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New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife



NEWS

DIVISION DEPLOYS 700 REEF BALLS

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For more information contact:

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According to the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife, a total of 700 commercially designed marine habitats were placed on ocean reef sites along the Jersey coast last year. Known as Reef Balls, the structures resemble small igloos made of concrete and have been used worldwide to create ocean reef habitat.

The fabrication and deployment of these habitats is a cooperative effort between federal, state and county government. Funding is provided through the [Federal-Aid-to-Sportfish Restoration Fund](#), which is administered by the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#). The habitats are fabricated by inmate laborers at the Southern State Correctional Facility in Delmont (Cape May County), which is administered by the New Jersey Department of Corrections. Once constructed, the habitats are trucked to Ocean County where they are barged offshore by the Ocean County Bridge Department.

The 4-foot by 3-foot reef habitats weigh about 1,600 pounds each and have numerous access holes for fish and other marine life. When deployed at sea, the Reef Balls are placed in groups of 10-20 structures to create one good fishing spot or individually dispersed over the sea floor to provide isolated refuges for fish and lobsters. The 700 habitats were divided equally among two reef sites, Barnegat Light, located four miles east of Barnegat Inlet and Garden State North, located eight miles south of Barnegat Inlet.

Companies, clubs and individuals have helped enlarge the state's [Artificial Reef Program](#) by sponsoring the deployment of one or more Reef Balls. Sponsors who've helped cover the costs of building large Reef Ball reefs in 1999 include:

- ✧ Penn Reels
- ✧ Forked River Tuna Club
- ✧ LBI Scuba
- ✧ Village Harbor Fishing Club
- ✧ The Family of Michael Deitzler

The production of Reef Ball habitats is an ongoing project, with 700 more scheduled for deployment in the summer of 2000. For details on sponsoring a reef contact Bill Figley, reef coordinator at

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The goal of the Division's Artificial Reef Program is to create: (1) reef habitats for certain species of marine fish and shellfish, (2) new fishing grounds for anglers and (3) underwater attractions for scuba divers.