

M/V Miss Lourdies

Palm Beach County's Artificial Reef Program

The Problem

- Inshore and offshore habitats have been reduced or heavily impacted by coastal development, overfishing, storms, and water discharges leading to declines in many marine life populations.

The Solution

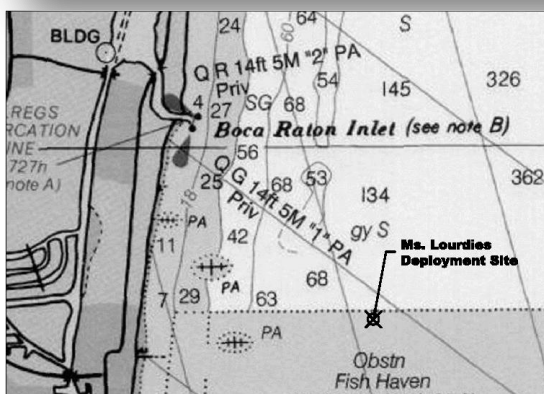
- Construct artificial reefs using various materials including rock, old ships, heavy-gauge steel structures, concrete, and pre-fabricated modules.
- They are placed in areas away from natural reefs creating new marine life communities.

History

- Artificial reefs have been created in Palm Beach County since the 1960s.
- The Artificial Reef and Estuarine Enhancement Committee (AREEC) oversees the construction of artificial reefs.
- Through AREEC, more than 35 ships and barges have been scuttled in the ocean.

Benefits

- Provide food, shelter, protection, and spawning areas for hundreds of fish species and other marine and estuarine organisms.
- Provide alternate areas for use by SCUBA divers and anglers, reducing user pressures on natural reef system.



History and Facts

- The *M/V Miss Lourdies*, formerly known as the *Sea Bird*, was built in 1972 in Port Arthur, Texas, and sailed under the flag of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- In 2008, this 165-foot supply ship was seized by US Customs and Border Protection in the Miami River after agents found 154 kilos of cocaine hidden in the ship's hull.
- In 2009, the boat was transferred to the City of Deerfield Beach.
- Transfer of seized vessels to a US governmental entity for sinking as artificial reefs has become a common practice of US Customs.
- Broward County and Palm Beach County already have several vessels that have been sunk as artificial reefs that were acquired in this manner.
- *M/V Miss Lourdies* was put through a stringent decommission process that included the removal of all pollutants and preparation of the ship for safe diver penetration.
- Costs to clean, transport, and sink the vessel were provided by private contributions through Daniel Fasano and the Miracle of Life Foundation.
- *M/V Miss Lourdies* will straddle the Palm Beach/Broward County line in approximately 140 feet of water one mile off the coast.

Project Partners

PBC Department of Environmental Resources Management, Broward County, City of Deerfield Beach, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, US Customs and Border Protection, Miracle of Life Foundation, Dixie Divers, and CEPEMAR Environmental Services



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