

## **Artificial Reefs of Collier County**

*Courtesy of Collier County Artificial Reef Program*

In 2015 and 2016, 36 artificial reefs comprised of concrete light poles, road barriers, culverts, pipes, and modules were deployed off the Collier County coast. A public/private partnership allowed both private donations and grant funds from BP's Gulf Tourism and Seafood Promotional Fund to be used to fund the reef project. The City of Naples, Collier County, and Marco Island collectively received a total of \$1.3 million from BP for the project.

These reefs range from 10 miles to 28 miles offshore and are in approximately 45' to 75' of depth. The newly created reefs create additional recreation opportunities for anglers, boaters, and divers. They also enhance marine habitat where fish can forage and seek shelter and invertebrates like urchins, sea cucumbers, sea stars, and anemones can attach to or live on the surface of the reef. There is already quite the diversity of sea life surrounding these reefs as some of them are almost 2 years old.

To document the planning and construction of the reefs, Pure Image Productions created an hour long documentary called "Paradise Reef" which also has extensive underwater footage of what the reefs look like and their inhabitants. It aired on WGCU and is available for viewing online. In December 2016, it won several Emmys!

For more information, visit <http://www.colliergov.net/your-government/divisions-a-e/coastal-zone-management/artificial-reef-program>