



California Artificial Reef Perspective



Photo Credit Eric Wilkins

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CDFW – Role

- Trustee and Responsible Agency
- California Environmental Quality Act
- Advisory Role to Other Agencies
- Office of Spill Prevention and Response



Source CDFW



Historical Program

- CDFW Artificial Reef Program – Early 2000s
- Fish and Game Code Sections 6420 - 6425
 - Placement of artificial reefs in state waters
 - Enhance species and fishing opportunity
- Numerous artificial reefs created during the 1980's and 1990's
 - A Guide to the Artificial Reefs of Southern California (1989)
 - Guidelines were investigated
- National Artificial Reef Guidelines



Current Status

- Unfunded Program
- Efforts Unfinished
- Program Needs
 - Funding
 - Research
 - Scientific Plan
 - Policy Guidance



Photo Credit Eric Wilkins



Artificial Reef Requests

- California is now seeing numerous requests for artificial reefs.
 - Mitigation
 - Restoration
 - Diving
 - Fishing
 - Kelp Harvesting
 - Oyster Beds
 - Dampening Impacts
- Requests are not always consistent with Fish & Game Code.
- Removal as mitigation.



Photo Credit Eric Wilkins



Wheeler North Reef Example

Mitigation for San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (Songs)

- Impacts to San Onofre kelp forest
- Goal of 150 acres of kelp forest
- Natural rock and Concrete
- Three Phases
- Functioning reef but not meeting all mitigation goals.



Credit Dan Reed, Stephen Schroeter, and Mark Page



Take Home Messages

Need for state wide policy, guidance, and scientific plan

There are unanswered policy questions and research needs:

Policy

- Should fishing be allowed on artificial reefs or are they a protected resource?
- What is the context of artificial reefs in Marine Protected Areas?
- Rigs to Reefs and Ships to Reefs, how do they fit within our current policy?
- How do artificial reefs fit in the context of marine spatial planning and competing ocean uses?
- How do we trade one habitat, soft bottom that is important to halibut trawlers, for a different habitat?

Research

- What impact does the placement of the artificial reef have on existing habitat?
- What restoration of fish population goals can be set for mitigation that are realistic and a positive for the fishery?
- How can siting of artificial reefs be best planned in CA?



Thank You

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Pt. Buchon habitat and marine life



Source CDFW