

COASTAL RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE FINAL REPORT*

Grant Number: 8511

Grant Title: Enhancement of ARs 364, 370, and 378

Grant Award Period: 7/1/14 – 6/30/15 *(the start and end dates of the entire grant period)*

Project Costs:

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Material and Deployment	\$640,060	\$539,662
Outreach and Reporting	\$ 8,500	\$ 10,119
TOTAL	<u>\$648,560</u>	<u>\$549,781</u>

Final Project Summary

The Onslow Bay Artificial Reef Association is a small group of eight volunteers and a few dedicated committee members whose mission is to continue the work of maintaining and enhancing the near shore reefs. Their latest project, primarily funded via the CRFL Fund, began groundwork in 2012 to identify those reefs in need of increased habitat either due to deterioration of original reef material or due to expansion to meet the demands of increased pressure from anglers and divers. In addition to reducing pressure and relieve overcrowding of vessels, it was a primary objective to provide a significant economic increase to the local communities by keeping the money expended within the state and at the best “bang for the buck.” The net result is hoped to be increased biological productivity within the areas of the reefs and in inlets, bays and rivers within close proximity to the reef systems.

The three reefs identified with the guidance of the NC-DMF Artificial Reef Program were AR 364-Billy Murrell Reef, located off New Topsail Inlet, AR 370-Meares Harriss Reef located off Wrightsville Beach's Masonboro Inlet, and AR 378-Phillip Wolfe Reef, located off Carolina Beach Inlet. Completion of the project took place on May 27, 2015 and came in \$98,779 (15%) under budget.

Over 1,745 tons of repurposed reinforced concrete pipe was deployed on ½ acre patches within these reef sites in total. The material was donated by Old Castle Precast, of Raleigh, and contracted to Tarheel Heavy Hauling, of Wilmington, for transport to the deployment contractor in Wilmington, Atlantic Coast Industrial via @123 truckloads. In addition to the pipe, ACI designed and constructed an experimental concrete habitat called Atlantic Pods, weighing about one ton each, and constructed on site for deployment in 50-pod clusters on each reef. These Pods will be studied and evaluated for their durability, stability and productivity over the next 18 to 24 months by marine scientists. OBARA is hopeful that they will be approved for future use in reefs throughout NC coastal waters as well as out-of-state applications.

Educating the public is a critical element of preserving the marine resources and gaining understanding and support for reef development. While this small group of non-scientists rely on the expertise of biologists to help with public outreach, many opportunities were taken to share their knowledge, experience and personal conviction to reef enhancement for the good of future generations. Fishing and diving clubs, conservation and governmental organizations, as well as schools, trade shows and businesses were visited and given information via talks, audio-visual presentations and brochures. A website was started and continues to be developed for further outreach and education (www.NCreefs-OBARA.org) and media outlets often publicized the project throughout the process.

Going forward, the Onslow Bay Artificial Reef Association plans to use this huge undertaking to continue enhancing the same three reefs to fully utilize the permits granted for additional development and to pursue other opportunities for supporting the marine resources of North Carolina.