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Excerpts from REEF NEWS 1999

OBJECTIVES OF THE REEF PROGRAM

New Jersey's Reef Program is administered by the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife. The objectives of the program are to construct hard-substrate "reef" habitat in the ocean for certain species of fish and shellfish, new fishing grounds for anglers and underwater structures for scuba divers.

REEF BALLS

A New Direction for the Reef Program

"Reef Balls" are concrete fish habitats designed by a firm in Sarasota, Florida and are used worldwide to build ocean artificial reefs. They are igloo-shaped and hollow and have over a dozen access holes for fish. Measuring 4 feet in diameter and 3 feet high, they weigh 1,400 pounds each.

Through a cooperative project between Southern State Correctional Facility, located in Delmont, and the Division's Reef Program, inmate laborers use fiberglass molds to fabricate Reef Ball habitats. The structures will be stockpiled until early summer, when over 600 of them will be barged offshore for placement on New Jersey reef sites.

These designed habitats are expected to maximize use by fish, especially those species, like tautog and sea bass, that hide under ledges or in caverns. The internal cavity will also provide juvenile fish refuge from larger, ocean predators. To further enhance their value as sanctuary habitat, the Reef Balls will be widely dispersed on the sea floor.

TO RECEIVE REEF NEWS IN THE MAIL

If you would like to receive the complete edition of New Jersey Reef News, containing more information than available on-line, including graphics, additional articles and an order form for products sold by the Artificial Reef Association, please send a completed [form](#) to the Reef Program.



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