



DESTIN  
FORT  
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BEACH  
FLORIDA



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Florida's Coastal Corridor Expands in Destin-Fort Walton Beach through Multi-agency Collaboration

**Okaloosa County, Florida** – Destin-Fort Walton Beach's Natural Resources Team and the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida have begun deploying 1,500 tons, or three million pounds, of repurposed concrete culverts to create three new artificial reefs off the Destin-Fort Walton Beach coast.

The project is the second deployment as part of Florida's Coastal Corridor, a statewide initiative led by the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The initiative's first deployment took place off Naples on September 2.

"These collaborations are necessary to continue the statewide effort to improve habitat for marine life in the Gulf," said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Trey Goodwin. "We appreciate the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida for choosing Destin-Fort Walton Beach to add to our already vibrant artificial reef system."

The reefs will be created roughly four to eight nautical miles from East Pass at a depth of about 68 to 74 feet. Each reef will include approximately 500 tons of concrete. The concrete culverts are being placed in concentrated configurations designed to create durable, complex hard-bottom habitat. Artificial reefs can provide areas for reef-associated fish and other marine life to feed, shelter, grow and reproduce while also expanding fishing and diving opportunities. This phase of the Coastal Corridor project is expected to be complete in November 2026.

"Thoughtfully planned artificial reefs can play an important role in conserving and enhancing marine habitat while supporting the long-term health of Florida's fisheries," said Roger Young, executive director of FWC. "Projects like this bring together sound science, careful site selection, durable materials and strong local partnerships to create habitat that supports marine life and helps sustain healthy marine resources for generations to come."

Florida's Coastal Corridor is designed to strengthen the interconnected habitats that support healthy fisheries and coastal ecosystems, from mangroves and seagrass beds to natural and artificial reefs. Through partnerships with FWC, local governments like Okaloosa County, scientists, conservation organizations and coastal communities, the initiative is building a coordinated network of habitat projects along Florida's Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

"Three million pounds of reef material makes this a big deployment, but what excites us most is what it represents," said Nick Wiley, executive director of the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida. "We are beginning to turn the Coastal Corridor from a statewide vision into real habitat in Florida waters. Okaloosa County has been an outstanding partner, and this is exactly the kind of collaboration that will allow the initiative to grow from one community to the next."

- Learn more about Florida's Coastal Corridor at: <https://wildlifeflorida.org/floridas-coastal-corridor/>
- View an interactive map of artificial reefs in Destin Fort Walton Beach at <https://www.destinfb.com/explore/eco-tourism/artificial-reefs/>

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