

The Pro's and Con's of Artificial reefs

January 31, 2018



artificial reef gili islands

An artificial reef is a human made structure that is built with the specific aim of promoting the marine life of an area.

Some artificial reefs were purposely built such as [reef balls](#) made from concrete or PVC whilst others are manmade items that have been sunk on purpose such as [wrecks](#) or construction debris.

Regardless of how they are built artificial reefs generally provide hard

surfaces where invertebrates such as oysters and barnacles as well as corals attach. The accumulation of these things makes artificial reefs popular with other species of fish who will visit the areas to feed.

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The History of Artificial Reefs

You may think that artificial reefs are a relatively new phenomenon however the history of them actually dates back to the Ancient Persians.

The artificial reefs built back then weren't for ecological reasons as described above but rather for trapping enemy ships and thwarting Indian pirates.

The first time that artificial reefs were built for the purposes of ecology is believed to have been in 17th century Japan when rocks and rubble were used to grow kelp and hence increase fish yields.

The Pros of Artificial Reefs

There are a number of pros associated with artificial reefs:

- They improve the marine life in a certain area
- They provide a [new location for fishermen to fish](#) and which works to ease the pressure on natural reefs
- They are a great way to get rid of large objects that would otherwise be placed on landfills
- Artificial reefs can be just as beautiful as the natural varieties and so help towards the tourist and diving trades
- They can also help to rebuild a fish population so further revenue can be made through offshore fishing

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The Cons of Artificial Reefs

Some people and organisations including the Ocean Conservancy group state that artificial reefs have very little benefit and instead do more harm than good. Some of the cons associated with artificial reefs include:

- The materials used in artificial reefs can cause harmful damage to the eco system especially [when tires](#) are used
- Some businesses use artificial reefs as a reason to just dump their stuff in the ocean
- If an artificial reef site is not chosen correctly it can cause damage to the marine life and other reefs in the close vicinity
- Due to the amount of fish that artificial reefs attract there are concerns by many that it could lead to over fishing

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Environmental Laws

Due to the vast amount of manmade objects that can be sunk environmental laws are in place in order to protect the world's oceans.

These laws vary from country to country but most state that the items that are used should be sunk in areas where they won't disturb a current habitat as well as in places where they won't cause hazards for divers or marine life. Furthermore the objects should be environmentally friendly and not be harmful to marine life.

Examples of Artificial reefs

The [underwater museum in Cancun Mexico](#). Here you will find 100's of statues in just 15ft and 30ft of water. The reef is a perfect place for an afternoon dive or a snorkel tour.

And then there are organisations that help build reefs in order to restore reefs that have been damaged. You can volunteer and help with "[planting](#)" corals in order to restore reefs.

Last but not least there are the sunken ships that became divers best friends all over the world. These majestic structures once roamed the oceans before they became reefs and now serve as structures where corals grow, fish hide and divers blow bubbles.

What are your thoughts about artificial reefs? Do you like to dive them or do you think that they pollute our oceans? Let us know in the comments below

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5/5 (1 Review)