



MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN DATA PORTAL

RESOURCES FOR  
REGIONAL OCEAN PLANNING



## MARINE LIFE

With competing demands for ocean use at an all-time high, marine life needs to be protected through ocean planning now more than ever, in order to sustain ocean health and coastal livelihoods and economies.

Marine life, commercial and recreational fishing, offshore alternative energy, ports, commercial shipping, and recreational boating are just a few of the interests that must be addressed in regional ocean planning today.

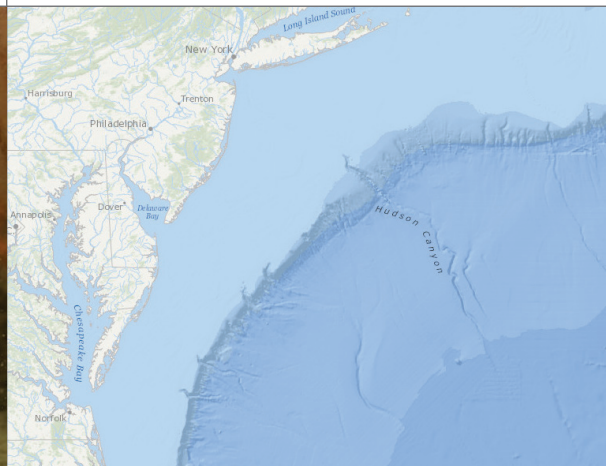
We need accurate data and information of where, when, and how stakeholders use the ocean to inform priorities for regional ocean planning and to provide ocean managers with the best decision support tools for maintaining and improving the health of the ocean, coastal resources, and coastal economies.

### MARCO and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) is committed to providing the tools and resources necessary for an accessible, scientifically-informed and adaptive approach to ocean management.

The MARCO Portal, an online toolkit and resource center, consolidates the best available data and enables stakeholders to visualize and analyze ocean resources and human use information such as fishing grounds, recreational areas, shipping lanes, habitat areas, and energy sites.

The Portal serves as a platform to engage all stakeholders in ocean planning from the five-state Mid-Atlantic region—putting all of the essential data and state-of-the art mapping and visualization technology into the hands of the agencies, industry, and community leaders engaged in ocean planning.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- Offshore habitats such as slopes and canyons provide foundations for deep sea corals, rare sponges, and anemones. These habitats provide shelter and food sources for lobsters, crabs, flounders, hakes, skates, monkfish, and tilefish. (Natural Resources Defense Council 2011)
- Nearshore habitats provide essential juvenile nursery grounds and spawning habitats for recreationally and commercially important fish and shellfish such as the Atlantic cod, Atlantic sturgeon, blue fish and quahog. (NOAA 2011)

### ABOUT MARCO

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) is a regional ocean partnership established by the Governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia for shared action to improve ocean health and contribute to the high quality of life and economic vitality in the region.

### ABOUT THE PORTAL

The MARCO Portal is an online toolkit and resource center to engage stakeholders in ocean planning in the five-state Mid-Atlantic region. Learn more at [www.portal.midatlanticocean.org](http://www.portal.midatlanticocean.org).

“I love the Mid-Atlantic because it’s got a bit of everything; one month you can see butterflyfish in the bays and mahi-mahi offshore, and a few months later you’re bundled in a wooly hat and gloves, seeking cod. One season we’re visited by sea turtles from the tropics; the next by sea ducks from the arctic. Who needs to go anywhere when the world comes to you!” *Rick Robins, Chairman, Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council*



## Healthy ocean habitats = healthy coastal economies

The Mid-Atlantic ocean is home to an important diversity of flora and fauna, supported by habitat in unique canyons, reefs and the outer continental shelf. The Mid-Atlantic's continental shelf slope, in particular, supports high abundances of swordfish, tuna, sea turtles, marine mammals, and seabirds. This area is also essential for migration of marine mammals, sea turtles, and fish.

These systems and habitats are crucial for support of a healthy marine environment, and they feed important fishing, tourism and recreation economies. They must be managed to prevent significant detrimental effects to all ocean stakeholders.

## Your voice matters

In order to protect marine life and the economies on which depends on it, we need input from tourism, recreation, conservation and other marine life stakeholders.

Whether reviewing existing information or contributing new data to fill critical gaps, your participation in the MARCO Portal project will help set the stage for future management decisions that balance diverse goals and provide lasting benefits for our region.

Through interactive meetings, web forums, and one-on-one communications with various stakeholder groups, you can join us in developing the Portal and successful ocean planning in our region.

By engaging with the Portal project, you will:

- Vet our existing data and information to ensure accuracy and relevance
- Fill data gaps, through contributions of local and scientific knowledge
- Learn how to use the digital visualization tool and improve its usability
- Build inclusive and comprehensive ocean management criteria

## To participate in the Portal Project, please contact:

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## PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Monmouth University's Urban Coast Institute, Rutgers University's Edward J. Bloustein School and Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis, The Nature Conservancy, The University of Delaware's Gerald J. Mangone Center for Marine Policy, and Ecotrust. The Project Team collaborates closely with a Steering Committee, which includes MARCO representatives from the states of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, as well as federal agency representatives.

This project is supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Region Ocean Partnership Funding Program.

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