

## THE OCEAN

# After five months, reef life abou



PHOTO BY ANNE COVATRE/AP/WIDE

Weed festoons the concrete modules on the seabed off Sydney

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Scientists have discovered new life under the waters off Sydney.

A brood of algae, starfish and possibly other life appeared five months after workers dropped a row of 270 concrete balls off the coast near Sydney Hotel.

The nearly one-metre diameter balls making up the artificial reef look like concrete igloos peppered with life.

City workers dropped the concrete forms to a 10-metre depth on the reef between two 190-metre swaths running parallel and south and north of the pier.

Scientists were not sure if the concrete forms would attract marine life, but all doubt has since vanished.

Diver Jil Rice said in the last six weeks, the hollow concrete balls have become barely recognizable because of the abundant marine growth.

"The colours are fantastic," she said. When divers shine a flashlight on some

of the fish, they seem to

Local divers have by their time and equipment explosive growth week hope the information to whether concrete balls develop marine habitat, also become part of a program artificial reefs.

Residents can expect for crab and shrimp sea growth, claspings.

Locals should also be for a number of octopus two kilograms and many metre long from head to

Scientists believe octopus, discarded reef by no be eating crabs at the art

But Cosgrove, Royal via Museum scientist, he seen the eight-armed crit sea crab fragments do distinctive style of octop

By September, the sp weigh about 15 kilogram three metres long.