

# Project ABIS Update

## *An HMCS Annapolis study*

*Compiled from Artificial Reef Society of BC*

**The Artificial Reef Society of BC is pleased to present Project ABIS – the Annapolis Biodiversity Index Study, an academic science study designed to observe and report marine species recruitment on the former HMCS Annapolis.**

In November 2015 the ARSBC launched the Annapolis Biodiversity Index Study (Project ABIS). This study was intended to monitor and catalogue

the progression of marine life accumulation on Annapolis. We asked divers who were visiting the Annapolis to document the life they were seeing. This information was then sent to Donna Gibbs, taxonomist at the Vancouver Aquarium, who has agreed to create an ongoing taxon of marine life that is accumulating on the ship over time. This information has resulted in recording the existence of about 60 species of flora and fauna on the ship.



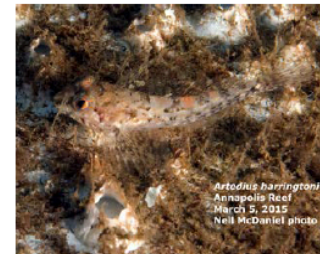
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We have been encouraged by the response to this study and by the results that have been recorded so far; however documenting efforts have been sporadic and inconsistent. Understandably it is difficult to expect divers who are on their own time to devote their limited time underwater to another cause. However, any photos or videos of any life on the Annapolis would be much appreciated. Please send it to: [donna.gibbs@vanaqua.org](mailto:donna.gibbs@vanaqua.org)

One of the critical pieces of information is to landmark as precisely as possible where on the ship pictures and videos are taken. Physical structures on the ship are useful reference points, as is a record of depth and your diving position on the port or starboard side of the ship. The more specific you can be about which feature of the ship you're diving, the better. It's also helpful to make note of your distance from specific landmarks. To assist you in identifying landmarks, photos with identified structures can be found at: <http://www.artificialreefsocietybc.ca/bulletin-board.html>

As well, 360 degree images of the Annapolis decks 1, 3 and 4 may be viewed at: <http://www.artificialreefsocietybc.ca/annapolis.html>

Recognizing that data was limited, we wanted a dedicated team of qualified divers to periodically go to the ship and document specific areas. We are pleased to announce that ARSBC successfully applied and received a Parks Enhancement Funding grant in May 2016. With these funds we can now help to offset the cost of getting a dedicated core of citizen scientist divers out on the ship on a regular basis and augment data that is obtained by fellow divers with consistent and knowledgeable observations. This is an ongoing project and with future grants we expect to continue this research in future years.



**DISCOVERY**  
INFOGRAPHIC

## Sink, then swim

HMCS *Annapolis* will soon be Canada's newest artificial reef  
By Thomas Hall

What would you do with a decommissioned Royal Canadian Navy destroyer such as HMCS *Annapolis*? If you're the Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia, you clean it and sink it, making it not only a lure for scuba divers, but a haven for marine life, including threatened species that will thrive in its nooks and crannies.

"Our mandate is to create sustainable man-made reefs," says Howard Robbins, president of the ARSBC, adding that the non-profit has also sunk a Second World War victory ship, destroyer escorts and a Boeing 737, and consults on the creation of other man-made reefs.

Scheduled for sinking in early 2015, the *Annapolis* is the society's most ambitious project to date. Built in Halifax and launched in 1964, it served off Canada's East and West Coasts before it was decommissioned in 1998. This graphic details how the warship will be made, some of the species that will call it home and more.

**PREPARATION**  
Robbins says the *Annapolis* is their cleanest ship yet. After the government removes anything potentially toxic, ARSBC volunteers spend days cleaning the vessel so they meet the highest environmental standards. Machinery, pipes, gauges and anything else that may have oil or other pollutants on it are removed, and potentially valuable metals such as copper and aluminium are recycled.

**SINKING**  
The *Annapolis* will be towed to its resting place in Hallett Bay Marine Provincial Park, where linear charges will be placed along its hull. Their placement ensures that the vessel will come to rest in an upright position. The charges don't explode so much as cut the explosive scuttles. In seconds, they slice a precise, metre-square hole in the hull and the ship sinks in about two hours. Explosives experts and diving experts go down to check for leaks, and within about two days the vessel is open to the public.

**WILDLIFE**  
This reef will be home to many species, but Jeffrey Mariani, vice president of marine science at the Vancouver Aquarium, says it will provide a "perfect" highly complex "habitat" for two endangered species of rockfish in particular. "It ought to be among the largest-lined fish in the ocean (more than 100 years), rockfish thrive in marine habitats such as rock slides and wrecks ships. Mariani adds that yelloweye and quillback rockfish — respectively listed as special concern and threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada — will be safe around the reef than elsewhere, because places that attract divers see less poaching.

**DIVING**  
With its canopy slides and shallow resting area, the entire ship will be accessible to divers of all abilities. Additional notes will be cut in the hull to help divers see into the vessel and explore, while novices can peer in and see the areas of most interest, such as the engine and boiler rooms.

**HMCS ANNAPOLIS**  
Length: 113.5 metres  
Weight: 2,000 tonnes  
Width: 12.8 metres  
Height: 21 metres (to stack)

**Concrete anchor**

**Moorings (steel)**

**Safety stop stations (also known as air decompression points)**

**Plumose anemones**

**Coarctated shrimp**

**Lingcod**

**Quillback rockfish**

**Yelloweye rockfish**

**Caboon (sculpin)**

Read about British Columbia's next artificial reefs at [map.cape.ca/it's/reef](http://map.cape.ca/it's/reef). For more information about the *Annapolis* project, go to [artificialreef.bc.ca](http://artificialreef.bc.ca).

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Infographic from <http://www.artificialreefsocietybc.ca/annapolis.html>