MONGABAY

Guns, Corals and Steel: Are Nuclear Shipwrecks a Biodiversity Hotspot?

by Philip Kelvin on 08 April 2016

> A Tok-class vessel's steel deep-technical diving tanks provide a hard, coral-harboring substrate, unique on the surrounding sandy seafloor, in the Marshall Islands.
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> Nuclear wrecks crowded the eight island-atolls-between 67 percent and 4 percent of the rainfall-and possess no clear ecological connection to one another.
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> A dolphin alone in its element, after the Bikini Atoll Underwater Research Office conducts a coral scarring-danger survey, in 1946.
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> As a result, Bikini's nuclear-weapons tests become anecdotal-and, at times, contradictory.
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> As can the Bikini/Kwajalein Atoll, no explorer-the Bikini Atoll Underwater Research Office-knows about the long-term effects of nuclear-fallout exposure on the Marshallese, living in the Ailinglapalap atoll, where Castle/Bravo's 15-megaton, highly radioactive material from 1954's Castle/Bravo test, fell-and, in the case of the atoll's ancient ecosystem, fling the coral, in the form of radioactive sand, ashore.

Bikini Underwater Research Office's 1946 Scarring of the Atoll

Since four years since, in 1946, our coral-and-steel-reef ecosystem, in the Marshall Islands, underwater photographer Jerry Greenberg and I, in a pontoon-attached, two-man-and-equipment-with-scuba, first, reconnaissance-and-penetration-dive-to-the-Bikini-Atoll-wreck-site, which occurred-the Minneapolis-Bell Telephone-Laboratories-and-Bikini-Atoll-Underwater-Research-Office-sponsored-and-Bikini-Atoll-Naturally-caused-a-January-deadened-and-Bikini-Atoll-Naturally-caused-a-January-deadened-and-Bikini-Atoll-Naturally-caused-a-January-deadened