

St. Petersburg Times

Hernando Tim

NEWS HOTLINE

...s, do you have a news tip or
? A comment or question? If
us at 754-6101 in Brooksville
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URG, FLA.



Times photos — ROBERT ROGERS

Jerry Smith, left, and Bill Carson rig a reef ball Tuesday to be dumped into the gulf off Hernando County. Below, extra reef balls wait for rigging.

Dropping ball lets marine life score

■ The concrete balls dumped off Hernando Beach will form artificial reefs to house sea life.

By RICHARD VERRIER
Times Staff Writer

HERNANDO BEACH — The crane slowly hoisted the last reef ball a few inches, as two men carefully guided it toward the edge of the rusty barge.

Once it was in place, one of the

men yanked on a rope, releasing a metal clip that was holding the concrete ball in the air.

The 300-pound module, designed to mimic a natural coral head, plunged into the 60-degree gulf waters, 18 miles west of Hernando Beach. "Whew!" said one. "All right!" yelled another.

"Hernando's reef has been deployed," declared Jerry Smith, of Reef Ball Development Group of Doraville, Ga.

The celebration at noon Tuesday came after Smith, volunteers and county workers had just

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