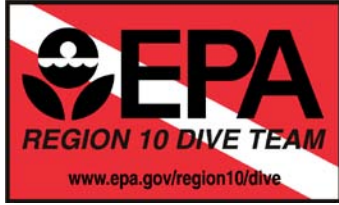


US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



[EPA Region 10 Dive Team](http://www.epa.gov/region10/dive)

Criminal Investigation of Illegal Boat Dumping Site, “Crow’s Nest” Marina, Commencement Bay, 2004

What: The EPA Region 10 Dive Team collected evidence and provided documentation to criminal investigators of boats illegally sunk in Commencement Bay in a joint operation between EPA, Ecology, and USCG.

Why: Witnesses reported suspicious towing and sinking of vessels in the vicinity of the marina. Several oil sheens that were reported near the marina were suspected to have originated on vessels sunken without removal of diesel/gasoline/other hazardous materials.

Where: Crow’s Nest Marina, Commencement Bay (near Tacoma, Washington). Approximately Lat N 47 deg 17’62” W 122 deg 25’14”

When: March, May, November, and December, 2004.

How: Over 20 dives were conducted by EPA Region 10 and Environmental Response Team (ERT) divers. A Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and sector scan were also deployed by ERT to aid in identification of wrecks for further diver investigation to “optimize” the use of diver time. NOAA Nitrox I (32% oxygen) was used on some deeper dives to enhance diver safety and prolong safe dive times, provided courtesy of the NOAA Dive Center.

Due to the presence of contamination in the water column from sunken vessels, diver decontamination was undertaken. See the [safety / sop](#) page for more information on diver decon and polluted water scientific diving.

Results: Dozens of sunken vessels were documented in video, still footage, and sector scan imaging. Many of the vessel observations included evidence of purposeful sinking, such as concrete block filled holds, and holes deliberately punched in the side of vessels. Many vessels were piled one on top of another, with riggings still attached, which presented a hazardous dive environment.

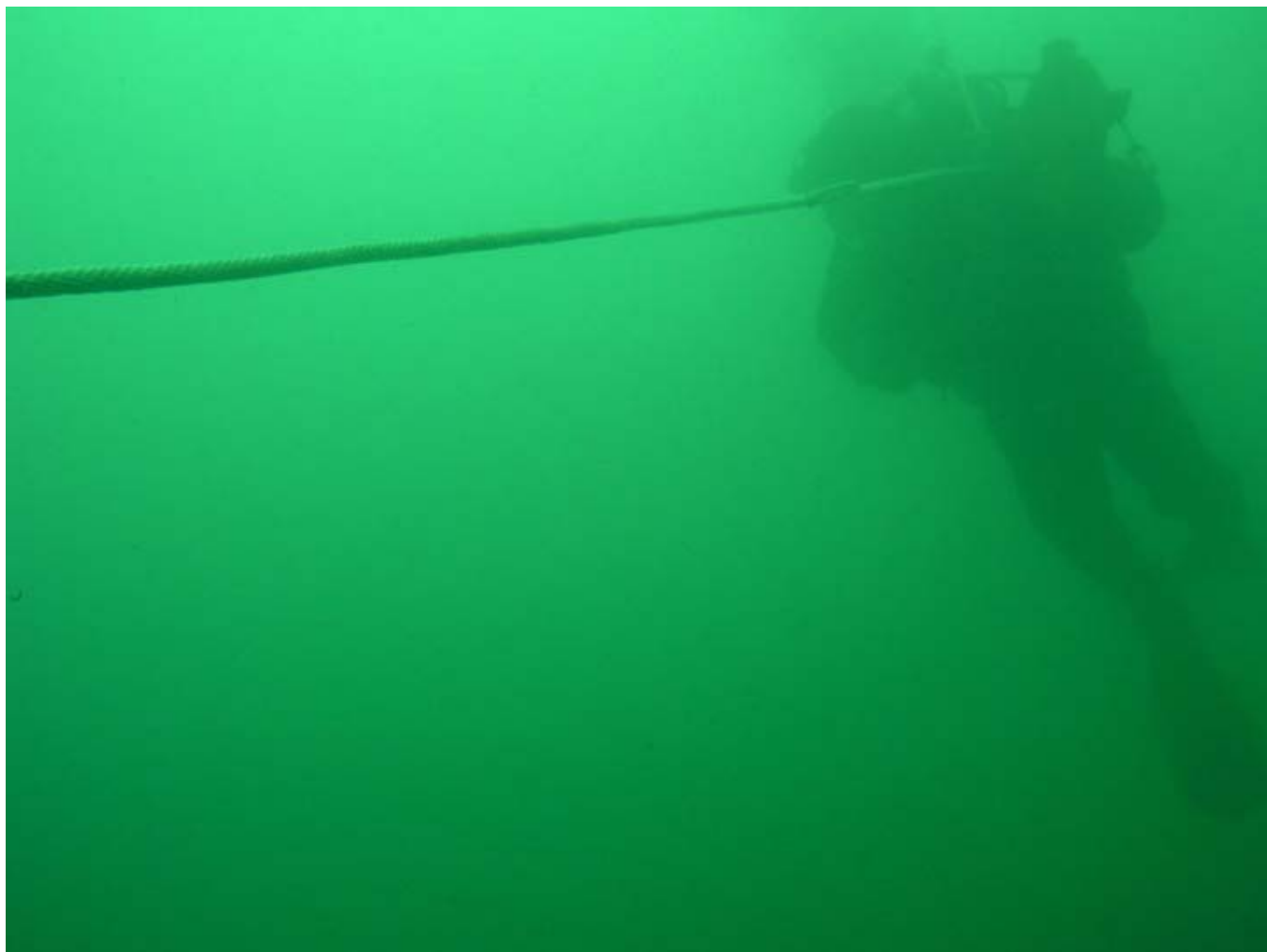
Product: Video, digital, and sector scan images were taken and a detailed report was provided to the criminal investigators.

Contact: Sean Sheldrake, sheldrake.sean@epa.gov

Photos:



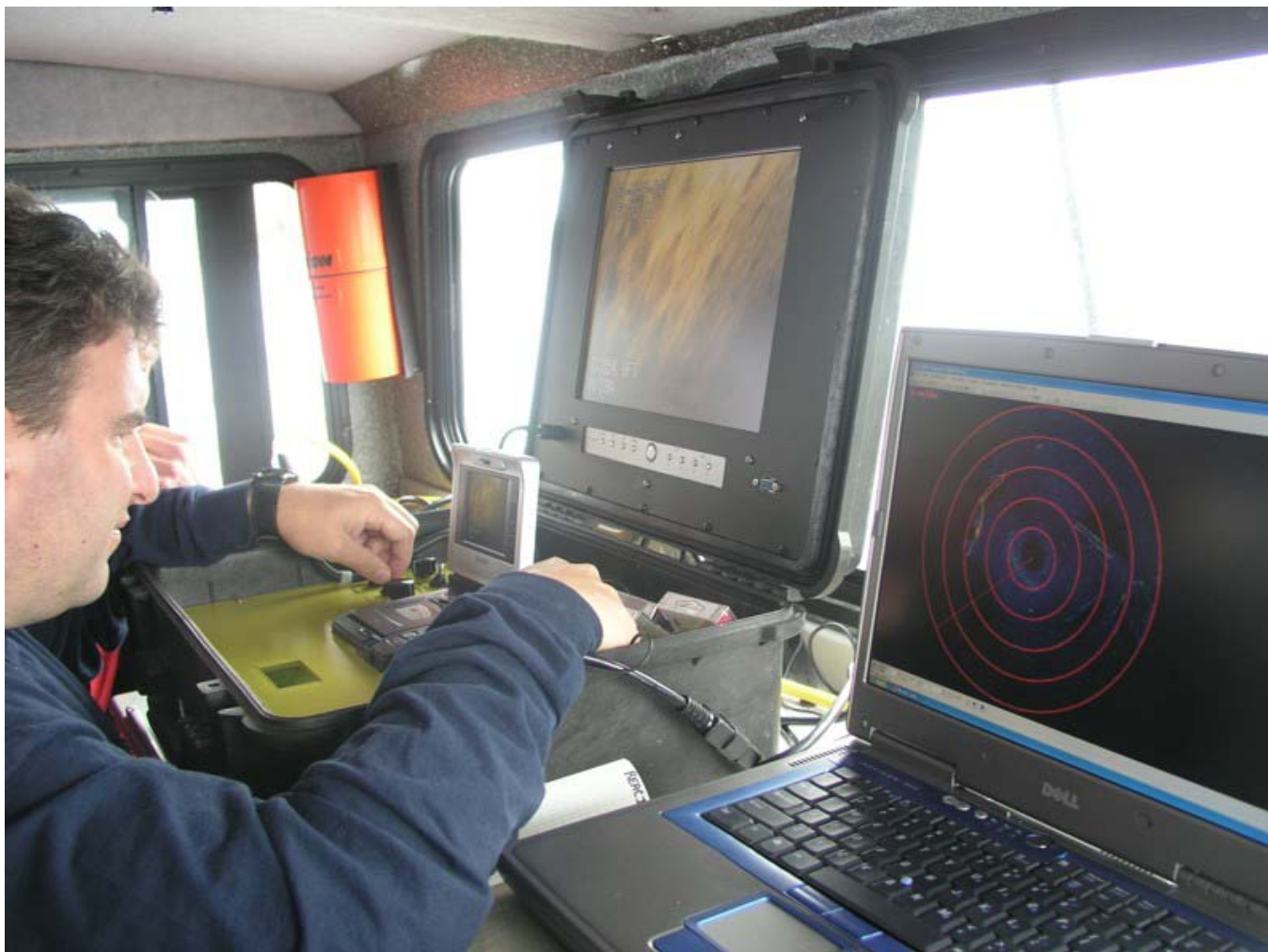
Deck mounted equipment



Diver descending a marker buoy placed on one of the dozens of sonar targets recorded to get a closer look.



Decaying vessel propeller just above the mudline.



ERT diver Scott Grossman operates the ROV, recording images taken on miniDV. Sector scan imaging to the right in photo.

Return to [EPA Region 10 Dive Team](#) homepage.