

[<=Back](#)



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Reef Balls aweigh


Saturday marked the beginning of Phase 1 for the Charlotte Harbor Reef Association's plan to install 81 concrete reef balls under various docks in the Punta Gorda Isles area.

According to association president Jerry Jensen the group placed two balls at each of three locations. "This is a five-month test to study reactions of both plant life and fish to the structures," he said. Each reef ball is manufactured with a sugar solution in the concrete and is then hand rubbed with a chum paste to attract fish.

If all goes as planned, 75 more reef balls will be deployed this fall. During the next 18 months the group plans to place 475 reef balls at sites that will include Gilchrist and Laishley piers. Two hundred and sixteen reef balls will be added to the harbor's existing reef site.

Shown on the cover: Reef Association contractors Ben Whiteaker, in the water, and Carl Clark assist home owner Fred Counter with the placement of a reef ball under his dock.

[<=Back](#)

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