

# AQUANEWS

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## 'Ships to Reefs' Picks up Steam

By Gene Gentrup

America's growing fleet of decaying retired military ships is a problem the dive industry is more than willing to help solve, and to the glee of many the feds are listening.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD), which takes over military ships once they are decommissioned, announced last year plans to not only continue providing ships to states that want them as reefs but also help clear a major hurdle that in the past ships-to-reefs supporters have struggled to get over: paying the costs to remove contaminants from the ships before they can be sunk. Cleaning a vessel can cost more than \$1 million. But with the government now committed to covering a major cost, dive leaders salivate at the prospects. Some consider it the most important development in the dive industry in several years.

It seems like the perfect marriage. On one side are the Navy and MARAD, which have shipyards full of rusting vessels too outdated for practical use, and too costly to keep afloat or haul away for scrap. On the other side are the divers and fishermen who like the idea of a sunken ship providing habitat for marine life where none exist now. Many military personnel like the idea of preserving their beloved ship in the waters it once served instead of seeing it cut into pieces.

So what's the holdup? In a nutshell, the idea is new. Multiple jurisdictions of the federal government, MARAD, Navy, Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, are assembling a template for processing all available ships, and fiascos like the rollover of the USS Spiegel Grove off Key Largo in 2002 and the premature sinking of the HMS Yukon off the coast of Southern California did nothing to abate concerns that the process needs fine-tuning.

That's why leaders in the dive industry are joining forces to perfect ship-to-reefs projects

and strengthen chances that many of the more than 400 ships available for reefing become diving paradises in waters all over the United States.

The project is called "Ships to Reefs," and the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) is serving as a clearinghouse to help groups land the vessels.

One of the entities involved in the movement is Canadian Artificial Reef Consultants. Over the past 15 years the group has placed four decommissioned Canadian Naval vessels in the Strait of Georgia between the British Columbia mainland and Vancouver Island. Another retired naval vessel was sunk in the Sechelt Inlet northwest of Vancouver. The consultants also helped with sinkings in Australia, New Zealand, California, and England.

Dick Long, who led efforts to put down the Yukon off the coast of Southern California, praised Straith and warned that poorly organized sinkings will only hurt the prospects for future sinkings elsewhere in the country.

"It's important we do this right," Long said.

But even with the less-than-perfect sinkings of the Yukon and Spiegel Grove, divers are flocking to both ships in droves, and that means economic stimulus for those local economies.

Straith, Long and others point to efforts to sink the decommissioned USAFS Hoyt S. Vandenberg in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary as pivotal to the success of other projects. While the Spiegel Grove also is in the sanctuary, a permit for the Vandenberg would be the first approved under the federal government's new ships-to-reefs initiative. Approval of a permit to sink the 520-foot-long vessel is expected soon and if granted would open up the possibilities for more vessels to be placed in marine sanctuaries around the country.

"If you can sink one in a national marine sanctuary, you can sink one anywhere," Straith said.

**Ships to Reefs:** [www.ships2reefs.com](http://www.ships2reefs.com)

## AQUANEWS

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## Next Meeting: Wednesday March 9th, 2005

7:00-9:30 pm at the Nanuet Public Library

149 Church St.

Nanuet, NY 10954

Phone: (845)623-4281 ; <http://ansernet.rcls.org/nan/>

Steve McLuckie and his photo presentation on Roatan, Honduras

All are invited and bring a friend or two.

### Directions:

#### From Tappan Zee Bridge:

Westbound across bridge. exit at 13S to Palisades Parkway. Exit at 8W to Route 59. Stay in left lane until first traffic light. Turn left. Watch for library on left. Driveway is just past entrance/exit ramps to Route 304. If you find yourself passing the Nanuet schools, you've gone too far.

#### From New York State Thruway South:

Exit at 13S to Palisades Parkway. Exit at 8W to Route 59. Stay in left lane until first traffic light. Turn left. Watch for library on left. Driveway is just past entrance/exit ramps to Route 304. If you find yourself passing the Nanuet schools, you've gone too far.

### About the Presenter:

Steve McLuckie, a contractor local to Kingston, NY, is an experienced dry cover and part of an elite group of cave rescuers. When he's not working or crawling underground, Steve scuba dives. His first dive was back in 1969 in Grand Cayman, although he waited until 1996 to become certified. Since then he has logged many dives in some of the best dive sites in the world. As an amateur photographer, Steve inevitably took his interest in photography under water.

## Members of the Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.

We need articles for our newsletter! Any help is appreciated.

Contact our webmaster

[webmaster@rocklandaquanauts.org](mailto:webmaster@rocklandaquanauts.org)

Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.

Mission Statement:

**To provide, promote, and advance environmental protection, care, and voluntary clean-up of waterways by any and all lawful means; to promote the importance and care in every manner possible by environmental awareness and otherwise; to purchase, print, publish, and circulate literature to promote the importance and care of the waterways and the work of the Corporation. To perform all acts the Corporation may deem appropriate or advisable in such operation; to establish, provide, and voluntary clean-up waterways, to encourage, support and subsidize the cleaning and protection from pollution.**

Divers embrace anti-shark device  
From CNN's Phil O'Sullivan

Monday, February 21, 2005

ADELAIDE, Australia (CNN) -- An Australian company has developed technology that intends to protect divers and surfers from being attacked by sharks while they are in the water.

Great white sharks are attracted to the warm ocean currents along Australia's southern coastline and are a constant concern for divers who work in the sea.

The coastline supports colonies of fish and seals, and divers who hunt for scallops and abalone can spend up to 10 hours a day in the water.

Increasing numbers of divers are using a protective electronic device, called Shark Shield, while they work. When a shark comes in to attack, it automatically closes its eyes as a way of protecting them. With no sight, it detects movement with a tiny sensor in its nose, which picks up the electrical current of its prey. The Shark Shield takes advantage of this by emitting a much stronger pulse of electricity. The battery-operated device is switched on when the diver or surfer enters the water and the electrical current is generated continuously.

The current causes intense discomfort to the shark and, as a result, they leave the area. The inventors of the technology say it does not affect any other marine life and has no known harmful effects on the shark or the wearer.

Paul Lunn, founder of SeaChange, the company that has developed the Shark Shield, said the device worked by attacking a shark's nervous system, and it worked on sharks with the strongest of charges. "It puts it (the shark) into a spasm, it cannot breathe, it cannot survive in this particular field. We call it hitting the wall. It comes in and hits this barrier and then it goes."

Lunn said the device puts a controlled electronic field into the water, which dissipates quickly, so there is no permanent damage to the shark.

"The wonderful thing about our technology is that when they get out of that zone, there is no long lasting damage to the shark whatsoever," he said.

The Shark Shield can repel a shark from between five and eight meters (16-26 feet), he said. Like so much technology that eventually makes it on to the marketplace, the Shark Shield isn't exactly new. It was first developed more than a decade ago in South Africa, but has only recently been designed to commercial standards.

It is also proving popular with surfers, but because it weighs 400g (0.9lb), it does add some weight on to the board.

The main housing unit of the Shark Shield is worn on the thigh, and the antenna is worn on the ankle. "It's something which takes a while to be accepted, it's like any new technology, people are not too sure," surfer Wayne Sutton told CNN.

Meanwhile, the device is also being attached to fishing nets to prevent sharks stealing fishermen's catch.

Scientists Find New Coral Species  
February 10, 2005 — By Associated Press

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — Scientists have discovered a new species of brushy coral that flames like a white and pink Christmas tree hundreds of feet below the Channel Islands.

Milton Love, a marine biologist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and colleagues from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration discovered healthy colonies of the coral while making fish surveys in a submersible in 2002.

The corals are home to thriving undersea communities. Love said scientists have found a new species of worm there, "a new animal living on the new animal."

The life form is a type of black coral (the color it turns when it dies). Samples were sent to expert Dennis Opresko at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. His description of the new species appeared Tuesday in the online journal *Zootaxa* along with its Greek name: *Antipathes dendrochristos*.

"Antipathes" refers to the ancient belief that amulets of black coral can prevent illness and "dendrochristos" is a reference to the Christmas tree.

In fact, there may be two new species, although DNA testing will be needed to confirm that, Opresko said Wednesday.

There are about 230 species of black coral around the world, from the tropics to Antarctica. Six or seven new ones may be formally named this year alone, Opresko said. Most are in deep water and some types are prized for jewelry.

The use of submersibles and remote cameras has opened up the deep sea, allowing more discoveries, Opresko said.

But "it always is exciting" to find a new species, Opresko said.

"It's a scientific discovery that no one else has seen and determined before. It's one of the most exciting parts of this particular kind of science," he said.

*Source: Associated Press*

**From Hulk to Reef**  
Sent in by Sid Lieble;

An 888-foot obsolete aircraft carrier has arrived in Pensacola, Florida, where it is being prepared for the sinking, to make one of the largest artificial reefs anywhere.

The Oriskany, which was launched at the end of World War II and taken out of service in the mid-1970's, was originally intended to be scrapped. But a Navy program makes surplus ships available for artificial reef projects. The Oriskany will be the largest naval ship used for reef-making when it is scuttled in June, in 212 feet of water 25 miles off Pensacola. The hulk should become a major diving attraction.

The Navy is paying most of the \$2.8 million cost of preparing the ship for sinking. Workers are removing lubricating oils, loose asbestos, PCB-containing transformers and other potential contaminants.

## Beneath the Sea Show Set for March 18-20 at the Meadowlands in New Jersey

BENEATH THE SEA's 29th annual Ocean Adventure Exposition and Travel Show will convene at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey the weekend of March 18th, 19th and 20th, 2005.

Once again, America's largest consumer ocean adventure, scuba diving, and travel exposition, Beneath the Sea will bring together over 300 exhibitors from all corners of the world for a weekend of excitement, education, and arts. Bringing education, information and excitement about sea changes during our times to the ocean community is the most important part of Beneath the Sea's charter.

In order to fulfill that obligation to the ocean's community, when Beneath the Sea convenes that weekend in March 2005 there will be over 60 seminars and workshops examining our life in, on and around the oceans of the world. These seminars and workshops are organized and conducted by subject specialists and industry experts.

Add to that, equipment demonstrations, visual presentations of exotic destinations, and always the rattle, buzz and hum of social events and parties that celebrate the coming together of old friends and the making of new friends. A Beneath the Sea weekend entertains, informs and excites the experienced diver and new diver alike, while enticing non-divers to join this fraternity of friends beneath the sea.

Ocean Pals, Beneath the Sea's environmental education program for children, will, on Sunday, March 20th honor the winners of their 2005 poster contest and host a party for children. For more information on Ocean Pals take a look at their web site [www.Beneaththesea.org/v2/ocean\\_pals.html](http://www.Beneaththesea.org/v2/ocean_pals.html).

Adding to the excitement, merriment and substance of this Beneath the Sea weekend, The Women Divers Hall of Fame will present a series of events.

Come, meet old friends, make new friends, and be a part of the present and the future in scuba diving, oceanography, exploration, environmentalism, adventure and underwater photography. Make yourself a part of BENEATH THE SEA when it convenes its 29th Ocean Adventure, Scuba Diving Exposition and Travel Show, not to forget, Party - at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey the weekend of March 18th, 19th, and 20th, - only 4 miles, just 10 minutes from mid-town Manhattan. For directions, visit the Meadowlands website: [www.Mecexpo.com](http://www.Mecexpo.com)

For more information call 1.914.664.4310, e-mail [info@Beneaththesea.org](mailto:info@Beneaththesea.org), or visit our web site for a complete up-to-the minute report on the show: [www.Beneaththesea.org](http://www.Beneaththesea.org)

Website: [www.beneaththesea.org](http://www.beneaththesea.org)



### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR RUBBISH TO BREAKDOWN?

- Orange and banana peel up to 2 years
  - Cigarette butts 1-5 years
  - Wool socks 1-5 years
  - Plastic-coated paper 5 years
- Plastic bags take between 20-1000 years
  - Plastic film containers 20-30 years
  - Nylon fabric 30-40 years
  - Leather up to 50 years
  - Tin cans 50 years
- Aluminum cans 80-100 years
- Glass bottles 1 million years
- Plastic bottles indefinitely
- Fishing nets 30-40 years
- Batteries 100 years

## Scientists Worry About Red Tide, Manatees

*February 04, 2005 — By Associated Press*

TAMPA, Fla. — An unseasonable outbreak of red tide has scientists worried that migrating manatees may swim into the potentially deadly algae.

The red tide, which formed in the Gulf of Mexico about 30 miles off Tampa Bay in early January, has moved nearer shore and south. It stretches from north of Anna Maria Isle south to Venice.

Red tide normally occurs from August through September. A winter bloom spells peril for manatees, which start moving out of warm water in rivers and estuaries in late February and early March, said Elsa Haubold, administrator for marine mammal research at the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Haubold said there is a danger of a repeat of 2002 and 2003, when red tide killed 34 and 96 manatees, respectively.

A bloom forming in winter on the southwest coast likely will remain along the manatee migration routes as they move north from the Caloosahatchee River. The animals congregate there during the winter to be near the warm waters around the Florida Power & Light power plant near Fort Myers.

Haubold said the public should look out for manatees that seem to be in distress. Scientists have been able to save every manatee but one effected by red tide that has been reported to the institute.

Although they have no data to support it, scientists are speculating that nutrients flushed into coastal waters by last year's four hurricanes could be responsible for the January red tide, said Cynthia Heil of the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Red tide is formed when *Karenia brevis*, a microscopic algae, reproduces at an explosive rate, forming a bloom. Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen are known to fuel that explosion.

Minor fish kills have been reported from the tide, but there have been no incidents of massive numbers of dead fish being washed up on Gulf beaches, Heil said. A fisherman alerted the institute about the red tide when his bait started dying.

Red tide is known to cause breathing problems in people when the algae's toxic spores become airborne. The effects can be serious for people with breathing problems such as asthma.

*Source: Associated Press*

## North Carolina— Summer 05

Max Estroff

So I'm trying to plan a trip to Moorehead City, North Carolina. So far no one has responded to last month's request. Our club picnic at Hessian Lake is Saturday, June 25th. Sunday, June 26th, could be our 10-12 hour drive down. Olympus Divers is booked every weekend. The only option we have for diving is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday optional. This is subject to sell out unless we get back to them real soon.

Rooms are still available at the Ramada on the Beach and the Amerisuites (for pet owners) across the road. This is also subject to selling out real soon. So, let us know if you are interested.

Telephone # 845-268-5272

## **ROCKLAND AQUANAUTS ANNUAL BOTTOM TIME AWARDS**

Check your logbooks! The Rockland Aquanauts Organization is coming up on its annual recognition of members who have achieved and logged 25,50,75,100 or 168 hours of bottom time. We'll issue a certificate to divers who have logged 25, 50 and 75 hours. We'll reward members who have logged 100 or 168 hours, the equivalent of a week under water, with a plaque.

This year we are adding another bottom time award for 336 hours, which is equal to two weeks under water, and members meeting this will also receive a plaque.

If you've reached any of those levels, contact member, Allan Block, to arrange a review of your logbook. The deadline is March 15, so don't delay!

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE**

How good are you about achieving your goals? Are you ready for a new set for New Year's resolutions, because you abandoned the old ones? Did you lose those last five pounds in time for the holidays the way you planned? Have you kept up with your fitness regime? Have you paid your Rockland Aquanaut Annual Membership fees?

Collecting fees is one of the unpleasant necessities of organizational life. Until we find a rich member to support the Aquanauts exclusively, we depend on your annual fees to keep the organization going. A full year will only run you \$42.

Kindly remit your check to:

Paul Galeazzi Jr.



**Rockland Aquanauts  
Post Office Box 387  
New City, NY  
10956**

**March 2005**

New anti-shark device, Scientists Find New Coral Species, BTS 2005, North Carolina

**\*\*Next Meeting March 9th 2005\*\*  
7:00 pm at**

**Nanuet Library  
149 Church St.  
Nanuet, New York 10954  
Directions inside**

**\*Special Speaker\*  
Steve McLuckie and his photo presentation on Roatan, Honduras**