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## Buck Island National Monument News Release

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### Lionfish Acoustic Tracking Study

**CHRISTIANSTED** – Beginning April 26<sup>th</sup> through May 11<sup>th</sup> 2018, the NPS Buck Island Reef NM Division of Resource Management will be working with our partners from the University of the Virgin Islands to understand drivers of lionfish movement among invaded coral reefs. This study will utilize data gathered from surveys of fish community structure, habitat composition, lionfish recolonization rates, and acoustically tagged lionfish within a VEMCO Positioning System (densely clustered acoustic receivers). The study is located on 26 individual patch reefs on the south side of Buck Island Reef National Monument and is focused within the cluster of 32 VR2W acoustic receivers.

The researchers have already completed initial native fish and habitat composition surveys, lionfish tagging, and deployed acoustic receivers and synchronization tags to calibrate the study area. The next steps will be to collect data on native fish communities and habitat composition at additional patch reefs. In addition, approximately 1 month post-tagging, researchers will conduct surveys to visually assess the changes and movement of tagged lionfishes at the selected patch reefs. Surveys will be conducted once every other month for approximately 1 year.

This study will 1) determine lionfish movement patterns including immigration and emigration rates before and after removals have been conducted at selected patch reefs, 2) produce data on the spawning patterns of lionfish including the frequency and location of spawning events, 3) help inform the level of effort and maintenance required to suppress lionfish populations at select sites to levels that are no longer detrimental to native fish communities.

If you would like additional information about these studies, please contact:

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The National Park Service thanks all of our community members and friends for 52 years of support for Buck Island Reef NM and we look forward to an exciting year of events celebrating our unique resource.

[www.nps.gov/BUIS](http://www.nps.gov/BUIS)

Learn about the NPS Mission at Buck Island Reef NM watch [Caribbean Gem](#) on YouTube.

