

Upside-Down Barge

The “Upside-Down Barge” is so named because it landed upside-down when it was deployed. Based on the Martin County archives we established that the Upside-Down Barge was deployed as an Artificial Reef in the Donaldson Permitted Area sometime between 1980 and 1986.

It remains upside-down in 65 feet of water and is approximately 15-20 years old.

The F.O.S. Dive Team rarely if ever conducted team dives at this site and the only information that we have on it is based on the 2004 Monitoring event. Based on this event, it is our opinion that this Steel barge is in the worst condition of any of the Steel barges that were a part of this study. It has completely collapsed into itself with its structural ribs exposed and the hull and deck plates scattered about the site. This is probably due to the poor condition that the barge was in prior to it being sunk.

What is left of this barge is heavily encrusted and teeming with all kinds of Fish.

One particular item of interest is the group of noticeably large and colorful Anemones that reside exclusively on what remains of the Southeast corner of the barge. This too is a great site for Macro Photography.

Florida Oceanographic Society Research Dive Team

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission Monitoring Grant

"Artificial Reef Stability Assessment Survey"

Martin County Florida

"Upside Down Barge"

Date of Survey: May 22, 2004

Research Divers: Dan Brady, Bill Goble, Doug Raynor, Wayne Turner.

Reef Material: Steel Barge

Orientation: Northeast and Southwest

Barge is completely upside down.

Bottom Composition: Sand and Shell

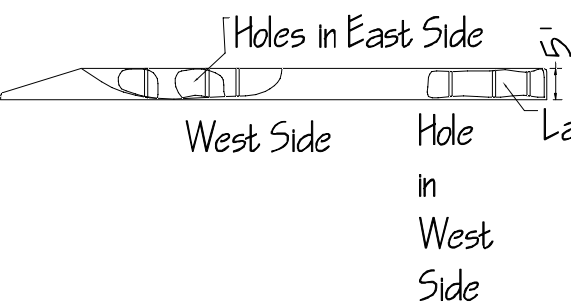
General Condition of Material: Very Poor

Collapse: 75% of the Hull plating has collapsed. The South end has broken off. 90% of the sides are missing.

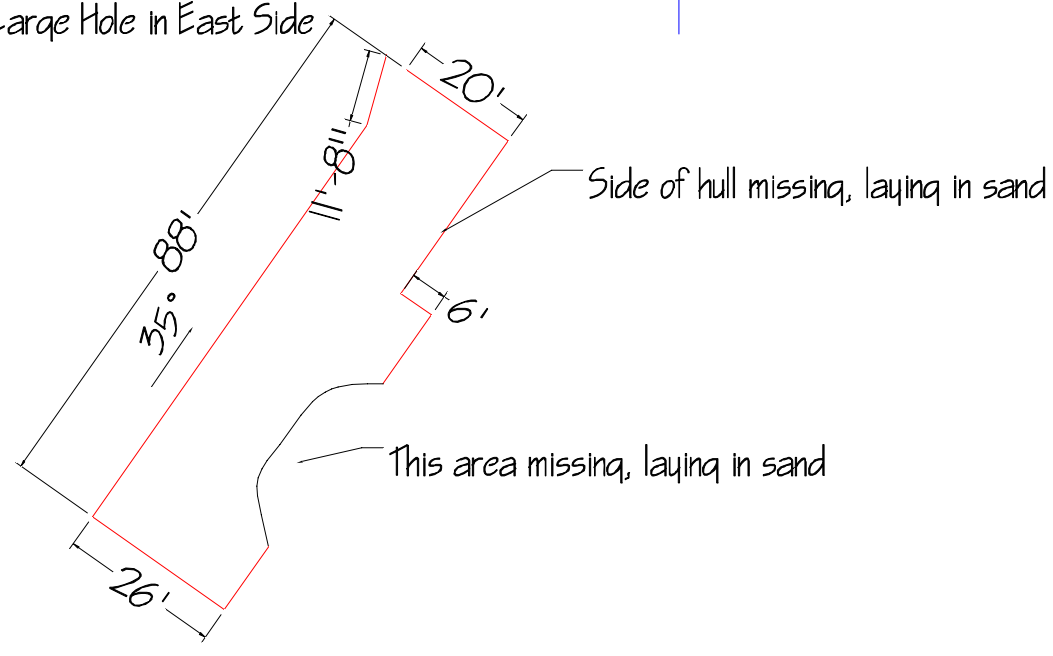
Scattering: There are several pieces of the Hull laying in close proximity to the Barge. South and West sides.

Disintegration: Much disintegration. Very jagged edges.

Additional Observations: In spite of there being almost nothing left of this barge, the remaining structure is heavily encrusted with Benthic organisms. A beam on the Southeast corner has several large Anemones on it.



"Upside Down Barge"
 Mapped 05-22-04
 Drawn by BS 11-28-04



Upside-down Barge

Survey Date: 22 May 2004

Benthic species listed below were identified using digital still images. Professionally trained divers spent 30 minutes on the Upside-down Barge 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 density, but sprawling.
Red Algae		
<i>Rhodymenia</i> sp.	Abundant	
Sponges		
Encrusting sponge	Many	
Worms		
Solitary feather dusters	Many	
Clustered "social" feather dusters	Many	
Cnidarians		
Branching hydroids	Abundant	
Feather hydroids	Abundant	
<i>Leptogorgia</i> sp.	Single	Bright yellow sea whip (maybe <i>L. virgulata</i>).
Regal sea fan (<i>Leptogorgia hebes</i>)	Few	
Anemone	Many	
Crustaceans		
Caribbean spiny lobster (<i>Panulirus argus</i>)	Single	
Bryozoans		
Yellow calcified bryozoan	Abundant	
Tunicates		
Compound tunicates (<i>Eudistoma</i> spp.)	Many	
Bulb tunicates (<i>Clavelina</i> sp.)	Few	
Colonial tunicates	Many	Looks similar to <i>Clavelina</i> spp.
Solitary tunicates	Few	

