

Florida has an active artificial reef program

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Artificial reefs are materials intentionally placed on the seafloor by humans to accomplish specific biological and/or socioeconomic objectives. In south Florida, artificial reefs consist of humanmade materials, such as “clean” designed or precast concrete structures, building rubble, and steel vessels and barges, as well as natural substances, such as limestone. Artificial reefs may be used to mitigate losses or damage to natural reef systems caused by vessel groundings or other impacts. They may also be used as habitat enhancements to provide substrate for shellfish, corals, and other benthic organisms and as shelter for dozens of fish species that use the reefs in the course of their individual life cycles for shelter, feeding, or breeding.



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South Florida has an active artificial reef program that includes the deployment of steel vessels, such as the Governor’s Reef located in Palm Beach County.

Florida has one of the most active artificial reef programs in the nation. There are approximately 705 artificial reefs along the south Florida coastline from Martin County to Lee County. These are placed at nearshore or estuarine bay or lagoonal sites (i.e., Lake Worth Lagoon, Palm Beach County) at depths as shallow as 3.6 meters (12 feet) and at offshore locations as deep

Why construct artificial reefs?

Artificial reefs have been constructed with one or more of the following intended objectives:

1. Enhance private recreational and charter fishing and diving opportunities;
2. Provide a socioeconomic benefit to local coastal communities;
3. Increase reef fish habitat;
4. Reduce user conflict;
5. Facilitate reef-related research;
6. Provide for mitigation or restoration of damaged hardbottom; and
7. While accomplishing objectives 1–6, do no harm to benthic communities, fishery resources, Essential Fish Habitat, or human health.

Structures placed on the seafloor for engineering purposes to manipulate shoreline processes (e.g., wave attenuation devices, jetties, erosion control structures), as well as accidental shipwrecks or other materials lost at sea, are not classified as artificial reefs under the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission definition of artificial reefs.

as 91.4 m (300 ft). Each artificial reef is strategically placed on the ocean floor within approved reef sites permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. In south Florida, there are no private reef deployments, and projects are overseen by local government resource managers. Projects must comply with permit conditions and adhere to guidelines established by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The site and the materials deployed must be inspected to ensure the reefs remain where placed, do not harm the marine environment, and do not become an obstruction to navigation.