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## Fighting the Lionfish Menace & Becoming Cousteau

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The Independent, Nonprofit Guide for Serious Divers Since  
1975



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October 27, 2021

**This Email is a Sample** of the more complete mid-month email we send our monthly subscribers. And, our 16-page monthly issue is sent the first week of the month. **If you had been subscribing to *Undercurrent*, you would have read in the 17-page ad-free October issue:** An undercover review of the *Belize Aggressor IV* . . . Diving tips on South Caicos, Jupiter, FL, St. Vincent, Cozumel, and many more . . . How dive operators weaseled out of refunding deposits and prepayments due to COVID-19 . . . Wearing fins on deck proves fatal . . . What you don't know about why your regulator free-flows . . . U.S. Coast Guard sued by 34 families after *Conception* Disaster . . . Guidelines for divers to avoid spreading Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease . . . Galapagos migratory sharks threatened by a Chinese fishing fleet . . . Why you must put your fins on last . . . A freak needlefish accident . . . and much, much more.

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**Liveboard Rammed at Sea with Divers Aboard.** Formerly the *Yemaya II* when it traveled to Malpelo Island, the *MV Bahamas L* was struck at the stern by a freighter just after midnight on October 10 while traveling from Bimini South to Tiger Beach (near Grand Bahama). *Undercurrent* correspondent Fred Turoff (Philadelphia, PA) was on board and reported that the damage was enough to end the trip. Still, they were able to limp back to the safety of Freeport. Two guests received minor injuries but were discharged from the hospital soon after evaluation. Fred says, "It was not the way to end a pandemic-caused two-years interval from diving." . . . Mark Shandur, for the Master Fleet, said, "We were involved in a collision with another vessel where we, and our guests . . . believe the liability lies with the other vessel. Let's see what the lawyers/courts manage to thrash out. As Fred mentioned, it is indeed pretty depressing after just having put all the time, money, and effort into restarting operations."

**The Jellyfishification of the Oceans.** While many species face extinction due to climate change and other destructive human activities, worldwide jellyfish populations have grown over the past two decades, becoming responsible for beach closures and even power outages (by clogging intake pipes). It's an overwhelming presence. *Forbes Magazine*

**The Man Who Taught Astronauts to Dive:** So they could experience weightlessness, Homer Hickam taught astronauts to dive and even taught David

Letterman in a hotel pool. In the '70s and '80s, Homer dived extensively on sunken German subs off North Carolina, leading to his first book, *Torpedo Junction; U-Boat War off America's East Coast, 1942*. Now comes his new autobiography, *Don't Blow Yourself Up*, which spins scores of stories about his military, NASA and diving careers, emphasizing his underwater adventures. In 1995, I met Homer on a Montserrat dive trip. He had dived throughout the Caribbean, especially Honduras, and we soon became friends. I read his next book, the autobiographical *Rocket Boys*, and was delighted it became the film *October Sky* (16-year-old Jake Gyllenhaal played Homer). This guy, I thought, has done it all. And he has, which now includes publishing a score of novels. *Don't Blow Yourself Up; The Further True Adventures and Travails of the Rocket Boy of October Sky*, released October 26, is the fascinating story of his adult life, much of it with a tank strapped to his back. A great read about a great guy, so get it at your local books store or at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

**Love the Caymans? Help its Coral.** The dive operation *Undercurrent* readers love, Ocean Frontiers, is asking for help treating stony coral disease (SCLTD) on 55 dive sites around the east end of Grand Cayman. It wants to raise \$80,000 to get the job done. In the last few months, its divers have conducted 225 treatments or survey dives and spent 743 hours on the reefs, a costly and labor-intensive process. To help them tackle the disease, make a tax-deductible contribution through [Reef Renewal Foundation International](https://www.reefrenewal.org).

**Aye, Calypso: Jacques Cousteau is headed to your neighborhood theatre.** *Becoming Cousteau*, an intimate and hugely informative biographic documentary directed by Liz Garbus, digs deeply into the life of the legendary French undersea explorer, his accomplishments, and contradictions. The director's remarkable feat is how she reveals Cousteau, after blowing a hole in the reef at Sha'ab Rumi ("for reasons of conservation"), transitions in his later years into an environmentalist (he also blasted the channel into Belize's Blue Hole). The film is a captivating and articulate documentary that will satisfy and even enlighten those of us who grew up with Cousteau's mesmerizing TV films, read his books, or sang along with John Denver: "*Aye, Calypso, the places you've been to. The things that you've taught us, the stories you tell.*"



**REEF Divers Maul the Florida Keys' Invasive Lionfish Population.** Over two days, Team Forever Young bagged 564 invasive lionfish by diving from dusk 'til dawn during the Reef Environmental Education Foundation's Lionfish Derby & Festival. Their haul made up almost half of the 1,215 invasive fish that were culled during the tournament. That four divers were able to kill as many as 50 lionfish in a 45-minute dive is indicative of the massive invasion of these alien fish. You, too, can contribute to eliminating lionfish by ordering them at restaurants and supporting organizations, such as REEF, that work to mitigate their impact in the Western Atlantic. Or, buy Florida wild speared [lionfish filets online](#), delivered directly to your home anywhere in the U.S.

**World Shootout -- Last Chance to Enter:** It is time to check your archives for what you have achieved and to submit your best shots taken in past years. The World Shootout competition offers 12 categories: Best Five Images, Wide-angle, Macro, Super Macro, Underwater Fashion, Black Water, Humorous, Sharks of the World, Wrecks, Environment and Conservation, Video Clips, and New Underwater Photographers. There's also a global championship. Register to enter by November 1. It's free (this year, like last year, rules differ). [www.worldshootout.org](http://www.worldshootout.org)

**Underwater Camera Gear Shortage?** Better snap up what you want while you can. The worldwide demand for aluminum is making Chinese manufactured strobe extension arms and fittings hard to come by. Jussi Hokkanen, from Mike's Dive



Cameras in London, has strong connections with Chinese manufacturers and advises potential purchasers to buy what they find in stores rather than waiting for specific pieces that may be significantly delayed. The same can be said for some underwater electronics.

**If You're Even Thinking About Making a Dive Trip** you need *Undercurrent*. Each month, in our 18-page newsletter, we'll keep you up to date on the safe spots to travel, who is operating safely, and where you should avoid traveling. As a subscriber, you can also access scores upon scores of reports pouring in from our fellow subscribers on the Keys, Belize, Bonaire, Hawaii, Cabo and Socorro, the Red Sea, and many other places. And there are plenty of features on safety -- like that bent diver who ignored her computer and listened to her guide -- equipment, and much, much more. For just 24 hours, I am offering you [a seven-month trial subscription for just \\$19.95](#). If at any time during this time you want your money back, email me, and you'll get it, no questions asked, a promise I've kept since 1975. [Click here](#) to become our newest subscriber.

*Stay Safe, Don't Share Your Air  
Wear a Mask, Get Fully Vaccinated*

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**Undercurrent October 2021 Issue**

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It's available free in 4 formats: PDF, Kindle (2 formats) and EPUB. You'll find reports from Africa to the Virgin Islands, Mexico to the Maldives, Indonesia to Vanuatu, Cayman to Cozumel, ... Detailed, honest reports that describe in detail what our subscribers experienced. All free to active subscribers.



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