

Divers to retrieve tires dumped off Fla.

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Plans have been drawn up to retrieve millions of tires that were dumped off the Florida coast in 1972 to make an artificial reef.

At the time, using the worn-out tires that were becoming a nuisance on land to create a home for fish seemed like a laudable idea, The Washington Post said. But the tires proved to be a poor base for sea life and, when they came loose and began rolling around, they could be extraordinarily destructive.

"It's depressing as hell," Ken Banks, a Broward County reef expert, told the Post about a recent dive. "We dove in and swam for what seemed like an hour and never came to the end of it. It just went on and on."

Coastal America, a coalition of government agencies and private groups, says removing the tires will take three years. Starting in 2008, marine salvage teams will begin bringing up the tires as training exercises.

"It's easy to throw something into the water," said Keith Mille of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. "What we're finding is it's extremely expensive to remove something from the water."

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