

<i>High Queen & Zeppo Barge</i>	Sirotkin Artificial Reef Site	Deployed August 7, 2003
--	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------

Project Date: August 7, 2003

From: Kerry Dillon

Subject: Post deployment assessment report for the “High Queen “ tugboat & barges

Location: Approximately 10 miles offshore Martin County, Florida

GPS coordinates: N27 13.527/ W80 00.263

Crewmembers: Capt. Leon Morrison, Kerry Dillon, Jack Glanville and Scott Glover

The following field report documents the deployment of the tugboat “High Queen”, her towed unnamed 120-ft. barge and another donated barge the “Zeppo” offshore Martin County, Florida within the northeast portion of the Sirotkin permitted reefsite. The report presents the history of the vessels sinking at the St. Lucie Inlet, the salvage, and the subsequent sinking of the materials offshore as an artificial reef.

HISTORY OF THE DEPLOYED VESSELS:

In Dec. 2002 a 57-foot tugboat known as the “High Queen” which was a converted Navy LCM-6 sank at the St. Lucie Inlet in rough seas. At the time she was towing an empty 120-foot long steel barge through the inlet which also sank. Fortunately all crewmembers survived without serious injuries and were rescued after being washed up upon the rocks of the north jetty. Both vessels floundered up against the north jetty’s large boulders and sank within hours. Seas that day were in the 3- 5 foot range, and rough seas continued for several days after the accident. Water depths immediately offshore of the north jetty are 8 – 18 feet, so that both sunken vessels protruded above the water surface for several months.

A contract was awarded to a salvage company to remove the vessels as they were a hazard because of their proximity to the St. Lucie Inlet and beaches of Hutchinson Island. Because of rough ocean conditions in Jan. & Feb. of 2003 very little salvage work was completed at the site. This delay allowed the winter ocean swells time to break apart both vessels so complete hull salvage was no longer an option. In March & April of 2003 the contractor utilized commercial divers to cut the hulls apart into smaller sections and raise the pieces up onto another barge for disposal.

After all vessel pieces were removed, the salvage barge was towed to Stuart, Florida and stored at the barge dockage area along the Roosevelt Bridge in the St. Lucie River. After all hazardous materials and inappropriate components were removed; the US Coast Guard and US Army Corps of Engineers were contacted to approve their use as artificial reef materials. The steel hulls of the two salvaged vessels and the derelict salvage barge were readied to be sunk as one component by centering loads and securing with chains and cables.

TOWING AND DEPLOYMENT:

The cut up remnants of both the tugboat “High Queen” and the steel barge it had been towing were placed on top of the barge “Zeppo”, and were towed offshore and intentionally sunk in 190 feet of water in the northeast quadrant of the Sirotkin artificial reef site on Thursday August 7, 2003. This addition to the deepwater artificial reef lies north of the “Tree Barge” and east of the ship “Wickstrom” that were previously sunk in April 2002 and January 2003, respectively.

<i>High Queen & Zeppo</i> Barge	Sirotkin Artificial Reef Site	Deployed August 7, 2003
--	-------------------------------	-------------------------



Figure 1. Barge with Remnants of salvaged *High Queen* Tugboat and Barge transported offshore for deployment in Sirotkin Artificial Reef Site



Figure 2. Remnants of salvaged *High Queen* Tugboat and Barge awaiting transport offshore for deployment in Sirotkin Artificial Reef Site

DEPLOYED ORIENTATION:

The “High Queen” and barge remnants on top of the “Zeppo” barge did not sink as one component as planned. During the flooding of the salvage barge, the barge lifted-up and rolled to one side just prior to sinking. This allowed the steel components of the other two vessels to break the holddown cables and slide off the barge. Therefore there was a scattering of the materials on the bottom just to the east and around the whole barge. This deployment has also been referred to as the “Zeppo” and is listed on some fishing charts.