



# NOAA Abandoned Vessel Program Removal Case Study: *F/V Done Deal*

Contributing Agency: Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

## OVERVIEW

### **VESSEL**

*Dimensions:* 20' x 64'      *Hull:* Wood  
*Type:* Trawler      *Tonnage:* 50-100

### **SITE**

*Name:* "Circle K" anchorage  
*Location:* Dry Tortugas, FL  
*Coordinates:* 24 43.657'N 82 47.751'W  
*Land:* FL Keys National Marine Sanctuary

### **INCIDENT & REMOVAL**

*Situation:* Sunk at anchor during storm  
*Incident Date:* Dec. 20, 2002  
*Total Duration:* 2 months, Dec. 20, '02 – Feb. 21, '03  
*Actual Operations:* 2 Days  
*Cost:* \$20,750 + Personnel time and donated sonar survey  
*Funding:* State of Florida - Ecosystem Management and Restoration Trust Fund (\$20K)  
Monroe County Derelict Vessel Program (\$10K - contingency funds)  
*Agencies Involved:* NOAA, National Parks Service, FL Dept. of Environmental Protection, FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Monroe County Marine Resources Department  
*Non-Government:* RPM Nautical Foundation  
*Primary Threats:* Public Safety, Environment, Navigation



## DETAILS

### **VESSEL, HISTORY & INCIDENT**

AVP #: 2517  
Vessel ID#: DO 602011

The "Circle K" anchorage, 65 miles west of Key West, FL, is popular with the local shrimping fleet because it is much shallower than the surrounding areas. It is located in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) and just outside the boundary of Dry Tortugas National Park. The F/V Done Deal was a 64' wood shrimp trawler built in 1979. It sank at anchor at the Circle K during a storm in December, 2002 while loaded with fishing gear and about 800 gallons of diesel. The vessel broke up completely during the incident; most of it was never found. Surveys after the storm discovered deck rigging, fishing gear and other debris including a fuel tank on the shelf in 55' of water on coral hardbottom habitat. The owner was uninsured and uncooperative.

The debris remained in the anchorage and posed a number of threats. It was an entanglement hazard not only for wildlife and divers but for the anchors of other vessels using Circle K as well. The

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fuel tank represented a significant pollution threat and the debris as a whole was crushing and abrading benthic habitats. The physical impact could be amplified if a vessel snagged a mass of debris with its anchor and dragged it across the bottom.

## **INCIDENT RESPONSE & SALVAGE OPERATIONS**

**Contractor:** Maritime Tug and Barge, Inc. (w/ subcontracted commercial divers)  
**Authority:** FL Statutes Sections 376.15 and 823.11  
**Permits:** FKNMS "Manager's Permit"

The removal operation took place in several key phases. The response began with site visual assessments of debris remaining at the Circle K by NOAA and NPS divers. This was followed by a one square mile side scan sonar survey. The additional survey, provided as in-kind support by the local non-governmental organization RPM Nautical Foundation, was an effort to search for the large portions of the vessel lost in the storm but no longer in the anchorage.

Because the owner was so uncooperative, the FFWCC was forced to officially declare the vessel abandoned. This provided the authority for the response team to remove the wreck.

Finally, a salvor was chosen and the removal operation was executed. In this case no other salvors were considered. This was because the NPS had already chosen Maritime Tug and Barge for another operation in the area and the response team was able to piggyback the removal of the Done Deal onto that trip with a cost savings so significant that other providers could not compete. Mobilization and demobilization costs were split between the two operations. The salvors brought in a tug, barge, 60-ton crane and a team of hardhat divers. To minimize environmental impacts, NOAA divers spotted a location to place the barge's anchor and the commercial divers rigged debris with straps and nets to be hoisted onboard the vessel. This minimized anchor damage and avoided damage common to less precise removal techniques like using a clamshell grab.

## **DISPOSAL OPERATIONS**

**Contractor:** Maritime Tug and Barge, Inc.

45 cu. yards of debris, 13 cu. feet of fuel soaked nets and 285 gallons of contaminated fuel were barged back to Stuart, FL, the home port for Maritime Tug and Barge. The clean debris was added to their normal outgoing boatyard waste and went to a landfill. The nets and fuel were incorporated into their onsite hazardous material system and disposed of accordingly.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

*It can be difficult to force an derelict owner to pay.*

The State (FFWCC) took the owner/operator to court in an effort to recoup costs associated with the salvage effort. The owner/operator was found not-guilty of abandoning his vessel. No monies were recovered.

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*The salvage barge and crane*



*Debris from Done Deal*



*Recovered fuel tank*



*Salvors recovering load of debris assembled by divers*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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