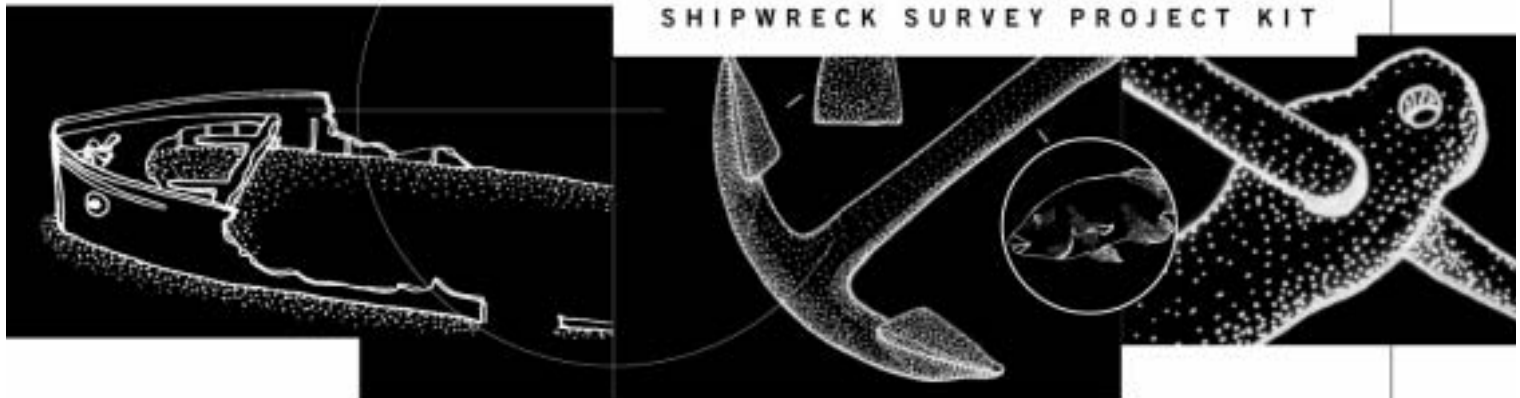




# WRECKS ALIVE

SHIPWRECK SURVEY PROJECT KIT



## What is Wrecks Alive!

*Wrecks Alive* is a community based, voluntary research project, co-ordinated by the NSW Heritage Office. It aims to encourage the recording of historic shipwreck sites in NSW. Divers are invited to examine their favourite wrecks, to research their history, and to record the range of marine life found on them.

## Project Aims

The project aims to:

- encourage divers to take an active role in preserving shipwrecks
- research the history of the ships and their loss
- record the visual appearance of Historic Shipwreck sites
- describe the range of marine life on Historic Shipwrecks
- increase diver participation in research related to shipwreck sites
- develop diver knowledge of recording techniques
- disseminate information gained through the project to the broader community.

Maritime Archaeologists from the Heritage Office manage NSW's Historic Shipwrecks and seek your help with wreck site research, documentation and protection. New South Wales has the largest concentration of shipwreck sites than any other State or territory in Australia. So far, the Heritage Office has identified 1800 known wreck events in the 200 years since European settlement. Divers and others have so far located over 260 of these important cultural sites. Around Australia about 7000 ships have been lost and about 700 wrecks have been found.

## Why Protect Shipwrecks ?

Shipwrecks are important for many reasons. Shipwrecks are important reminders of Australia's maritime past. By inspecting shipwrecks, we can learn about developments in marine engineering and technologies, trades and cargoes, past working conditions and life on board. Like any archaeological site, shipwrecks can provide information that no longer survives in written archives or which is lost from general memory. They remain as fragile time capsules on the sea floor.

As attractive dive sites, they offer a varied diving experience. As mini reef systems, they abound in colourful marine life and serve as breeding grounds and refuges for the many fish species which rely on them.

## Step back in time

Shipwrecks are fun to visit and provide divers a rare opportunity to step back in time. Divers can re-live the drama of each loss as they swim over a shattered hull. Together we have a unique opportunity to experience the past and preserve it for the future. Join the Project and become involved in this fascinating opportunity. When first launched in 1993, this project was an Australian first and involved over thirty group and individual projects. Simply choose your favourite site, take an underwater slate and jump into the water!

## Who Can Join ?

*Wrecks Alive* is aimed at dive shops, dive clubs, Wreck Diver Courses and individual divers. Even non-divers can become involved by assisting with historic research, writing and drawing up site plans. Become "Wreck Wise". Individuals and Community groups can play a major role in recording our fragile Historic Shipwreck sites and help to preserve them for future generations to enjoy.



### Which Shipwrecks to choose ?

With over 260 Historic Shipwrecks located in NSW's, you have a wide selection to choose from. Most towns or suburbs have their own local collection. You should choose a shipwreck which can be easily visited by your group and one which can be safely dived according to established recreational diving standards.

### What do we do with the results ?

A selection of the best entries will be published in leading dive magazines. The results of the project will be compiled into an annual report summarising all the data that you or your group collected. Each group project will receive a complimentary copy of the final report produced by the Heritage Office. Additional copies will be available for a nominal fee. Outstanding individual or group entries will also receive a copy of the Heritage Office's celebrated *Shipwreck Atlas of NSW*.

### When does it start ?

Just go for it ! *Wrecks Alive* is open now ! Simply contact the Heritage Office's Maritime Archaeology Program on the number below and register your project. Tell us which shipwreck will be recorded, the member(s) of your group, and where relevant, the dive shop or Scuba club involved.

### How long do we have ?

*Wrecks Alive* runs continuously. Visit your site as weather and time permits. All entries must be completed and returned to the Heritage Office **by the end of December 1999** to be included in the report for that year and the end of December 2000 for that year, and so on.

### What do we have to do ?

The project is intended to be *easy and fun to complete*. Simply dive and record. Undertake wreck site sketches or more detailed site plans. Conduct historic research on land at the major libraries and available archives. First contact the Heritage Office to find out about which records are already held.

After completing site drawings and observing the major elements of the wreck site, record fish and marine life living on, in or around your wreck. Where possible, record approximate numbers of fish species and any interesting or rare species. Don't forget to record the types of visiting fish. Note the type and range of fixed marine growth. Photograph the range of species where possible.

A sketch plan of the wreck will help in plotting your wrecks habitat types. Look at the changes in species types between shallow and deeper wreck sites. Compare the marine growth on exposed and sheltered sides of the wreck. Note the location of the shipwreck, its depths, orientation, prevailing currents or swells, water temperature, bottom type, etc. This will allow the same wreck to be continually recorded over different months and with changing conditions.

### Getting Started

Once you have decided to join this exciting project, fill out the attached registration form and forward it to the Heritage Office. You will need to provide general contact details, the nature of your project (individual, group, club or shop) and the wreck site you wish to record. The Heritage Office can provide you with historic records to enable you to begin the historic documentation part of the project. Then it is a matter of organising visits to the site to begin the wreck site documentation component. This will involve the graphic recording of the site through underwater sketches and/or plans, and the recording of marine life present at the site. If you have access to an underwater camera or video, this will assist your work.

Your final short report, together with drawings and key photographs, should then be sent to the Heritage Office for editing and compilation into the final *Project Report*. All photographs will be returned. Contributors are asked to supply copies of all historic references obtained as part of your research (eg. newspaper clippings, Lloyd's Register of British Shipping reports, ship registers, marine reference books, etc).

All contributors (text, photographs, site plans, etc) will be credited. Individuals, dive shops, clubs, associated organisations or diving courses will also be acknowledged. These are YOUR projects!

***Thank you for participating in Wrecks Alive !***

## Contents

This kit will assist you to gather information to complete your projects. Remember, there are three main tasks:

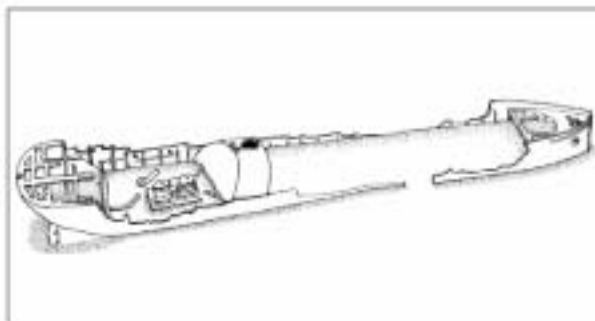
1. complete limited research on the wreck's history
2. complete an underwater site plan and sketches
3. document the marine life observed at the site

### Which shipwreck to choose?

The Heritage Office's *Shipwreck Atlas of NSW (Ed.3)* lists over 200 shipwrecks in NSW that have been located and positively identified. Choose a site which you can access readily and one which can be easily dived. Don't forget that most shipwrecks in NSW are protected under State or Commonwealth legislation (see below). Make sure that your work will not impact on the site in any way. All survey and documentation tasks are restricted to recording observed features only, with no excavation or removal of relics permitted.

## 1. Historic Research

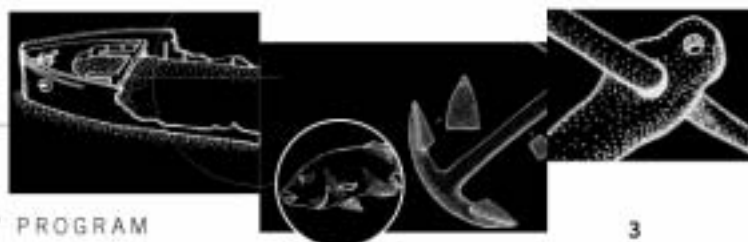
Having nominated your wreck you can begin gathering the reference information you require. This can be relatively easy to undertake by spending some time in your local library or Historical Society. The historical background to the vessel should be brief yet informative. At the end of this kit you will find a list of organisations who might be able to assist you with research. Remember, many of these organisations are run on a voluntary basis just as your involvement in this project is voluntary. Where possible ensure that your communication with them is a two-way exchange of information. All information that you obtain should be credited to the organisation or individual that supplied the information.



The following areas are a guide to the information that you could find:

The vessel's date and place of construction, the builder and yard, the vessel type (eg. clipper, paddle steamer, screw steamer), its construction (eg wood, composite, iron), usual trade (eg. collier, coastal trader, immigrant ship), its tonnage, principle dimensions, regular ports of call, unusual events or cargoes/fast passages, any modifications (eg. lengthening, new engines and boilers), the final cargo, wreck event, and any evidence of contemporary salvage attempts.

Research is always more accurate if you can access contemporary records. Those of greatest benefit include the *Lloyds Register of British Shipping*, *The Register of British Ships (at Australian Ports)*, shipping arrival and departure records, *Marine Board of Enquiry* reports (following loss), and contemporary newspaper stories. Many newspapers from last century provide useful accounts of shipwreck events. Be sure to provide a



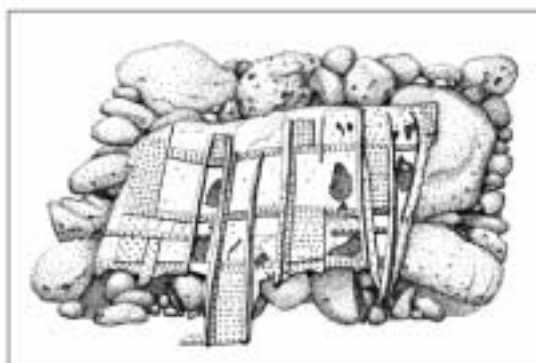


reference (footnotes) for all details recorded in your text. This will help the Heritage Office to check your results later.

Where possible, try and locate original drawings, photographs or paintings of your vessel. These provide an important source of information on the general appearance of the vessel and will help you identify features observed at the wreck site. Important collections are held at major archives (not always in NSW), including the State/Mitchell Library (Sydney), in contemporary newspapers, and at local and regional museums. Rare material can sometimes be found in personal collections, held by families descended from shipping owners and crews.

## 2. The Underwater Site Plan

The best way to interpret a wreck site is to draw it. It is an essential element of any scientific study of a site. The plan does not have to be detailed. Even a simple sketch of the site will allow you to mark the location of major features, provide a visual appearance of the remains, and allow you to plot the location of marine life types. A picture tells a thousand words.



Many details of the wreck site can be recorded including hull and debris orientation, state of deterioration, major surviving elements, cargo and bottom topography. Wreck drawings can become extremely useful guides for later visitors to a site, and for continuing interpretative projects such as Wreck Trails, plaques and diving brochures.

There are many ways to go about producing a wreck site plan. Ask the Heritage Office in the first instance. The level of information that can be recorded will be related to the amount of time you can spend at the site. Photographs and video provide a useful means to add in details later. To get started, all you need is a slate, a pencil, some drawing film, tapes and a compass.

### Wreck Site Description

Part of the recording process is the description of the wreck site. Write a few notes about the wreck's orientation, major surviving elements, the method of construction, materials used, state of preservation, the depth of the site, the bottom topography (eg: is the wreck on flat reef, boulders, shifting sand, mud), variations in visibility, susceptibility to currents and surge, any visible remains of cargo.



As with drawings and photographs, a clear description of a wreck can greatly increase the understanding and enjoyment that divers and non-divers gain from a site.

### Location Map

A location map should also be included with your Project entry, indicating the approximate position of the wreck site and nearest landmarks. A scale and north point are also important. Compass bearings, transit sketches or GPS positions should also be included.

