

# Suncoast Reef Rovers Clean the Venice Pier

May 21, 2016

A truly impressive amount of marine debris was cleaned from the Venice Fishing Pier on May 21, 2016 by the Suncoast Reef Rovers. The Suncoast Reef Rovers of Venice, Florida is a dive-enthusiast club dedicated to organized dive trips and coastal stewardship. They have been cleaning this location since 1998. Imagine what a positive difference this group has made over the last 18 years!



More than a dozen people assisted the 8 divers who cut, dug and yanked crab traps, buoys, line, fishing line, lures, knives, rods & reels, anchors and hooks that were wrapped around the pilings. This is a job for skilled divers who can work safely in an environment where the divers themselves are at risk for getting tangled.



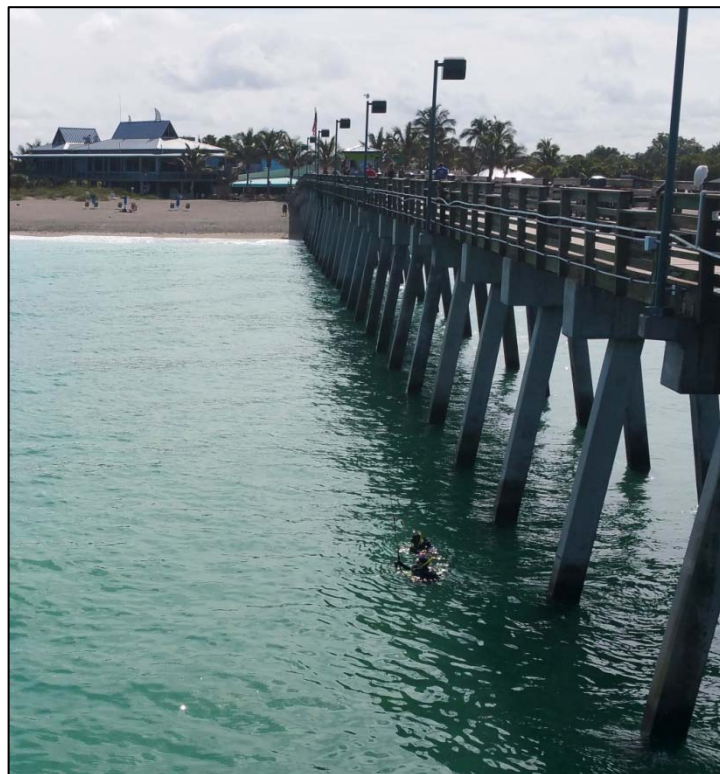
The waste material was hauled up to the pier and also gathered onto a boat. The area cleaned was the seaward end of the fishing pier located at 1600 Harbor Drive South at Brohard Park, near Sharkey's restaurant.



Recycled or reused materials included thirty pounds of lead weights, anchors, hooks, and leaders. Waste remaining after usable materials were removed was more than could be held by three large trash cans! The Rovers report that there is more debris down there that will be cleaned up at some other time.

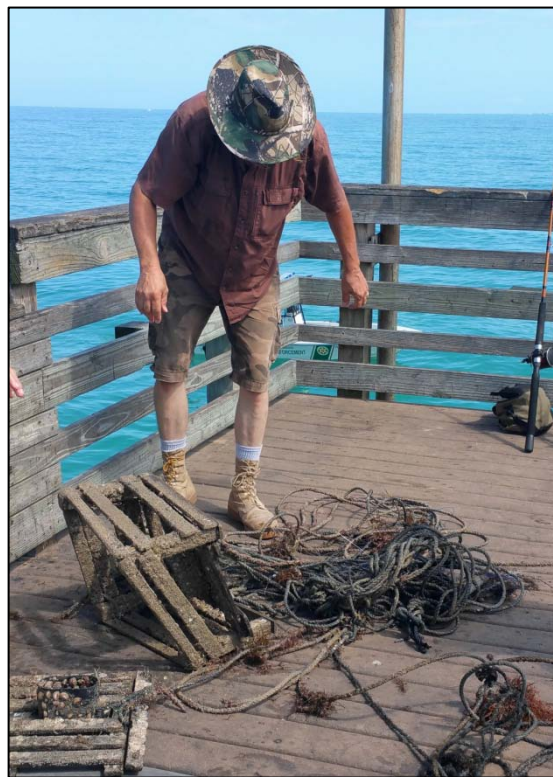


Three members of Sarasota Bay Watch participated in the event. They brought a boat and helped hoist materials from the water. The Rovers welcomed efforts by Sarasota Bay Watch to gather data about marine debris that can be used by scientists to understand problem areas, commonly found debris, fishing impacts and marine life entanglement.



SBW will measure the fishing line, nets and rope. Mote interns and high school volunteers will get community service hours for measuring, counting and weighing the waste that was gathered. Plastic waste will be recycled. The data will be shared with the NOAA Marine Debris Working Group.





The City of Venice closed the pier to fishing during this annual event. Venice Marine Patrol and the Florida Fish and Wildlife officers patrolled the area and ensured the diver's protection from boaters. Sharkey's on the Pier provided delicious, discounted lunches for the volunteers.







The Suncoast Reef Rovers will be conducting three more dive cleanups this year at the Venice Jetties. Sarasota Bay Watch enthusiastically recommends that skilled divers or other volunteers help the Suncoast Reef Rovers to continue their important work in keeping our marine waters healthy for aquatic life. Visit their website at [www.SuncoastReefRovers.org](http://www.SuncoastReefRovers.org) to learn more.

