



Abandoned Vessel Program

*Developing new partnerships for effective
program implementation*

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Underwater Intervention, 2003

From NOAA's Damage Assessment Center

Here today to talk about our abandoned vessel program

Start with background

Get into what we are currently working on

Finally finish up with why we felt it was important to talk about the program here at
UNDERWATER INTERVENTION

NOAA? DAC?

Natural Resource Trustee Responsibilities

- CERCLA (Superfund)
- Clean Water Act
- Oil Pollution Act of 1990
- National Marine Sanctuaries Act



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First a quick explanation of why we are interested in this issue.

Essentially, NOAA has been delegated Natural Trustee Responsibilities by Congress in these four major piece of legislation.

Through this delegation NOAA is responsible for

- Endangered & threatened marine species – like the marbled murrelet
- Marine mammals – like sea lions
- Anadromous fish species – including salmon
- Coastal habitats – seagrass and mangroves
- Fishery resources
- Sediment and water quality
- National Marine Sanctuaries and National Estuarine Research Reserves

So, in looking out for these resources, NOAA gets involved in a wide array of activities – including natural resource damage assessment and restoration.

Abandoned and Derelict vessels directly threaten these resources

NOAA's Damage Assessment and Restoration Program (DARP) conducts natural

Impacts of Abandoned Vessels

Physical Damage

Paradise Queen
Kure Atoll, HI



Unknown
USVI

Impacts of grounded and abandoned vessels are numerous

- Physical damage of natural resources is an obvious one. Grounded vessels crush and smother the habitat they rest on.
- They also reflect wave energy which scours areas around vessels – as you can see here around a vessel in the USVI

Unk2443

Spills of Oil & Hazmat



Prestige - Spain

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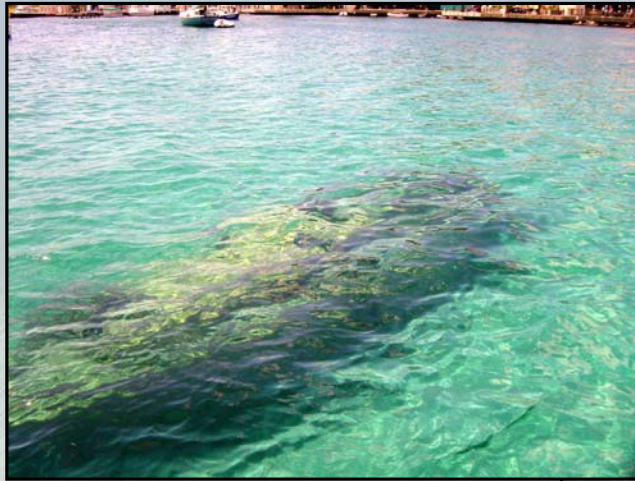


Another highly publicized and obvious impact is the release of toxic substances...

The recent sinking of the Tanker Prestige off the coast of Spain is a good example.

This would include vessels like the Empire Night, a freighter sunk off state of Maine with, among other things, a cargo of Mercury. This cargo has not been released yet but as the vessel ages and deteriorates, it is likely that the mercury will find its way into the surrounding ecosystem.

Navigation Hazards



*Unknown
USVI*



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In addition to the very obvious there are a number of other impacts including navigation hazards...

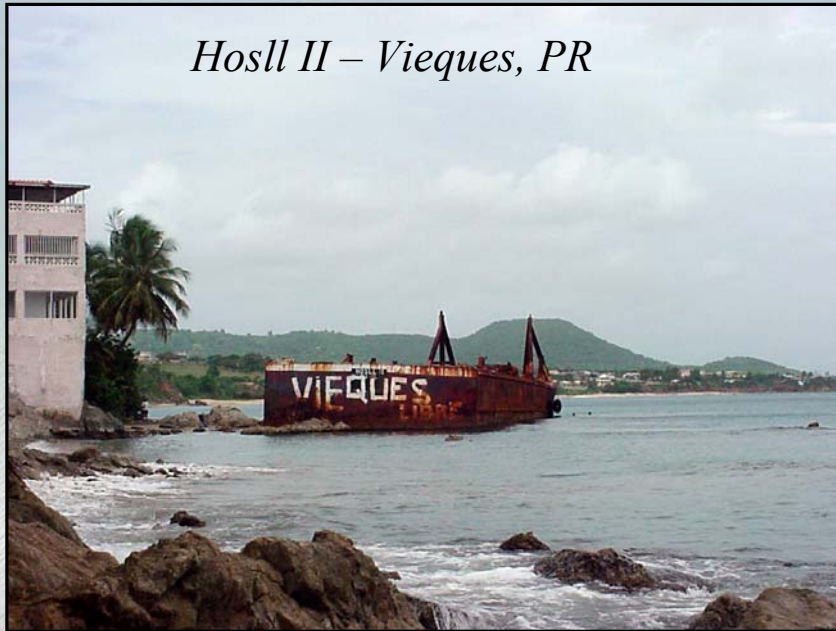
Vessels may simply impede navigation or, like this one, they may be hidden hazards that can cause serious damage to intact vessels if hit and significant injury to passengers and crew.

For an example on a larger scale we only have to look as far as the English channel. Currently the Norwegian car carrier, Tricolor is sunk in the Channel and has been hit by and damaged at least two large vessel – including a German cargo ship in December of last year.

Unk2435

Public Health Hazard

Hosll II – Vieques, PR



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...vessels also pose public health hazards....

There are inherent dangers involved with the boarding of unmaintained vessels by the public — whether they are above or below water.

This barge in PR shows clear signs of boarding by the public. It seems to be a spot for late night drinking and bonfires etc. A rusting hulk like this one poses serious slip/fall hazards for those who board it without proper experience. Submerged vessels are more likely to be entrapment hazards.

Aesthetics / Use of Intertidal Area



Messenger of Peace - Maui

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Vessels also pose aesthetic impacts

This boat recently broke mooring and ran aground on Sugar Beach – Maui

Not only is this vessel an eyesore but it is also preventing the public from using the beach – this interference would be magnified greatly if the vessel had released fuel or even a cargo of fish

A similar vessel could prevent or affect aquaculture or other human uses of the resource depending on grounding location etc.

Dumping of Hazardous Wastes



Cactus & Victoria M - Tacoma, WA

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This is a picture of the Victoria M and the Cactus in Tacoma, WA

These vessels are also interfering with use of the intertidal - Both happened to be moored in what is to become a NMFS restoration site.

In addition the vessel in the background (ex USCG buoy tender) is also an illegal waste storage facility and is loaded with hazardous materials.

So, you can see Abandoned and Grounded vessels pose both ecological and human risk.

Foreground vessel – Wooden hulled Victoria M is tied up to it

Background vessel - 180' former buoy tender in WA has been repeatedly filled with hazardous materials

Awareness of the Issue

Fishing Vessels in American Samoa – 1999

- USCG, NOAA and AS Gov't
- 9 Vessels were removed from reef
- Grounding Sites were restored

US Coral Reef Task Force – 2000

- National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs
- Grounded vessels are a major impact

These risks were brought to the forefront of political attention in 1999 and 2000

1999 – Collaborative effort to address 9 abandoned longliners in American Samoa

The removal and subsequent restoration received lot of publicity

2000 – The USCRTF published their National Action Plan. In it they recognized grounded vessels as a major impact to coral reefs and their associated habitats

NOAA Responds with AVP

*Short-range
Goals*

- Improve Understanding of the Issue
- Increase Awareness
(Coral Focused)

*Long-range
Goals*

- Provide Technical Assistance
- Facilitate Vessel Removals
- Expand Scope to all US Waters

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NOAA responded to the increased interest by creating the Abandoned Vessel Program

The short range goals of the program are

Our longer range goals include....

Short Range Initiatives

(Understanding & Awareness)

- Abandoned vessel inventory (AVI)
 - Collect, organize and prioritize data on vessels
- Field efforts
 - Field surveys
 - Workshops with local stakeholders
- Review of legal authorities and current policy

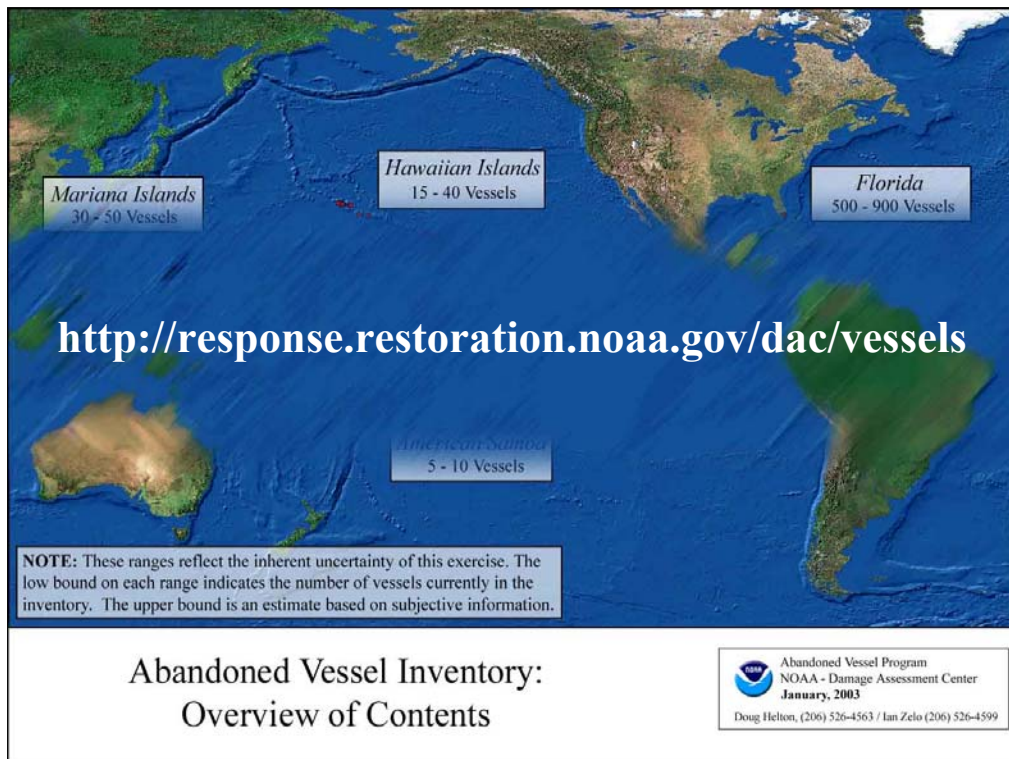
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To meet our short range goals we've been working on a # of initiatives

1. AVI
2. Field work on vessel surveys and stakeholder workshops
3. Review of legal Authorities



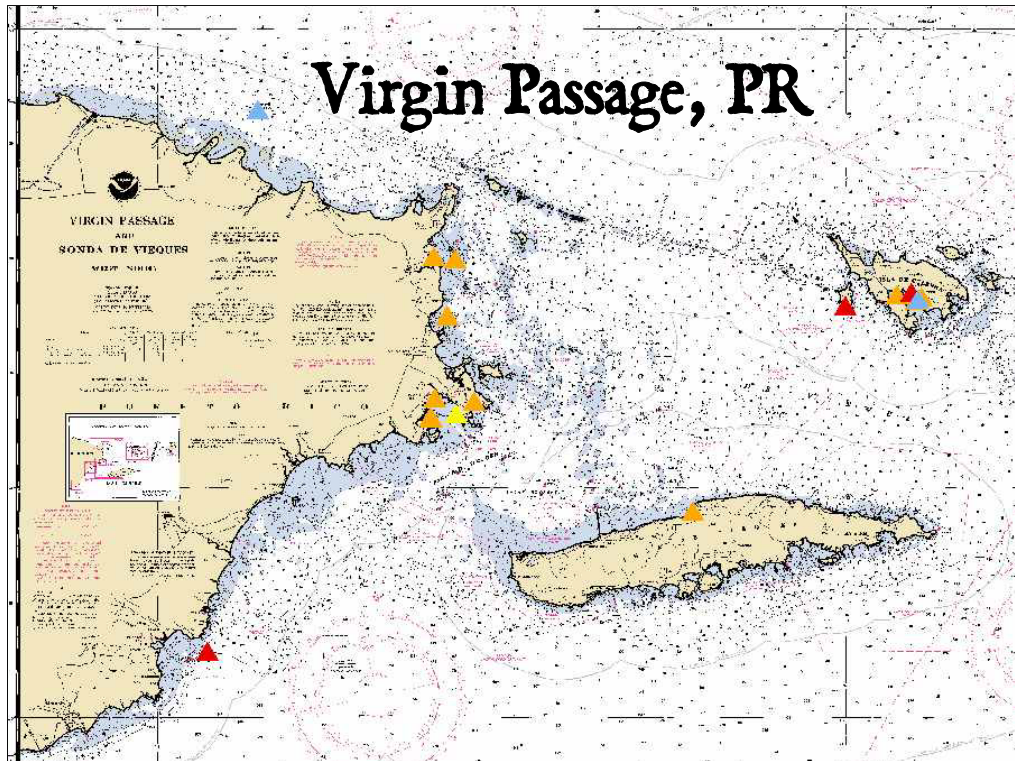
Currently we have 2000+ records

location, vessel condition, field survey information, contacts, images (~450), related documents, websites etc.

The inventory currently focuses in 6 major areas – this slide gives you a sense of how many we have and how they are distributed.

Assembled Info from: USCG Abandoned Vessel Inventory Program (AVIS), NOAA’s Automated Wrecks and Obstructions Information System, Florida’s Derelict Vessel Removal Grant Program and vessels from NOAA charting.

CLICK - We also have built a Website to support the project, It has info on selected vessels, as well as a significant amount of information on the program and what we have been doing.



Along with the Database and the website we have a Geographic Information system for the project.

The system contains Navigational charts, habitat maps, and aerial photography

It is also actively linked to the db so that as new vessels are added, they appear in the maps.

This map depicts very low, low, medium and high priority vessels in Virgin Passage, PR

Field Surveys & Workshops

2002

Puerto Rico – 32 vessels

USVI – 69 vessels

2003

American Samoa?

Guam?

Surveys of Abandoned Vessels:
U.S. Caribbean Region



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2002 – surveyed 100+ vessels in the Caribbean

-collected detailed information on many vessels

-Learned that there are many vessels in our DB that are not in the field and vice versa

-Helped to correct and validate our data for the region (better analysis etc)

2003 – we would like to get out into the Pacific – keep things balanced

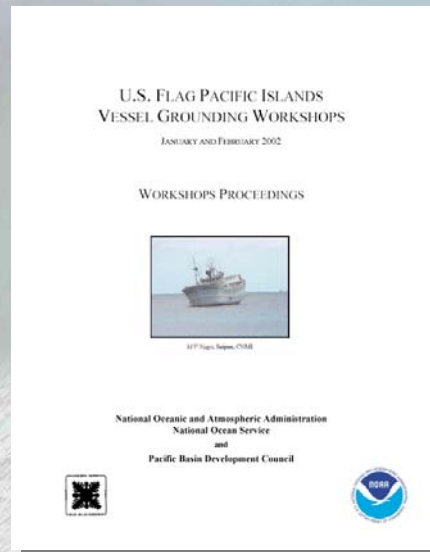
-Still working on what would be appropriate

-Just had a productive discussion with the USCG abandoned vessel manager in Guam

Field Surveys & Workshops

2002
Multi-day meetings in
Hawaii & Guam

2003
Meetings in Puerto Rico
& USVI



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Held Workshops in HI and Guam to get local perspective on the issue
Needs, severity etc.

Had representative from all the pacific island governments and agencies
to discuss the nature of the problem and the roadblocks to getting work
done.

- Experienced legal support – to help get vessels declared abandoned and
to assist with new legislation
- Funding – as always
- Cooperation between agencies at different levels of government
- Prevention efforts – education and vessel checks

2003 – With the workshops from 2002 as a base we will develop similar
info for the the Caribbean

The Caribbean Survey report and the Pacific workshop proceedings are
available from our website.

Legal Authority & Policy

- Legal Review
 - In progress
 - Partnership with NOAA and DOJ lawyers
- Policy Initiative
 - Build political support
 - Potentially develop funding and broader removal initiative

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AVP has begun the process of reviewing the current legal and political landscape surrounding abandoned and derelict vessels.

Main idea – to identify road blocks and potential opportunities for declaring vessels abandoned and removing them

As this assessment draws to a close we will begin to work towards building political support etc.

This Brings me to how we will begin to address our longer range goals.

Long Range Initiatives

(Technical Assistance, Removals & Expansion)

- Reference Documents
 - Prevention methods
 - Emergency response
 - Damage assessment & mitigation
- Removal Assistance
- Canvas new areas and experts

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DOCUMENTS – Once we have a better grip on the issue we will enhance our efforts to educate others (paper and web resources)

-Present case studies

-Response options, methodologies

-Potential contractors

-Designed to be useful to wide array of stakeholders – not just US states and territories with coral reefs

REMOVALS

-Funding and facilitating removal and mitigation of vessels that impact reefs and other natural resources

-As we expand into new areas we will be looking for experts familiar with derelict and abandoned vessels in these areas

-Help us ID and prioritize vessels as well as to ID related local issues and players

New Partnerships: How you can help...

General:

- Increased recognition with private industry
- Input on & critique of the AVP
- Participation & buy in

Specifically:

- Technical expertise
- In-depth field experience

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It is the pursuit of these longer range goals that new partnerships and working relationships - especially with the commercial diving and salvage community – will become critical to our success

By introducing you to the program, we hope to

increase our recognition with private industry

encourage input...

as well as participation in and buy in of our projects

Specifically we feel this community can provide technical expertise and in-depth field experience as well as a position on the issue that is not available in the government sector.

New Partnerships: How you can help...

Expert information

- Case histories
- Small vessel salvage?
- Containment vs. removal?
- Removals and prevention of further harm?

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Case Histories – we'd like to start building a collection of examples of vessel removals or other mitigation efforts employed specifically for environmental protection

Detailed information on the salvage of small vessels

With so many old and potentially dangerous wrecks in US waters – the choice between containment and removal will be important and we would like to hear what you have to say on this

There is also the need to balance good done by removing a vessel with the additional injury caused by removal activities. We would like to start a dialog, begin a collection of information to support beneficial removals. How do you minimize damage so that removal can be justified?

New Partnerships: How you can help...

Professional Opinion

- Abandoned Vessel problem in general
- Future of the industry and its response
- Abandoned Vessel Program

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Grounded, derelict and Abandoned vessel issue in general

The future of the industry in this area

Your opinions of this program –

-I'd like to hear if you think there are directions that we could be going but aren't

-If there are data source that we have overlooked

-If there is a way that we could be doing what we are doing better or make it more useful

Contact Us

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<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/dac/vessels>

With that, I would like to encourage all of you to check out our website and open it up to questions.

Thank you.