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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SBEP TO DEPLOY NEW ARTIFICIAL REEF HABITAT MODULES IN SARASOTA BAY

SARASOTA, FL - The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) will deploy new reef modules on three existing artificial reefs in Sarasota Bay during the week of September 12, 2016. The three reefs, Bayshore North, Bayshore South, and White Key, are managed by the Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources

Department. [Reef Innovations](#) of Sarasota constructed the reef modules and will oversee their deployment.



Deep cover artificial reef module that simulates the natural ledges many fish seek for protection from predators.

Six different types of reef modules will be deployed on each site. The reefs are popular fishing destinations that are already supported by materials such as rocks and reef balls. The new modules are designed to attract young reef fish, particularly gag grouper, during their first two years of life. The deep cover module, in particular, mimics natural ledges and can hold large numbers of fish, offering safety from predators and humans. The reefs will increase fish survival rates by protecting juvenile fish until they are large enough to move offshore and become part of the adult fishery.

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program is dedicated to restoring the area's greatest natural asset—Sarasota Bay. Its unique program strives to improve water quality, increase habitat and enhance the natural resources of the area for use and enjoyment by the public. Sarasota Bay is one of 28 estuaries in the United States that have been named by the U.S. Congress as an "estuary of national significance." Partners include Sarasota County, Manatee County, City of Sarasota, City of Bradenton, Town of Longboat Key, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.