

Regina
Take an Underwater Tour
Audio Transcripts

Stern

We begin our journey at the stern of the vessel. As we swim north along the 247-foot long steel tanker-barge, we see the eroded hull remains of *Regina*. When she originally sank, she landed on an even keel but after six decades of turbulent waters and pounding surf her hull has been twisted and broken.

When the tanker-barge first wrecked the site was locally referred to as the “Sugar Wreck” or “Molasses Barge” because in 1940, at the time of her demise, her cargo of molasses drained into the gulf and covered the nearby beaches for weeks.

Today, her stranded hull has become part of the landscape and a popular dive site in Bradenton Beach.

Boiler and Plaque

As we swim across the sand we see the top of the boiler valve. In this dynamic environment, extreme sand movement is common, and the boiler is periodically buried.

Here we see the cement monument and plaque identifying this site as a Florida Underwater Archaeological Preserve. The plaque briefly describes the size and history of the vessel, the cargo contained onboard when she went aground, and the heroic support by local residents and the Coast Guard to save the lives of the stranded crewman.

Stanchions

Swimming north across the site we come upon the stanchions, or upright supporting posts for the deck beams.

Corals and sponges have grown over the structural remains, thus providing natural protection for the protruding features. There are many species of marine life living amongst these posts: toadfish and flounder camouflage their bodies to match the sand, hermit crabs traverse along side the stanchions, and schools of bait fish, Sheepshead, and Atlantic Spadefish visit the site. Even Manatees have been known to stop by for a tour.

Bow

Here we are at the bow, or forward part of the vessel. Like the rest of the site, the majority of the bow is now buried by shifting sands, a result of periodic beach renourishment activities and natural wave and storm action.

You can see here that the bow of *Regina* is pointed. This is a common practice that allows the vessel to efficiently cut through the water while underway.

In 2001, *Regina* was nominated to become an Underwater Archaeological Preserve by Pete and Lorraine of SeaTrek Divers in Bradenton Beach. They have enjoyed diving amongst the historic wreckage, schools of small baitfish, atlantic spadefish, and other marine life for years.