Environmental Education Foundation, based in Key Largo, Florida. His primary focus since 2006 has been the invasive lionfish issue. Lad has worked throughout the region, conducting extensive research programs on the lionfish covering trapping, tagging, density studies, and helping to develop lionfish training programs and response plans. Lad has appeared in numerous videos, reports, and research papers on lionfish and has worked with Dr. Morris on a number of lionfish projects.