

Wrecks

Photo and text from "Wrecks of Sardinia" (Relitti di Sardegna) by Egidio Trainito.

Lying on the bottom of the sea, these wrecks rest on the sand. Once the pride of their respective captains and pilots, they are now the lair of fish and a bed for seaweed and anemone. Inside the Marine Area, there are eight wrecks of particular interest – seven ships and an airplane.

AMALIA

Schooner

Location: Off of S. Teodoro

Depth: 40 meters

Built in 1931, this ship belonged to Nicola Marchigiani from San Benedetto del Tronto.

Registered to the Port of Ancona (license 736) the ship was later commandeered by the Italian Royal Navy in Ancona on May 25, 1940. It entered into service on the following June 1, with the initials A. 47, as an auxiliary minesweeper.

The ship was sunk by cannon on July 18, 1943, at 2.10 PM by the Safari, 16 miles and 345° from Cape Comino. This account was confirmed by an eyewitness who was aboard a sister minesweeping ship and managed to escape from the submarine.

KLEARCHOS

Motorboat

Location: Between Tavolara and Molara Islands

Depth: 74 meters

This Greek cargo ship was carrying a cargo of toxic substances. The ship caught fire on July 14 and forces from the nearby American base at La Maddalena were unable to extinguish it. Instead, the ship was left to sink between Tavolara and Molara Islands. In subsequent years, the hazardous cargo was removed and today it remains covered with red and yellow sea fans.

MAMMA ELVIRA

Motorboat

Location: Molara Island

Registered to the Port of Viareggio (license 750), this ship belonged to Delfino of La Spezia.

It was sailing from Cagliari to La Spezia with 360 tons of cargo and 40 tons of explosives on October 29, 1950, when, at 1.15 it sank one mile from Molara due to bad weather.

The 8 crew members aboard, under control of Commander Alberto Biancalana, managed to save themselves after 4 hours of struggle, eventually finding refuge on the island of Punta Timono in Tavolara.

SAN GIUSEPPE

Motorboat

Location: Molara Island

Registered to the Port of Viareggio (license 750), this ship belonged to Delfino of La Spezia. It was sailing from Cagliari to La Spezia with 360 tons of cargo and 40 tons of explosives on October 29, 1950, when, at 1.15 it sank one mile from Molara due to bad weather.

The 8 crew members aboard, under control of Commander Alberto Biancalana, managed to save themselves after 4 hours of struggle, eventually finding refuge on the island of Punta Timono in Tavolara.

CHRISO

Motorboat

Location: Punta La Greca

Depth: 3-5 meters

Chrisso was a motorboat that belonged to Hero Shipping Co. Ltd in Cyprus, and was built in 1958 in Oldenburg. The name was changed four times – the first name was Sorteklint, followed by Jacqueline, Coral Bay and Inalotte Blumenthal. Tradition states that changing the name of a ship brings misfortune, and in this case it proved true. The Chrisso went aground on the night of December 31, 1974 between the island of Reulino and a sand bar, landing on the rocks of Punta La Greca, after it was ripped from its moorings during rough seas. An eyewitness account states that the ship tried several times to recover the anchors and find shelter behind Tavolara, but all attempts were useless. The crew escaped unharmed, and the ship avoided major damage as well. The ship remained aground for a long time and was protected by a security guard. It was later sold to another company that intended to recover it, but a fire destroyed the equipment on board. The ship was eventually abandoned, and was ripped in two and nearly destroyed completely by rough seas.

OMEGA

Cargo Ship

Location: Scoglio dei Fratelli, east of Molara Island

Depth: 18 meters

The Omega was a cargo ship registered to the Port of Cagliari and was the property of the Canali di Genova shipping company. On February 17, 1974 the ship was traveling from Sfax in Tunisia and headed to Viareggio with empty cargo holds. The ship crashed against the Scogli dei Fratelli (also known as the Cerri, east of Molara Island) during rough seas at night and rapidly descended into the water. Seven sailors died during the episode (all from Monte di Procida) and the only survivor was Commander Domenico Barone, who was 27 years old at the time. Many search missions were undertaken to find the seven sailors, but to no avail. The wreck was later blown up to provide access inside for divers searching for the dead sailors, but their bodies were never recovered. On March 5 of the same year, one corpse was recovered after it became entangled in a fishing net during tidal movements by the Island of Mortorio

OUED YQUEM

Cargo Ship

Location: Near San Teodoro

Depth: 36 metri

Allied submariners sank at least two ships off of Cape Coda Cavallo: a minesweeper and an "old steam cart," which transported bails of tobacco and, most likely, grain. Eyewitness testimony and archival records suggest that the first ship was the Amalia, while the second, also known as the "wreck of Molara," has only recently been identified as the Oued Yquem. This ship was constructed in 1920 in the A. Van Dulvendijk shipyard, and was originally called the Noordzee. It was later given to the Compagnie de Navigation Paquet of Marseilles, which christened the ship with the new name. Constructed with mixed materials, wood and steel, the ship had grand dimensions: over 70 meters of the hull remain. It was a steamship with two pistons. When it sank, it quickly fell into a bad state; testimony recounts that the ship was headed towards Marseilles from Latakia in Syria. Along with the French commander, there were 12 – 13 crew members aboard. On October 3, 1941 at 12.32 the ship was attacked by a Dutch submarine O21 torpedo. Eyewitnesses said that the submarine captured only the commander, while crew members (who escaped via a lifeboat) were left to escape..

REGGIANE 2001

Bomber Jet

Location: Molara

Depth:

Only 238 units of the Caproni-Reggiane RE 2001 "Falco II" aircraft were produced, and today only one remains outside of the water (located in the Museo dell'Aeronautica Militare, the Air Force Museum). The plane that sank at Molara is almost certainly another one of these planes, even if it has not yet been identified. The reasons for the sinking of the plane remain unknown; the only known fact is that the plane had Pirelli tires produced after 1946, meaning it did not sink during war. In Sardinia, RE 2001 planes operated in two divisions; one was the 22nd group, which was involved with the Allied invasion of North Africa, during which these planes carried 100 kg bombs. The 24th group, instead, operated during 1943 out of the Venafiorita Airport in Olbia. During the Battle of Mid-August (August 12, 1942) two RE 2001 jets departed from Villacidro and unsuccessfully attempted to attack the Illustrious aircraft carrier with 650 kg bombs.