



Marvelous Lionfish

Sometimes called scorpion fish or dragon fish, this bizarre looking creature is originally from the Indo-Pacific - the islands between Australia and Asia. There are other species found throughout the world. Now, they are commonly found in pets stores to be sold for salt water tanks.

Lionfish are famous for their venomous spines. Unlike a poison which you must eat, venom is injected. When a predator attacks or they are trying to catch a meal, the lionfish will use their long spines.

A Lionfish for Me?

Lionfish are very cool additions to a coral reef tank. Different species may be from 8 inches long up to 15 inches!

Most lionfish like to hide upside down in caves and rock work. After they are used to their tank, they will be more adventurous and say hi!

In a tank, lionfish will eat small shrimp...and even small fish. Once you are a good saltwater aquarist, a lionfish could be your next new friend.

Found in rocky reefs, they will live in water up to 150 feet deep! They hang out in caves and under ledges and will lay almost motionless.

Lionfish have what is called "disruptive coloration". The stripes on their body help break up their shape, so from far away predators can not tell that they are a fish.

They have teeth but they are very small. To catch prey, they will corner a fish or shrimp using their long spines. Then, the lionfish will make a lightning quick snap and swallow the prey whole!

These fish are very adaptable. Groups of lionfish have now been found off the east coast of the USA. Scientists think these fish originally came from people releasing their pet fish into the ocean!

Try This!

Try this fun game! Act like a lionsfish and protect yourself by stinging predators.

Have one player be the lionfish in the center. Place an object between their feet. More classmates can be predators roaming around trying to get the object.

Staying over the object the lionfish must protect it from the predators by tagging them if they get too close.

If a predator captures the object, they become the lionfish.

