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Article Citation:

Andrew Smith, Douglas Helton, and Ian Zelo (2003) Developing a Database to Support and Prioritize the Removal of Abandoned Vessels Impacting Coral Resources. International Oil Spill Conference Proceedings: April 2003, Vol. 2003, No. 1, pp. 575-578.

<https://doi.org/10.7901/2169-3358-2003-1-575>

Section II: Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Developing a Database to Support and Prioritize the Removal of Abandoned Vessels Impacting Coral Resources¹

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¹ This article expresses the views of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA.

ABSTRACT

Derelict and abandoned vessels pose significant threats to coral ecosystems by releasing pollutants, physically destroying habitat, and causing algal blooms through iron deposition. Each of these threats has been anecdotally documented in the recent academic literature and popular press, but the scale and scope of the problem is poorly understood because of reporting inconsistencies at the local level and the lack of data collection and analysis at the national level. NOAA's Damage Assessment Center is attempting to address these issues by creating a comprehensive database of abandoned vessels threatening coral reef ecosystems. While the program has assembled data for vessels across the entire United States and its territories, it is also distributing the data to agencies across the country on CD and through its website. Additionally, the website contains a tool for collecting data from those who log on who have information about vessels both recorded and new to the database.

Volume 2003, Issue 1
(April 2003)

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