

## Atlanta Research Team Creates New Artificial Reef Structure Off Fla.

By Laura Barber

An Atlanta volunteer research team, sponsored by the Reef Ball Development Group, reports an environmental success story after sinking three artificial Reef Balls in West Palm Beach, Fla., on Aug. 8, at one of the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management artificial reef test sites.

The research team, headed by Todd Barber, son of inventor Jerry Barber, built the Reef Balls on site in Florida with the help of local volunteers creating 600 square feet of reef habitat for a host of marine life.

The invention is unique in that each ball provides 200 square feet of reef surface for \$75 in materials found in a hardware store.

Since natural reefs are being destroyed rapidly by man and global warming, Barber felt it necessary to develop a practical and inexpensive way for man made structures to replace them.

The balls are made by forming a steel and fiber glass frame around a large balloon.

The frame is then covered with concrete, leaving many holes for life to come in and out.

The balloon makes the hardened ball buoyant, so any small boat can tow the structure to the drop site.

Once the site is reached, the balloon is deflated and divers guide the ball down to the ocean floor.

The balls can be cemented together when rough water is considered a hazard to the reef.

The Reef Balls will be monitored monthly by the Palm Beach County Reef Research Team to chart life and activity on the new reefs.

For more information about the Reef Balls or future projects, contact the Reef Ball Development Group, 7085 Chappell Circle, Doraville, Georgia 30360. (404) 642-5948.

The Reef Ball Development Group is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to saving global reef life through artificial reef development.

— From Reef Ball Development News Service



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