

U.S. Corps of Army Engineers approves fish habitat project

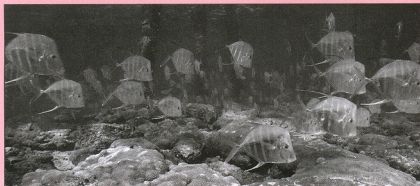


Photo By Official Town Photographer Marc Furth

FISH STORY: The health of the coral reefs and fish populations off Lauderdale-By-The-Sea (above) has declined in the past two decades.

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** recently awarded the **Town of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea** a federal permit to proceed with its fish habitat project off Commercial Boulevard.

The **Broward County Environmental Protection Department** is expected to award the Town the final permit it needs (to proceed) by September.

The construction of the artificial reef, which was initially discussed by the **Town Commission** in July 2005 and approved in June 2006, is expected to start sometime in September.

The Town plans to construct the artificial reef off Commercial Boulevard south of the pier to help boost local fish populations.

The Town approved a **\$64,500** contract with the **Global Coral Reef Alliance**, a non-profit organization, to build an artificial reef with a solar-powered, low-level electric current to help stimulate coral growth.

The newest artificial reef will be located near the Town's **Snorkel Trail** off Datura Avenue.

Dr. Thomas J. Goreau, president of **Global Coral Reef Alli-**

Construction of the fish habitat project is expected to start in Town sometime in September.

ance in Cambridge, Mass., said scuba divers with **Cry of the Water**, a local non-profit environmental group, were responsible for mapping the ocean bottom where the reef will be located.

Goreau said the the goal of the project is to restore the coral reef fish habitat, which has declined severely over the years.

The coral reefs off the Town's shores are extremely popular with snorkelers and scuba divers. The reason is simple: their close proximity to the beach. A snorkeler can be swimming over a reef before he or she reaches the end of the pier. □