



# NOAA Marine Debris Program Innovative Removal

## Abandoned & Derelict Vessels in the Dog River Watershed

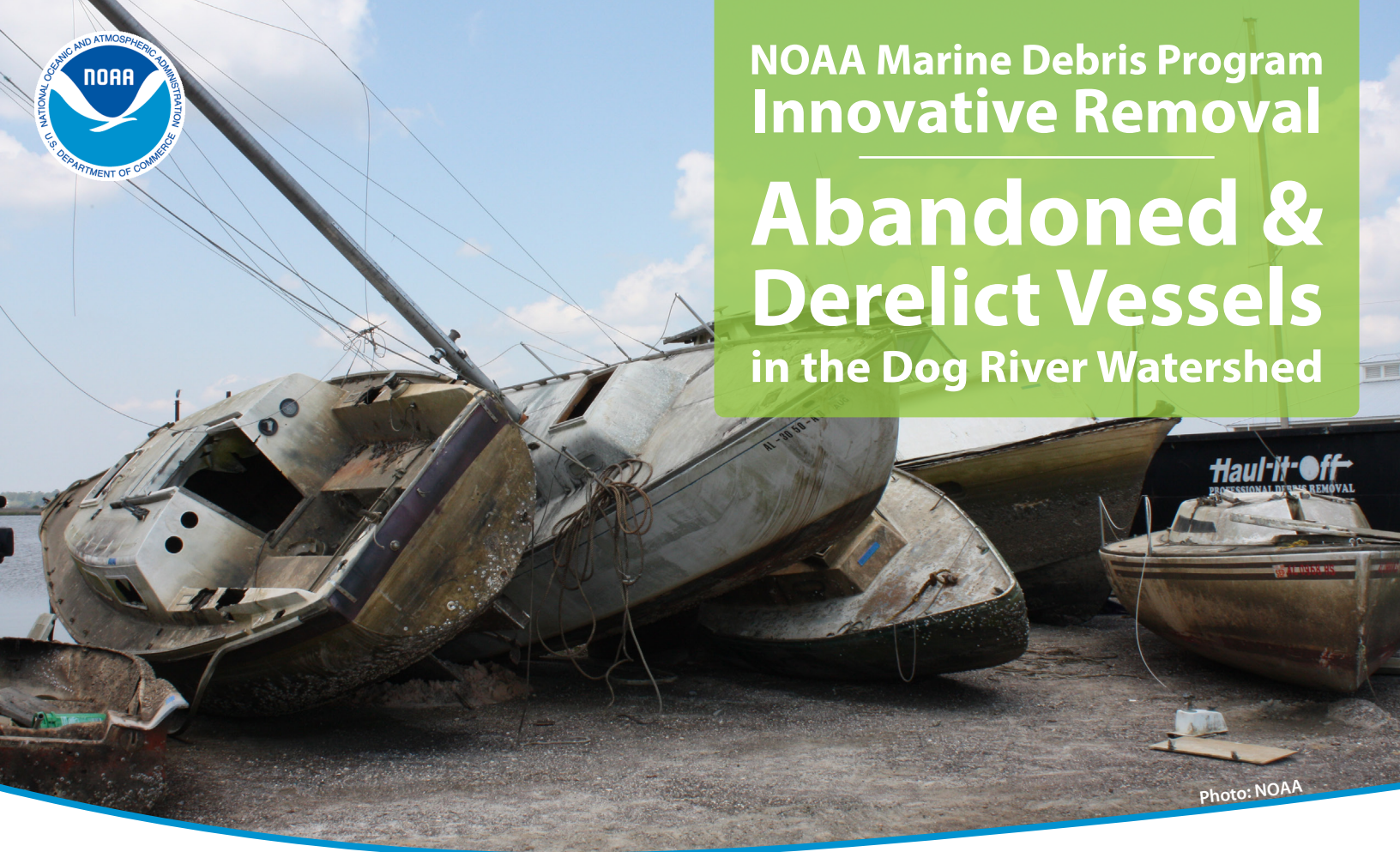


Photo: NOAA

### Project Description

This project, led by Dauphin Island Sea Lab in partnership with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, community organization Dog River Clearwater Revival, and national non-profit Ocean Conservancy, evaluated sites with abandoned and derelict vessels for removal using a barge and crane. Within the Dog River, 25 vessels/parts were removed, while 41 were removed from the Fowl River. Following removal, restoration activities took place, which included planting Eel and Widgeon grass cores within two sites that were affected by the derelict vessels. Other project activities included public outreach through the installation of 59 signs within the watershed, which educated boaters about the anchoring of vessels and riparian rights.

### Innovative Techniques

Because of the large number of derelict vessels present in the Dog River watershed, Dauphin Island Sea Lab developed an evaluation tool in order to determine which vessels should be removed. This derelict vessel evaluation tool (DVET) analyzed the impact that vessels had on the environment based on 10 categories including:

- Vessel materials
- Fauna and flora present at the site
- Type of habitat
- Water quality
- Difficulty of vessel removal

These aspects were ranked on a scale of 1-10 and scored out of 100. Legal ownership of the vessels was then analyzed, and priority vessels for removal were identified.



## Uses & Lessons Learned

The evaluation tool developed through this project could be used in other projects with similarly-sensitive habitats or with abundant abandoned vessels in order to best identify which would be the safest to remove with the smallest impact to the surrounding environment.

## Point of Contact

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Photo: Dauphin Island Sea Lab

