

Reef News

June 2008

Santa Lucia Clean Up Raises Awareness of Abandoned Fishing Gear

by Bryan Fluech, Collier County Sea Grant Extension Agent

The Santa Lucia reef is one of Collier County's most heavily fished artificial reefs because of its proximity to the coast and abundance of fish species found on the site. The reef sits in 30 feet of water north of Gordan's Pass and is made up of a 46-foot long concrete Cuban boat surrounded by concrete pilings.

As a result of its popularity, the reef has accumulated large amounts of fishing gear over the years including cast nets, lines, lures, and anchors. Besides the threats the abandoned gear has on marine life, it also acts as a hazard to anglers who commonly get their equipment caught up on the site.

The Collier Sea Grant Extension Agent and Coastal Zone Management Department's Artificial Reef Coordinator organized and coordinated a clean up event on the Santa Lucia in January with the help of local fishing guides Captain Erik Alexander of Solo Lobos Charters and Captain Will Geraghty of Grand Slam Charters. The coordinators also recruited volunteer divers from the City of Naples, Rookery Bay Reserve, and the Isles of Capri Fire Control District. Besides the fire district's search and rescue boat, Captains Alexander and Geraghty donated the use of their boats to transport divers out to the site.



Volunteer divers removed over 300 pounds of abandoned fishing gear off the reef. The local press was also invited to cover the clean up to help raise awareness about the hazards of abandoned fishing gear. Both print and television media ran stories about the event and highlighted the importance of reef stewardship.

Read the Naples Daily News article from January 2008:

<http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2008/jan/14/tough-work-volunteers-divers-take-waters-clean-san/>

As a result of the successful collaboration between the guides and participating agencies, future clean ups are currently being scheduled for the Santa Lucia and other reefs in the county.

For more information, contact Bryan Fluech, Collier County Sea Grant Agent at: Fluech@ufl.edu.

Sponsors of the Clean Up:

Solo Lobos Charters: http://www.captaineric.com/solo_lobo.html

Grand Slam Charters:

http://www.floridasportfishing.com/magazine/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=203&Itemid=68