



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.

What Are Artificial Reefs?

- Man-made habitats built from 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.

Artificial Reef Locations in the Lagoon

- Kelsey Park
- Sugar Sands
- Peanut Island
- Rybovich Reef
- Lantana Cove
- Boynton Inlet

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.

Peanut Island Fishing Pier



Rybovich Artificial Reef



Sugar Sands Artificial Reef



History of the Artificial Reef Program

- Artificial reefs have been created in Palm Beach County since the 1960s.
- In 1985, the Board of County Commissioners officially appointed a committee to oversee the construction of artificial reefs.
- In 1991, the committee was given additional responsibilities and became known as the Artificial Reef and Estuarine Enhancement Committee (AREEC).
- The AREEC meets quarterly and includes government officials, commercial and recreational anglers, SCUBA divers, scientists, and anglers. The public is encouraged to attend.
- Palm Beach County through the AREEC has:
 - scuttled more than 35 ships and barges in the ocean.
 - placed hundreds of thousands of tons of limestone and concrete structures on the ocean floor and in the Lake Worth Lagoon.
- Most reefs are constructed within recreational diving limits and are monitored by volunteers from the Palm Beach County Reef Research Team and County staff.

Project Partners

Palm Beach County, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Inland Navigation District, West Palm Beach Fishing Club, Palm Beach County School District, Town of Lantana.



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