Abandoned and Derelict Vessels in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Derelict and Abandoned Vessels in Florida

![Bar chart showing the number of derelict vessel cases from 2010 to 2015. The chart includes cases that were opened and resolved.](chart_image)
Derelict and Abandoned Vessels – Impacts to Wildlife

- Introduction of hazardous materials
- Ingestion of lines, nets, plastics, etc.
- Entanglement
Derelict and Abandoned Vessels – Impacts to Habitat

- High energy environments
- Erosion
- Fracturing, scraping, gouging, etc.
Derelict and Abandoned Vessels – Public Safety

- Hazardous materials
- Dangerous to beachgoers
- Navigation hazards
- Aesthetics
Derelict and Abandoned Vessels – Federal Jurisdiction & Authorities

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act
- Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000
- National Marine Sanctuaries Act

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899
- Engineer Regulation and Pamphlet 1130-2-520, Chapter 4

United States Coast Guard
- Clean Water Act and Oil Pollution Act of 1990
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
- Abandoned Barge Act of 1992

Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act)
Chapter 823.11 Derelict Vessels; relocation or removal; penalty
- Defines “derelict vessel”
- Prohibits storing/abandoning derelict vessel
- Authorizes removal activities
- Authorizes recovery of costs
- Violation is 1st Degree Misdemeanor

Chapter 376.15 Derelict Vessels; relocation from public waters and Chapter 376.16 Enforcement and Penalties
- Prohibits storing/abandoning derelict vessel
- Establishes grant program for removal activities
- Establishes penalties

Chapter 705 Lost or Abandoned Property
- Establishes procedures for abandoned/lost property
- Authorizes recovery of costs
- Prevents person from registering vessel/vehicle until costs paid
Chapter 327.4107 Vessels at risk of becoming derelict on waters of this state
• Prevent vessels from becoming derelict
• Violation is a noncriminal infraction

Chapter 403.93345 Coral Reef Protection
• Addresses coral injuries resulting from anchoring and vessel groundings
• Requires responsible party to remove vessel within 72 hours
• Authorizes recovery of response and restoration costs
• Establishes penalties
Monroe County Chapter 21 Article II Section 21-21 Illegal waste disposal on public and private lands and waterways
- Prohibits placing/leaving abandoned vessel on waterways

Monroe County Chapter 26 Article V Section 26-102 Anchoring and mooring restricted areas
- Establishes managed anchoring zones to deter derelict vessels
- Prohibits vessels exhibiting pre-derelict vessel conditions
- Prohibits derelict vessels

City of Marathon Chapter 36 Article IV Section 36-86 Abandoned, derelict, and wrecked vessels and illegal floating structures and 36-89 Penalties
- Prohibits derelict vessels
- Authorizes removal
- Authorizes recovery of costs
- Establishes penalties

City of Key West Chapter 82 Article II Section 82-38 Abandonment; mooring creating menace to navigation
- Prohibits leaving abandoned vessel on public waterways
Derelict and Abandoned Vessels – Challenges and Limitations

- Jurisdiction
- Authority
- Funding
- Identification of responsible party
- Access to vessel location
- Sensitive habitats
Derelict and Abandoned Vessels – Current and Future Actions

- Maintain and improve existing partnerships
- Identify sources of funding for removal projects
- Enforce compliance with existing regulations
- Strengthen legal authorities to prevent derelict vessels
Commercial Towing and Salvage in FKNMS
Derelict/Abandoned Vessels, Groundings, Fires, Marine Casualties, and Debris Removal

Photo: USCG

Photo: USCG

Photo: FWC

Photo: USCG

Photo: FWC
FKNMS Management Plans 1997 and 2007

- Regulatory Action Plan identified the need to reduce impacts from improper vessel salvage
  - Permits
  - Notifications
  - Observers and/or Authorization to Proceed
  - Operator Training
  - Use of environmentally sound towing/salvage techniques

Photo: FWC
FKNMS Management Plans 1997 and 2007

- No regulations implemented specifically addressing towing/salvage
- Permits to be issued for operations that may involve prohibited activities:
  - Alteration of, or construction on, the seabed
  - Operations of vessels
  - Discharge or deposit of materials or other matter
  - Movement of, removal of, injury to, or possession of Sanctuary historical resources
  - Interference with law enforcement
  - Areas to be avoided
  - Existing Management Areas, Research Only Areas, Sanctuary Preservation Areas
Current FKNMS Requirement

• No requirements for “typical” salvage/recovery
• Letter of Authorization or General Permit will be issued for “non-typical salvage/recovery involving prohibited activities
  ✓ Installation of temporary spuds
  ✓ Deployment of boom, turbidity curtains, air bags and other materials on the sea floor
  ✓ Use of dredge pumps to restore sea bottom after vessel removal
  ✓ Contact with sea floor by equipment
• May require staff oversight
“Typical” Salvage/Recovery

Photo: FWC

Photo: FWC
“Non-Typical” Salvage/Recovery

Photo: Coffin Marine Services Inc.

Photo: FWC.

Photo: FWC.
Resource injuries from salvage/recovery

Photo: Coffin Marine Services Inc.

Photo: FWC.
Techniques to reduce resource injury

- Use floating lines or cables instead of chains
- Use spuds instead of traditional anchors
- Use stationary barges rather than vessel power in shallow areas
- Dismantle vessel in place
- Remove potential pollutants prior to salvage/recovery
- Ensure necessary equipment is on scene for pollution response
- Do not attempt operations above your capabilities and/or experience level
- Appropriately trained personnel and maintained equipment
- Be aware of sanctuary resources
Types of equipment to reduce resource injury

Photo: Adventure Environmental Inc.
Types of equipment to reduce resource injury

Photo: Coffin Marine Services Inc.

Photo: Adventure Environmental Inc.
Objective 7: Reduce damage to natural resources from improper vessel salvage methods.

Implement a towing and salvage permit program in the FKNMS:

- Use established and successful programs from Biscayne National Park as a guide.
- Establish a SAC Towing and Salvage Work Group to ensure dialog and coordination with the towing community.
- Include Standard Operating Procedures (use C-Port, USCG, BNP for guidance).
- Promote innovation of techniques.
- Allow for adaptive management.
How to keep engaged and where to find more information:

Visit our website at floridakeys.noaa.gov

Contact your Sanctuary Advisory Council Member:
http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/members.html?s=sac

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Contact us at:
Beth.dieveney@noaa.gov
Stephen.werndli@noaa.gov