

◊ RRT REEF BRIEF ◊

Volume 99, Issue 9

September 10, 1999

Important Dates

- 9/4 Monitoring Dive
- 9/8 Scubanauts meeting @ Wormans Deli on San Jose
- 9/12 JAXSPOTS Dive
- 9/15 6:30 PM JAX RRT Officers/ Board meeting at JU-Reid Hall
- 9/15 7:30 PM JAX RRT meeting
- 10/2 JAXSPOTS Dive
- 10/10 JAXSPOTS Dive

From Your Coordinator

Here it is September already and our last scheduled monitoring dive on September 4th was called due to NO visibility. Such is the way of offshore Jacksonville diving. While hurricane Dennis made it terrible for diving, it made it really great for the surfers. I wonder what John Perkner was doing last week?

As you look through this newsletter, you will see that there is still a lot going on regarding offshore reef deployment. The reef ball project has begun and we have a relatively short window to build and deploy the material before we have to vacate the construction site. If you can work it into your schedules, Larry Beggs would appreciate all the volunteer labor that we can muster.

In addition to needing to get a pre-deployment survey done as soon as possible, we also need to complete the intended layout for the project.

Unrelated to the reef ball project, it is my understanding that the Jacksonville Offshore Sports Fishing Club also has a new drop to be deployed this month when the weather cooperates. Oh, if we can just have a few more good diving weekends before the water gets really rough and frigid!

I hope that all of the people that have expressed an interest in the 1999-2000 training class will make it a point to come to the September meeting. Brian would like to get the class started and we want to put more divers in the water doing the things that we do best! Hopefully, we can combine the 1998-1999 class and the 1999-2000 class and have a really great Expedition at Longboat Key this next May!

Hope to see all of you at the meeting on September 15th!

Jim Cribb

The following is an excerpt from a report created by John Dotten and Dave Eaken with the Florida Marine Research Institute.

ASSESSMENT OF CORAL LOSS, POST-HURRICANE GEORGES, AT SELECTED FLORIDA KEYS REEFS

Original presentation of this information was made at The International Conference on Scientific Aspects of Coral Reef Assessment Monitoring and Restoration, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL April 14-16 1999.

Georges moved into the Florida Straits early on September 25th and re-intensified making landfall near Key West, Florida, with maximum sustained winds of 105 MPH and a peak storm surge of 10.82 feet recorded on Bahia Honda Key.

Shallow Reefs

The 6 shallow reef sites were hardest hit by Hurricane Georges and all showed a decline in coral colonies (see bar graph). Looe Key Reef Shallow #4 exhibited the greatest loss (40.0%) of coral colonies from the pre-storm values. Looe Key Reef Shallow #2 was the least impacted with a decline of only 8.3% of coral colonies. Mean coral loss for the 6 shallow reefs examined was 24.6%. Shallow reefs lost an average of 26.7% of the boulder corals and 63.9% of the branching corals. Conch Reef Shallow #4 lost a large pillar coral (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*) colony, although the actual decrease in branching corals was 25% (4 colonies to 3).

See **Deep Reefs**, Page 2

Deep Reefs
page 1

from



From your Vice President

The latest on the Reef Ball project is that construction began on Friday, Sept. 3rd. Project-coordinator Larry Beggs of Reef Ball is on site and assembling the first of 600 reef balls. The construction site is at the old Music Shed adjacent to the old Jacksonville Shipyard facility. The site is a donation made possible by the Jacksonville Riverfront Development Corporation. I spoke with John Hanan, the president of RDC, and after showing him the scope of the project, he offered his property free of charge. It is perfect in that it has electric, water, and is on the water so the balls can be placed on the barge for deployment. The "drop-dead" date for us to be gone is October 26, I believe. So, many thanks to Mr. Hanan and his generosity! It is through efforts of people like his company that makes projects like this possible.

Larry and a couple of guys that work for him will be doing the day-to-day work as the site foremen and project managers, but they could use all the extra help we can provide. So, if at all possible, please make an effort to contribute some "free time" to help with grunt work to get all these balls ready to drop on BW before the end of October. It should be an interesting experience to say the least! I for one am really interested just to see how this operation works.

Seems there needs to be a clarification of the procedures for team dives and Jaxspots dives to let everyone know what the scoop is. Jim, John,

Dennis and I should have some kind of report to present to the team at the

next meeting to make sure everyone is on the same page regarding these dives.

Hope everyone has been having a good summer. Hard to believe it is September already. Not too many days of fair-weather diving left. Hopefully, the hurricanes will leave us alone long enough to get in a few more fish-counts before the curtain falls.

See you at JU.

Lex Waters

Safety Corner

JUST A REMAINDER ON DIVING PROFILES

Planning your dive profile whether for research or recreation should involve a little more thinking than just choosing a time and depth. Here are a few guidelines that help minimize the risk and enhance your diving experience:

1. Plan the dive at least one notch back (or at the line limits) from the edge of the tables for no-decompression limits.
2. Make sure the profile is realistically tailored to the underwater terrain, depth and contour.
3. Select a profile that is feasible, considering your air supply and air consumption rate and that of your buddy's .
4. Take an underwater slate with you, with your primary and contingency profiles written out.
5. Dive you plan.
6. Do the deepest part of your dive first and work progressively upward.
7. Allow both time and air to make a slow controlled ascent rate with safety stops.
8. Always add in a safety stop at 15 feet

(5 meters) for 3 minutes or more.

NAUI PROFILE STATEMENT

Dennis Short

Results from analyses from the deep reefs showed a higher degree of variability. The mean coral colony loss for the 7 transects was only 3.6%; however, the highest incidence of coral loss (44.4%) in this assessment was at Sand Key Reef Deep. Branching coral loss at deep sites was 100.0%. In particular, Sand Key Reef Deep #1 lost 100.0% of the 9 *Porites porites* complex observed in the pre-hurricane video (see before/after image 1). Unexpectedly, the number of coral colonies increased at 3 deep transects. The greatest increase of coral colonies (38.5%) was at Sombrero Reef Deep #3. Boulder corals at the deep reefs increased by a mean of 4.3%.

Summary

A total of 272 coral colonies were counted in pre-Hurricane Georges video. Post-hurricane, a total of 236 stony corals were counted for a net loss of 36 colonies. Stony coral loss for all 13 transects was 13.24%. Of the total 272 corals, 246 were characterized as boulder corals (i.e. *Montastraea annularis*, *Colpophyllia natans*) and 26 colonies were categorized as branching corals (i.e. *Porites porites*, *Acropora palmata*). Sixteen boulder corals were removed (6.50% of total colonies lost). Movement of large (> 1.0m) boulder corals documented at Looe Key Reef Shallow #2 (see before/after 2) may represent a significant loss of coral cover. For all analyzed transects combined, 20 of 26 (76.92%) branching corals were lost.

See **Summary**, Page 3

Summary, from Page 2

All remaining branching coral colonies showed evidence of storm damage.

How did Georges increase the number of hard corals?

Pre-hurricane video transects show high macroalgae cover, primarily *Dictyota spp.* Hurricane Georges' wave surge and scouring removed nearly all of the *Dictyota spp.* from the analyzed transects. Small coral colonies were revealed in the post-hurricane video that had been obscured in the pre-hurricane video.

Write this down—there may be a quiz!

- A net loss of 36 coral colonies (13.24%) resulted from Hurricane Georges for the 13 transects analyzed.
- Branching coral loss was 76.92% (i.e. *P. porites*, *A. palmata*) and boulder coral (i.e. *M. annularis*, *C. natans*) loss was 6.61%.
- Macroalgae removed by Hurricane Georges revealed small corals in the post-hurricane video which resulted in increases in colony numbers at 3 deep reef transects.

Future analyses of 1998-1999 Coral Reef Monitoring Project video data will document change in percent coral cover Keys-wide. Net change attributable to Hurricane Georges may be difficult to discern.

1999-2000 Training Class

Brian Salzman would like to meet with all divers interested in the upcoming class at our September meeting at Reid Hall on the campus of Jacksonville University. Discussion will center around the time and dates for the classroom portion of the training as well as the weekends that will be planned for the diving portion. Are looking forward to having you be involved! Come and ask Brian all the questions you want!

1999 DIVE SCHEDULE

Day	Month	Dive Date	Rain Date	M	J	Location
Saturday	April	04/03	04/10		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	April	04/17	04/24		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	May	05/08	TBA	*		BB
Sunday	May	05/16	05/23		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	June	06/06	TBA	*		CR Culverts
Saturday	June	06/19	06/26		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	July	07/03	Open		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	July	07/04	TBA	*		JW
Saturday	July	07/10	07/24		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	July	07/18	TBA	*		EEF Culverts
Sunday	August	08/08	08/15		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	August	08/14	TBA	*		HH Barge
Sunday	August	08/15	08/22		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	August	08/28	TBA	*		TR Anna
Saturday	September	09/04	TBA	*		JW
Sunday	September	09/12	09/19		*	Jaxspots
Saturday	October	10/02	10/09		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	October	10/10	10/17		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	October	10/31	TBA		*	Jaxspots
Sunday	November	11/14	TBA		*	Jaxspots

Notes: M = Monitoring Dives J = Jaxspots Confirmation and Discovery Dives

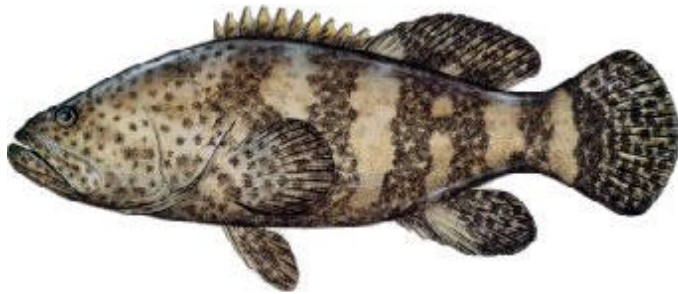
Meet at Mayport Marine promptly at 7:30 for all dives, unless specified otherwise

Contact Alex Waters at 262-5001 or John Perkner at 273-4562 with questions on the schedule.

1999 Officers/Board of Directors

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SUPPORT YOUR NEWSLETTER BY SENDING AN ARTICLE OF GENERAL INTEREST TO THE TEAM!



Jewfish

Family Serranidae, SEA BASSES AND GROUPER
Epinephelus itajara

Description: head and fins covered with small black spots; irregular dark and vertical bars present on the sides of body; pectoral and caudal fins rounded; first dorsal fin shorter than and not separated from second dorsal; adults huge, up to 800 pounds; eyes small. *Editors note: Spots or "freckles" on head always continue onto lips.*

Similar Fish: other grouper.

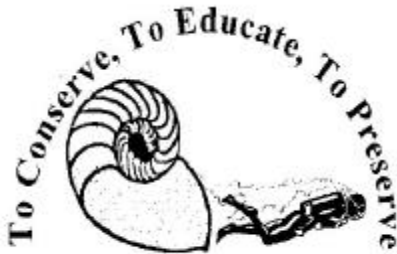
Where found: NEARSHORE often around docks, in deep holes, and on ledges; young often occur in estuaries, especially around oyster bars; more abundant in southern Florida than in northern waters.

Size: largest of the groupers.

***Florida Record:** 680 lbs.

In This Issue...

September meeting will be at Jacksonville University – Reid Hall!



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