Hadley Pinkerton

Why does Colin Angle (inventor of the Roomba) want to create a killer robot?

Lionfish are an incredibly invasive species. In just 5 weeks, a singular lion fish can decimate up to 80% of the fish in an area. They prey on critically endangered species. They also destroy coral reefs- which are already in danger. Additionally, they reproduce very quickly- they can lay up to 2 million eggs per year. This makes them a massive threat to the environment. These problems started when pet owners began releasing their no-longer wanted lionfish into the wild. However, many lionfish swim at very deep depths of the ocean, making it impossible for the average diver to catch them.

Frazer, Thomas K., et al. "Coping with the lionfish invasion: Can targeted removals yield beneficial effects?" Reviews in Fisheries Science, vol. 20, no. 4, 2012, pp. 185–191, https://doi.org/10.1080/10641262.2012.700655.

The Inventor of Roomba Has a New Robot That Sucks up Invasive Fish, www.fastcompany.com/40440386/the-inventor-of-roomba-designed-a-robot-to-suck-up-invasive-fish. Accessed 18 Sept. 2023.

Colin Angle, the inventor of the Roomba, has expanded his business from vacuum cleaners, to robots that catch these invasive species. His new nonprofit, Robots in Service of the Environment, is designing a robot that will stun and capture lionfish, to be sold as food in restaurants. His goal is to make the robot as affordable and effective as possible. Eventually, he hopes to sell the product to commercial fishermen. He hopes that one day, for a very affordable price, someone could catch a lionfish at home, from their iPad.

Rocha, L.A., Rocha, C.R., Baldwin, C.C. et al. Invasive lionfish preying on critically endangered reef fish. Coral Reefs 34, 803–806 (2015). https://doi.org/10.1007/s00338-015-1293-z