

**Family:** Scorpaenidae

Prepared by: Graham Slidell

Photo Courtesy of "Volusia County Reef Research Dive Team"



**Black Volitans Lionfish**

*Pterois volitans*

**Range:** Indo-Pacific, with introductions into western Atlantic waters via aquarium release. Temperature has been found to limit the northern range of *P. volitans* off the coast of the United States. The southern limit extends to the coast of southern Florida. Further distribution south has not occurred naturally suggesting human-induced introduction as a necessary factor.

**Similar Species:** *P. miles* is often mistaken for *P. volitans*, but can be distinguished by the size and number of dorsal and anal fins and the size of the dorsal fin spots.

**Identification:** Bold red and white banding pattern, long dorsal spines and fleshy tabs above and below the mouth help identify this exotic fish. The Black Volitans Lionfish generally varies in shades of brown and reddish brown, but rarely as dark as black despite its name. Warning: Extremely venomous

**Note:** *P. Volitans* is highly invasive. Within a period of ten years of its introduction off the U.S. coast the species has dispersed throughout its thermally habitable range. If you have information pertinent to wild Lionfish please contact Paula Whitfield at [paula.whitfield@noaa.gov](mailto:paula.whitfield@noaa.gov)