

SS *Tarpon*
Take an Underwater Tour
Audio Transcripts

Midships

As we swim south, we come upon the ship's main boiler. The grate-like object on the left is the back tube-plate, and the two large circles on the right are the furnaces. As you can see, this cylindrical boiler is now home to a variety of fish.

As we continue south across the site, we can see the remains of the midships section of *Tarpon*. These deck beams and hull plating once stood tall above the seabed, but over time, due to storms and modern salvage attempts, have become twisted and broken.

Here we can see a portion of *Tarpon*'s hull, which was 160 feet long, constructed with iron plates, like this one, joined together and supported by iron beams. On her final voyage, these iron plates carried more than 200 tons of general cargo which never reached its destination.

As we continue along we head toward the bow of *Tarpon*. Here we see additional hull plates and structural remains.

The large object coming into view on our left is the ship's anchor chain. Over time the chain links have concreted together to form a large conglomerate.

Stern

In 1997 *Tarpon* became Florida's sixth Underwater Archaeological Preserve. This monument with a bronze plaque was placed on site to inform visitors of the significance of this historic vessel and of the commitment of its captain, Willis G. Barrow, to the commerce of the Gulf Coast for more than 30 years.

The plaque is located just south of *Tarpon*'s main engines. As we look up, the machinery towers above us. The vertical compound steam engines, now overgrown with soft and hard corals, are like a monument to the site. Although the hull structure no longer stands, the inner workings of the ship's engines still look intact.

As we head toward the stern, we can see the propeller drive shafts below us. These shafts connected the engines to the propellers, which pushed *Tarpon* through the water for almost 50 years. We can also see the twisted rivets, iron beams, and hull plates that at one time formed the shape of the vessel but today are home to a variety of fish and other marine life.