

The Owl

The Owl is unique in that it is a Steel hulled Yacht that was acquired for use as an Artificial Reef. It was deployed on September 10, 1986 in the Donaldson Permitted area in 60 feet of water. How it came to be called the Owl is not known. It is 19 years old.

One of the members of the F.O.S. Dive Team did a dive on the Owl on April 15, 1990 and noted in her Dive Log that the top of the Yacht was at 48 feet giving it a profile of 12 feet. The structure was upright and intact and there was a small cabin that you could swim into.

During the 2004 Monitoring event, we made 6 attempts to locate the Owl. This involved going to the known GPS location and attempting to identify the structure on the Depth Sounder. Having failed at this we did several dives in the area to see if we could spot the site. All of this was to no avail.

During one of our searches we noticed that a fishing boat had been anchored to the same spot for several hours and had several baits in the water. This was about 300 feet East of where we had been searching. We approached and asked the Captain if he was on some structure and he said that he was but he didn't know what it was. We told him that we were members of the F.O.S. Dive Team and that we needed to dive that site. He was nice enough to pull his anchor and allow us to recon the site. It turned out to be the Owl but the entire hull was mostly buried with only 1-3 feet visible above the sandy bottom. This probably wasn't a good choice for an Artificial Reef due to the thin Steeled hull.

There are also 3 Steel Rinker Barrels within 25 feet of this site.

As a point of interest, there were many Black Sea Bass and large doormat sized Flounder on and around the structure.

Florida Oceanographic Society Research Dive Team

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission Monitoring Grant

"Artificial Reef Stability Assessment Survey"

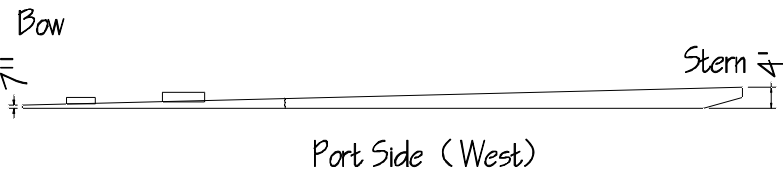
Martin County Florida

"Owl"

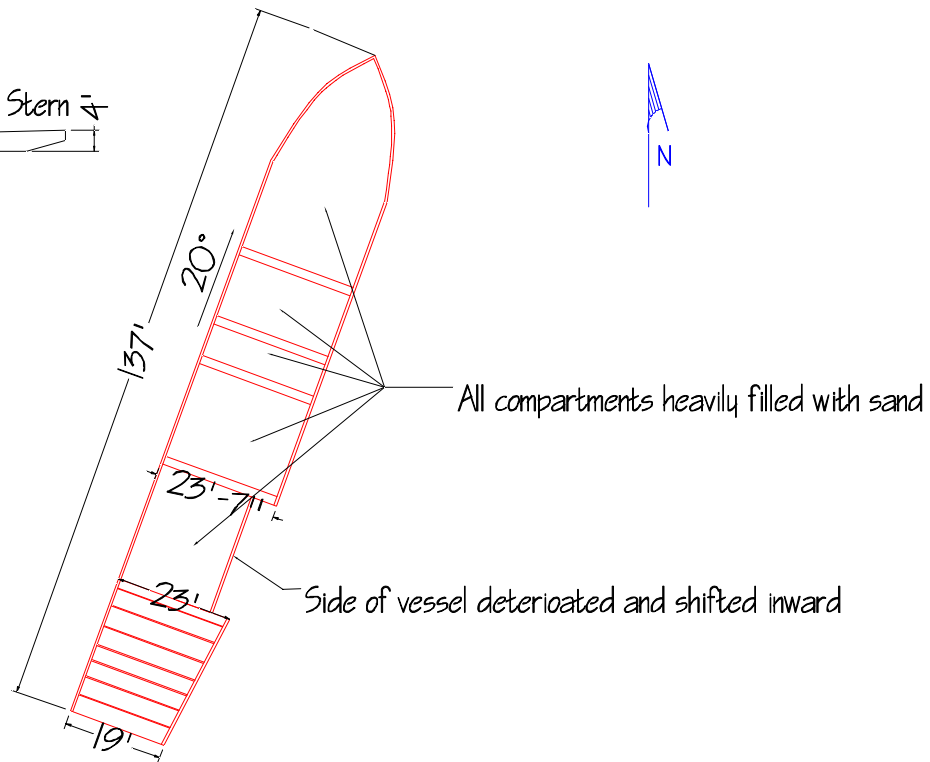
Date of Survey: August 21, 2004

Research Divers: Bill Scammell, Merle Stokes, Wayne Turner.

Reef Material: Steel Yacht
Orientation: North and South
Bottom Composition: Sand and Shell
General Condition of Material: Poor
Collapse: 90% of the deck is collapsed or missing.
Scattering: None noticed
Disintegration: Steel hull shows extensive desintegration.
Additional Observations: The steel hull has settled into the sand bottom and has a profile of only 7 inches at the bow.
Heavy Benthic encrustation.



"Owl" Steel Yacht
 Mapped 08-21-04
 Drawn by BS 11-27-04



Owl Steel Yacht

Survey Date: 21 August 2004

Benthic species listed below were identified using digital still images. Professionally trained divers spent 30 minutes on the Owl Steel Yacht photographing benthic invertebrates and macroalgae. All species were documented (to lowest recognizable taxon) and verified using reference guides. Some of the most relevant guides for the Martin County area include: 1) Littler and Littler's Caribbean Reef Plants: An Identification Guide to the Reef Plants of the Caribbean, Bahamas, Florida and Gulf of Mexico, 2) Hendler, Miller, Pawson and Kier's Echinoderms of Florida and the Caribbean: Sea Stars, Sea Urchins, and Allies, and 3) Paul Humann's Reef Creature Identification: Florida Caribbean and Bahamas. Documented organisms were also placed in one of the following abundance classifications for long-term analysis: Single (1), Few (2-10), Many (11-100) or Abundant (>100).

<u>Benthic Species Identified</u>	<u>Abundance</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Green Algae		
<i>Caulerpa brachypus</i> (attached)	Abundant	Low relative density.
<i>Codium</i> sp.	Few	
Red Algae		
<i>Rhodymenia</i> sp.	Abundant	
<i>Halymenia</i> sp.	Single	
Sponges		
Tube sponge	Single	
Encrusting sponges	Many	
Cnidarians		
Branched hydroids	Abundant	
Feather hydroids	Abundant	
Gorgonians	Few	
Mat anemone	Single	
<i>Oculina</i> sp.	Single	
Sea Urchins		
Pencil urchin (<i>Eucidaris tribuloides</i>)	Single	
Tunicates		
Bulb tunicates (<i>Clavelina</i> sp.)	Few	Tunicates are joined at the base.
Compound tunicates (<i>Eudistoma</i> spp.)	Many	

