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# Release

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## **Martin County invites residents and visitors to dive in**

Martin County, in partnership with MCAC Reef Fund, will deploy a new artificial reef today. Utilizing 1,500 tons of clean concrete, the reef will lie within the Donaldson permitted area. “Since 2003, we’ve been working together to enhance marine habitats off Martin County’s coastlines by creating artificial reefs. These reef sites also provide residents and visitors increased opportunities for fishing and diving,” said Jessica Garland, Associate Project Specialist in the Coastal Resources department.

The Martin County Utilities and Solid Waste Department secures materials for the artificial reef program. By allowing contractors to dispose of clean concrete free of charge and storing the material for the program, the cost of creating artificial reefs is greatly reduced and material is redirected to a beneficial use rather than to a landfill.

Today’s deployment is the first of three this month that will be used in the creation of two new reefs. Once complete, the coordinates will be released and shared with the public for exploration. “There’s no better way to appreciate our area’s natural treasures offshore, than to fish and explore these waters,” said Kathy FitzPatrick, Martin County Coastal Engineer.

Martin County’s artificial reef program began in the 1970s, when a group of retirees and sport fishing enthusiasts led by Bill Donaldson, began a movement to create self-sustaining marine habitats. Martin County’s nearshore reef sites are located between the Stuart and Jensen Public Beaches.

To date, Martin County has constructed over 100 artificial reefs within four permitted sites, creating new environments that foster marine life. They are monitored annually for marine activity and structural status. The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has been a valuable partner in providing grants that help fund monitoring and artificial reef construction projects.

To learn more about Martin County artificial reefs, search locations and reports visit [www.martin.fl.us/Reefs](http://www.martin.fl.us/Reefs). Follow Martin County Coastal Resources at [www.facebook.com/MartinCountyCoastalResources/](https://www.facebook.com/MartinCountyCoastalResources/). To stay up-to-date on other county news, follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MartinCountyBoardofCountyCommissioners/](https://www.facebook.com/MartinCountyBoardofCountyCommissioners/) and Twitter at @MartinCountygov.

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