

Many Friends Make Light Work

Oh, what a day! Enthusiastic volunteers gathered on Saturday morning, August 11, 2017 for the SunCoast Reef Rovers annual underwater clean-up of the Venice North Jetty, a popular fishing spot. A combination of 19 SCUBA divers, 19 'topsider' helpers, one kayaker, one snorkeler, and one Sarasota County Sheriffs police boat worked for a few hours to rid the underwater habitat of abandoned fishing gear.



Sarasota Bay Watch partnered with the Reef Rovers to help gather volunteers, sort debris, and gather data. The EPA donated sturdy dive bags and Reelcycle partnered to ensure best practices for waste disposal. NAUI Green Diver Initiative was also on hand.



The Venice North Jetty was cleared of:

- 81 pounds of fishing nets
- 243 pounds of abandoned traps
- 72 pounds of rope
- 6 fishing poles
- 82 pounds of lead (removed from the nets)
- 108 pounds of fishing line
- 55 lures
- 50 pounds of recycling

- An anchor, a bimini pole, a water filter, a large piece of fiberglass, a pair of glasses, an umbrella, a beach chair and many other curios were recovered.

Sheriff's Deputy, John Fandozzi, patrolled to ensure the safety of the divers in the inlet and the kayaker worked to communicate between shoreline volunteers and divers. All ages gathered for the dirty work with smiles on their faces and sweat on their brows.



Once fishing gear is lost it snags other fishing lines, forms an underwater tangle that moves with the waves, rips out vegetation and entraps animals. This annual cleanup helps to ensure a healthy, sustainable fish population.



The Suncoast Reef Rovers and Sarasota Bay Watch will join forces later this summer to clean the South Jetty and the Venice Mooring Fields. **Come join us!**