

# FEATURES

## Not a Fish Tale!

By Ken Wardlaw, Fmr. Mayor/Commissioner

If you were told that there was a very large school of tarpon in the waters just off our beach here in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea., would you believe it? Yes, I said TARPON! If you were told these tarpon were five to six feet long and so thick you could not see through them, would you believe that? Well, it's true. This was no small number of fish, but rather they were there by the hundreds!

On a recent dive to map the area for a proposed fish habitat Dr. Tom Goreau

and Dan Clark found themselves in the middle of just such a school of tarpon. Dr. Goreau took pictures, but the water was so thick with Tarpon that a truly good picture, suitable for print, was virtually impossible

While tarpon are seen in these waters, it is rare to have such a large school at any one time any where on the east coast of South Florida. They were here in our own front yard by the hundreds. My knowledge of tarpon is quite limited, but to the best of my recollection when I was doing a lot of charter boat fishing I recall that the area for the best tarpon fishing was on the west coast,

FISH continues on page 14



# FEATURES

---

FISH continued from page 11

the Tampa Bay and Boca Grande areas.

I expect to be corrected by those better informed, but to me this is an extremely rare occasion and worth special notice.

Future articles regarding the program to establish a fish hatchery in our area will include pictures and commentary by members and associates of Dr.

Goreau. The town's official photographer, Marc Furth has been working in conjunction with Dr. Goreau and Dan Clark. Following articles will likely include some of Marc's excellent underwater pictures.

A local diver, Dan Clark and his wife Stephanie have been diving these waters for many years, and have a wealth of knowledge related to our coral reef/ fish hatchery project. In the very near future, perhaps I can prevail upon Dan to give an in-depth report on what has transpired over the

past few years, as it relates to Dr. Tom Goreau and his non-profit organization, Global Coral Reef Alliance.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea can be extremely proud of the effort it is making to preserve and enhance our coral reef system. Contrary to what some consider nothing more than an attraction for divers and snorkelers, the coral reef system plays a major part in the protection of the beach areas and adjacent motels and properties near the beach. Without the reefs and the areas surrounding them, the

small fish would have no protection from larger predators, and the large income from fishing would be gone.

It is critically important to protect these areas, and for the benefit of those who are not aware we have made the first effort in the State of Florida to provide the fish habitat areas so vital for the continuation of commercial and sports fishing.

