

Underwater habitats dot desert-like

artificial reefs offer rooms, ocean view

...more than an reef — sandy and patches of seagrass here and there.

...travelers search an oasis, marine life for a safe haven in the desolation. Their own proves to be a

...long, thin natural reef north-south offshore, most in 10 to 150 feet deep.

...the natural reef artificial reef concrete walls, old steel from Cape Canaveral — all fact fish.

...could hope to number of "unofficial" y ambitious such sundry items as buses, washing machines. Even if it to make such an effort — like couldn't — like weight in gold to you're not telling.

...artists are vision the which artificial reefs help solutions ravaged ocean. They say do the opposite, central areas where fished off.

...ve been hot means there's a habitat for Bohnsack, a fishery National Oceanic Administration is not going to numbers.

...people think re going to increase an overfished, then detiding.

...functioning reef colored signs and the surface several inches of white sand or shell.

...start this way and books and reef. Larger y to make a local fishermen do the job.

...rds Institute of the biologist Walk a half-mile area of south or Sebastian types of seaweeds that of 325 and animals from

...speaking of Brevard's natural reefs Scattered pieces of thick coral rest on the local ocean floor, but this county does not get the elaborate coral structures that are found in South Florida, or even as close as Port Pierce. The water is just a little too cold.

...Brevard's natural reefs are made of two other substances: Coquina and worm rock.

...Some of these reefs are 15 to 20 miles offshore, under more than 100 feet of water. But others are so close to shore that beachgoers can see and venture out to reefs during low tide.

...The reefs are known by a variety of local names: 8-A Reef, the Lumps, 27 Fathom Reef and the Warts, all east or northeast of Cape Canaveral; the Chris Benson Reef, east of Canaveral National Seashore; and Pelican Flats, running from Cocoa Beach south to Indian Lantic.

...Some of the ridges out there are only a couple of inches high, but they attract an amazing amount of life," said Larry Begg, a local diver.

...So much life, in fact, that the natural reefs became crowded with fish which led to overfishing.

Fish attractors

...People started wanting their own "private" reefs. With the advent of LORAN — an incredibly accurate radio-based navigation system that allows a boat captain to repeatedly find a precise spot on the ocean — they began dropping into the drink anything that could attract a fish.

...The fishermen created their own private little fishing spots. The coordinates of these "habitats" are considered top-secret by their owners, as sacred as any matter of national security.

...I've been out there when some things have been dumped," said David Shaver, captain of the party boat Pelican Princess. "The cylinder part of cement trucks, worn-out dumpsters, dump trucks, buses — pretty much anything of size and structure that would stay out there for a while. Anything that wouldn't continuously roll around, that would create some growth."

...Retired commercial fisherman Eyan Moore fondly recalls his "Chevy Rock" — a 1977 Monte Carlo with swivel chairs he dumped in the early 1980s for use as a reef.

...Moore said the man who taught him what he knows about fishing always left the port with two old washing machines strapped to the back of his boat. The machines were never seen again, but the man did bring in some Warsaw grouper that he attributed to the machines.

...The practice still goes on to n



Denise Thompson Jr., FLORIDA

WORKERS at Rinker materials plant in Orlando pour cement molds for reef balls to be sunk off Brevard

...regulations on ocean dumping — led to a series of larger artificial reefs that now dot the ocean floor.

...They produced so well that people started saying, "We need to do this on a larger scale." Moore, who has become the county's premier artificial reef builder, he has created every one of the six publicly known artificial reefs in the county.

Fish attractors

...The first attempt to create a legitimate artificial reef came in 1980, when Brevard County received its first artificial reef permit from the federal government. The county hired Moore to dump material on the site, but funding ran out quickly. Some waste concrete, a derelict barge and a 100-foot sailboat called the Moby Dick were the only objects to end up on this reef.

...The next reef came about in 1985, although at the time Port Canaveral officials were more concerned with getting rid of a nuisance than they were interested in starting a reef.

...The Damocles was a 150-foot ship confiscated in a drug bust around 1981. Authorities left it docked at the port while several different parties argued over who now owned the ship. Unfortunately, the ship — a World War II-era troop transport — developed a habit of visiting the port's shore.

...It sat over there on the north side of the port and it just kept sinking, and every time it sank it caused an oil spill," said Ken Karpinski, who was a port commissioner at the time.



Joseph Daniels, for FLORIDA

PORK FISH swim at a reefball off the coast near West Palm Beach

...Association obtained a permit for the reef ball. Moore towed the Damocles offshore and sank it in 85 feet of water.

...The Damocles Reef proved a tremendous success, attracting all sorts of sport fish. So the Florida Sports Fishing Association followed it in 1988 with the Lois DuBets Artificial Reef.

...Named after the late wife of the association's then-president, the reef consists of a 100-foot work barge with some other port junk thrown in, including the bow

...pad 28. Moore's crew took apart space junk, loaded it onto a 135-foot barge and sank it in 110 feet of water.

...The reef was named the Hammilab Reef after the Alabama-based firm Hammilab Reef Depth Soundings, which donated \$12,500 for the reef's formation.

...The Space Reef provides better cover for fish than expected, according to local diver Jim Creever — the open steel structure has proven a magnet for expensive tackle.

...The reef has been a success