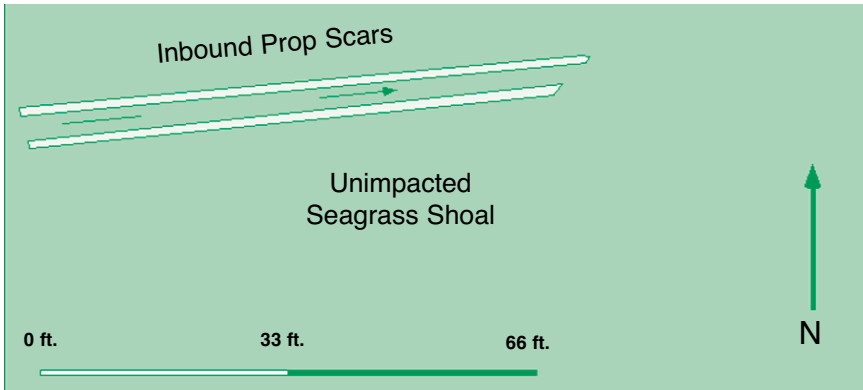
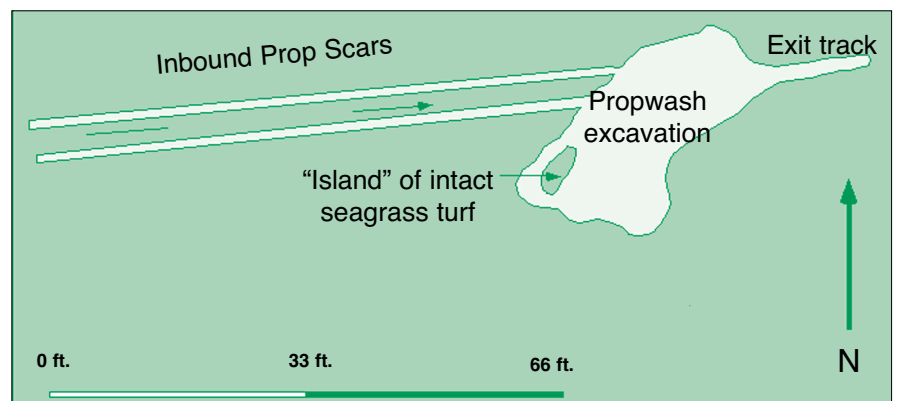


Prop Scarring--More than a trace left behind

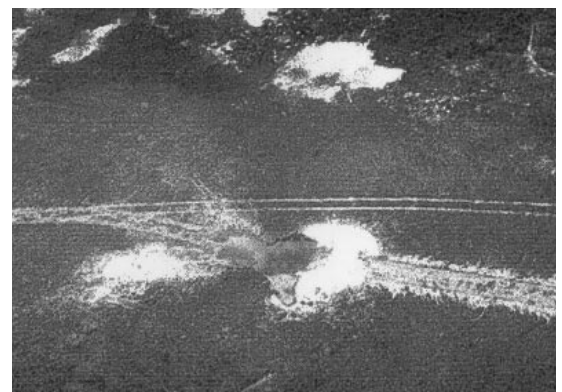
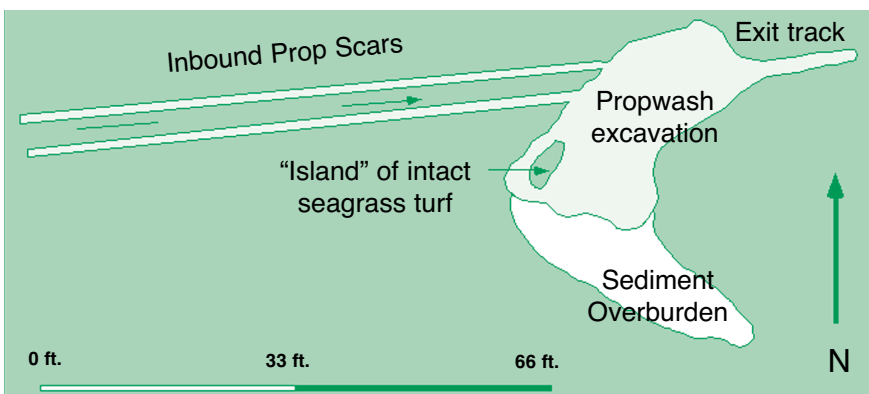
Bill Goodwin, Nancy Diersing, FKNMS



The diagrams on this page were created to document the sequence of events that occurred when a twin-engine boat grounded on a seagrass flat within the Sanctuary. First, the boat propellers dredged parallel prop scars across the seagrass flat (above left). The severity of a scar left by a propeller is apparent in the underwater photograph (above right).



Second, when the boat operator attempted to "power off" using the engines, a barren sandy crater known as a "blow-hole" was created (above left). An exit track was also dredged leaving behind an intact "island" of seagrass turf and a propwash blow-hole (above right).



Finally, the propwash excavation by the boat engines caused sediment to become deposited behind the boat on top of unimpacted seagrass (above left). Blow-out scars, entrance and exit tracks, and sediment deposits are all visible in the aerial photograph (above right).

Note: This article first appeared in the Autumn 2000 issue of **Sounding Line**, the newsletter of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. For more information, visit: www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov.