

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL PLANNING BODY

PUBLIC WEBINAR

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL

OCEAN ACTION PLAN

DECEMBER 8, 2016



Webinar Objectives

- Review changes made to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (Plan) in response to public comment.
- Answer questions and provide input to the public about Plan implementation and other topics.



Webinar Agenda

- 4:00 pm Welcome, introductions, agenda review
- 4:05 pm Overview of the Mid-Atlantic RPB and public comment process
- 4:10 pm Overview of public comments and RPB response
- 4:20 pm Plan implementation update
- 4:40 pm Facilitated public Q&A
- 4:55 pm Wrap up
- 5:00 pm Adjourn



Webinar Materials

The following materials will be posted on the RPB website at www.boem.gov/mid-atlantic-regional-planning-body after the webinar:

- A recording of the webinar
- A transcript of the webinar
- The full slide presentation
- A record of all chat questions and comments from the public
- A list of webinar participants

Overview of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) was established in 2013 to design and implement collaborative Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning.

The primary purpose of the RPB is to:

- Improve coordination
- Share data
- Build collaborative relationships to address regional ocean issues

The RPB includes members of 6 Mid-Atlantic states, 2 federally recognized tribes, 8 federal agencies, and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.



Public comment process

- To ensure the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (Plan) represents stakeholders throughout the region, the RPB accepted comments from the public during a 60 day public comment period in the summer of 2016.
 - During the public comment period, the RPB received written public comments from 34,600 people.
- In conjunction with the public comment period, MARCO hosted open houses in five Mid-Atlantic states in July. Over 160 people participated in these open houses and submitted verbal comments to the Plan.



Public comment themes

Most, but not all, sub-sections of the plan were addressed in public comments. Some of the most commonly commented on sections include:

- Support for the Plan and the planning process
- Best Practices
- Ecologically Rich Areas
- Sustainable Ocean Uses
- The continuation of the Data Portal
- Stakeholder engagement
- Implementation and the future of the RPB
- Suggestions of new topics and ideas

The RPB has prepared a Response to Public Comments Document that describes how comments were incorporated into the plan in detail. This document is [available on the RPB's website](#).



Public comment response

The public expressed support for **Best Practices** and their incorporation into agency business, and requested that the RPB provide clarity on how best practices will be incorporated.

In response, the RPB clarified that:

- Agencies may develop public operating procedures that describe best practices and take additional steps towards formalizing best practices beyond what is outlined in the Plan.
- The Data Portal, a key component of best practices, is available to all parties.



Public comment response

The public had many questions about **Ecologically Rich Areas (ERAs)**, including how they will identified and used. Commenters expressed both support for and concern about identifying ERAs.

In response, the RPB stated that:

- Publically available data products will be used to identify ERAs.
- The work will proceed with careful stakeholder and scientific review.
- Further detail about the process for identifying ERAs will be developed in an implementation focused work plan in 2017.
- The RPB does not have the authority to identify discrete areas of the ocean for specific management objectives.

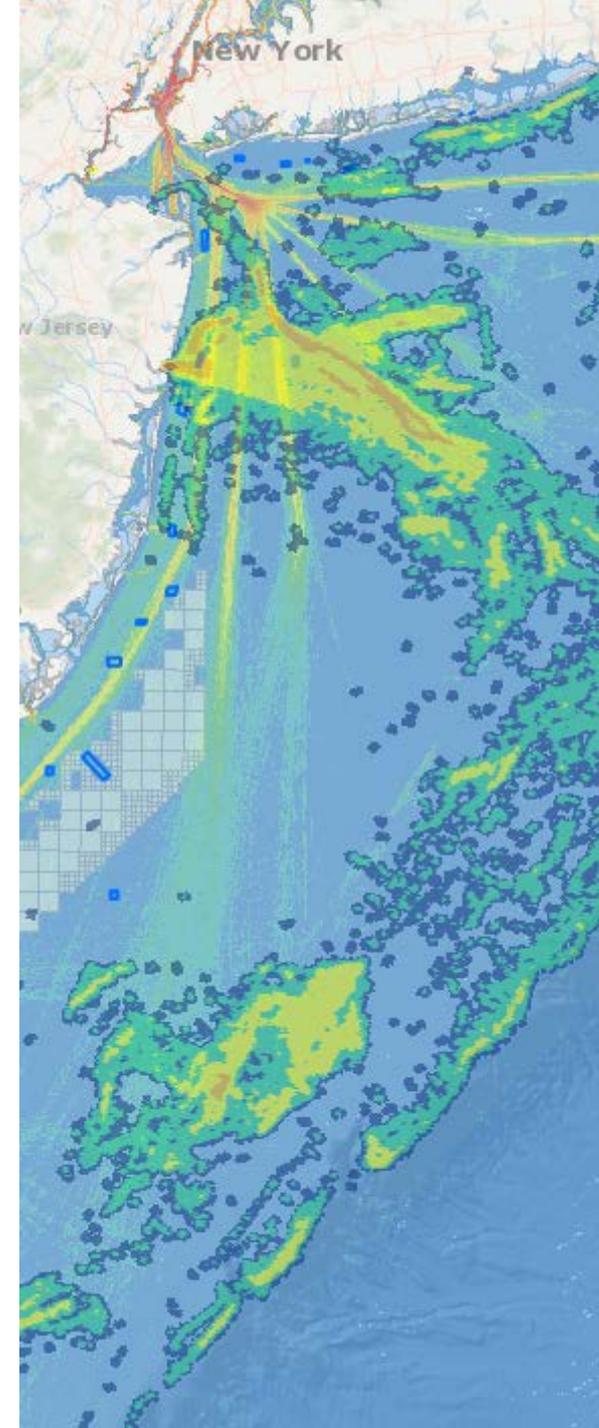


Public comment response

Many comments expressed support for the **Data Portal** and posed questions about data gaps and the continuation of the Data Portal.

In response, the RPB stated that:

- The Data Portal will be updated as capacity allows.
- Work to address data gaps is ongoing.
- Ongoing public engagement will continue to be critical for improving the Data Portal.
- Data Portal users should, as with all data and information, carefully consider limitations of data sets including data gaps and uncertainties.



Public comment response

Many commenters expressed support for **stakeholder engagement** during the planning process and requested details about future engagement opportunities.

In response, the RPB stated that:

- Stakeholder engagement will continue to be important to the RPB during Plan implementation.
- Specific timelines and processes for stakeholder engagement will be developed in an implementation focused work plan in 2017.

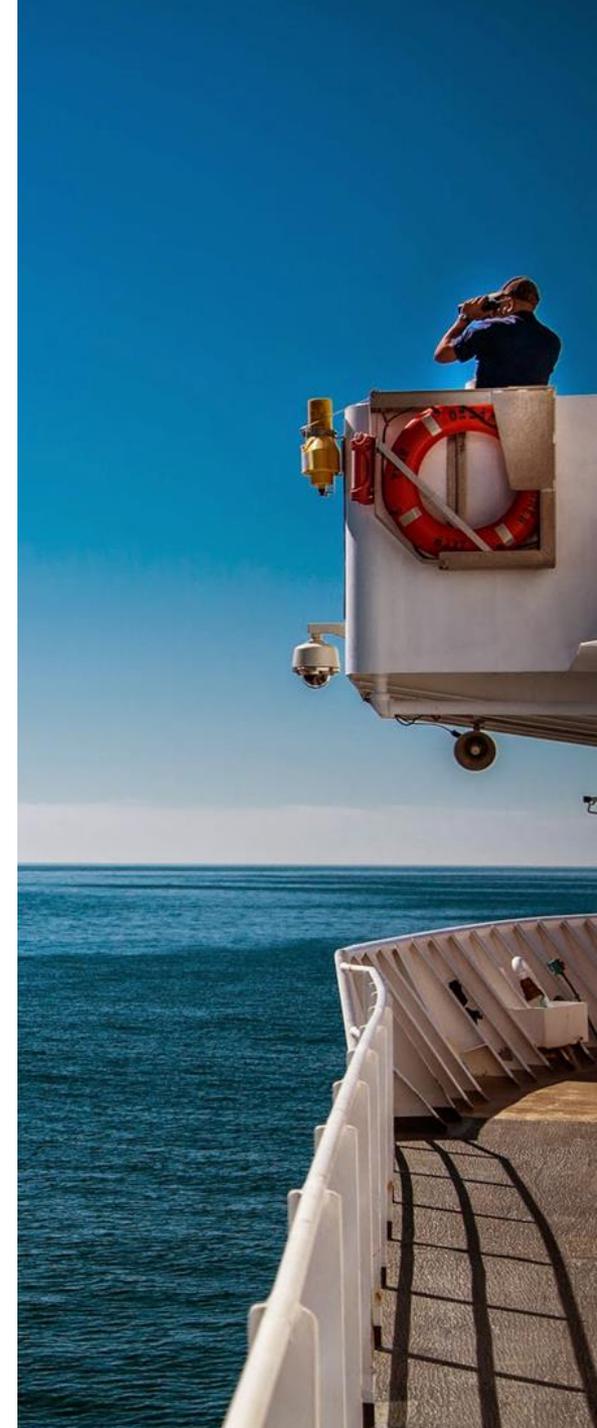


Public comment response

Many comments asked about **Plan implementation** and the future of the RPB, and expressed support for Plan performance monitoring and evaluation.

In response, the RPB stated that:

- The RPB will further develop its performance monitoring and evaluation approach during Plan implementation.
- Indicators specific to stakeholder and public engagement may be developed to inform performance monitoring and evaluation.





Plan Certification

- The Mid-Atlantic Plan was certified by the NOC on December 7, 2016, a historic step toward promoting healthy ocean ecosystems and sustainable ocean uses.
- Plan promotes integrated ocean data and best practices for informed and efficient management.
- Implementation will foster sound ocean management.



Future of the Mid-Atlantic RPB

- Transitioning from Plan development to implementation.
- RPB members are committed to ongoing collaboration to address opportunities and challenges facing the region, as articulated in the Plan.
- Implementation of actions directly supports existing agency missions, mandates, and priorities.
- Stakeholder engagement will continue to be a core priority for the RPB, as resources and opportunities allow.

Future of the Data Portal

- The RPB acknowledges the importance of the Data Portal to good ocean governance.
- The RPB is committed to maintaining, enhancing, and using the Data Portal.





Next Steps

In 2017:

- Proceed with action implementation and ongoing communication, coordination, collaboration.
- Share a draft work plan for public review.
- Proposed in-person public meeting in the Summer of 2017.

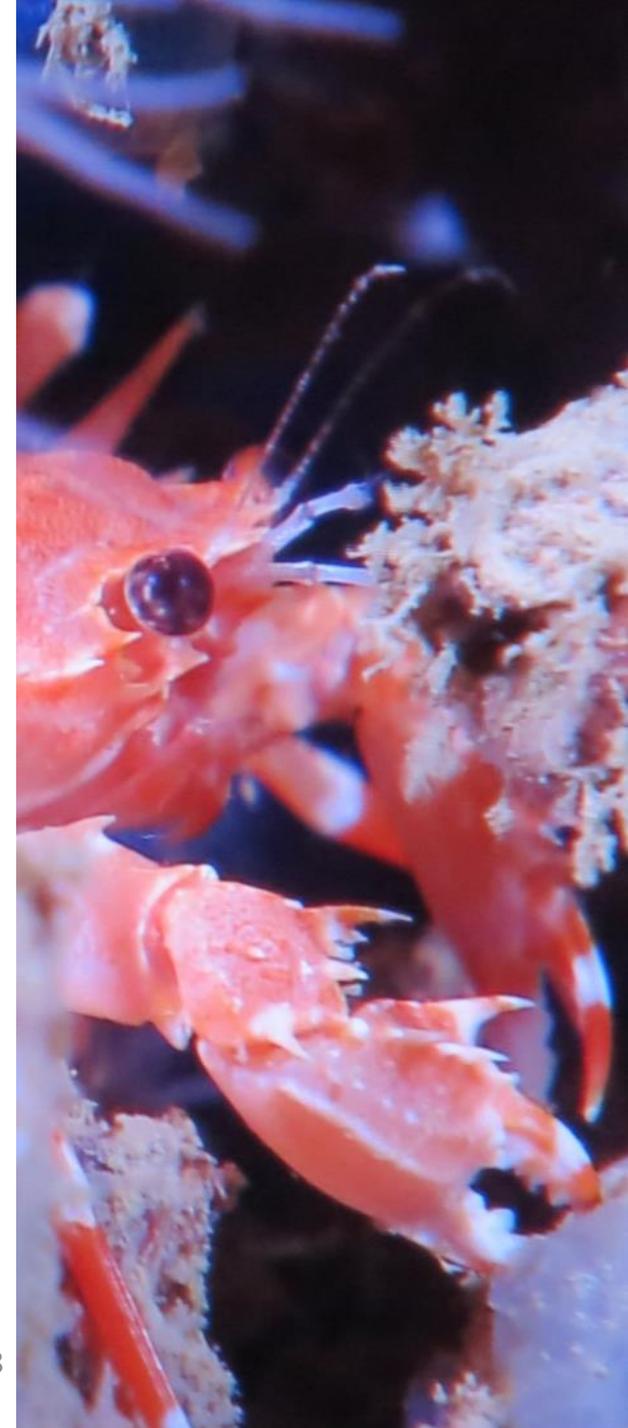
Selected Action Updates

Next Steps for Implementation



Update on HOE Action I – ERAs

- **Summary** – Identify and increase understanding of Ecologically Rich Areas of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean.
- **Next steps**
 - Finalize framework for identifying areas (step A) in collaboration with the Northeast as soon as possible.
 - Virginia CZM submitted a grant proposal in November 2016. If funded, this would allow MARCO staff and MDAT to undertake steps B – F of this action beginning in October 2017.
- **Stakeholder engagement**
 - Stakeholder input will be solicited on refinements to the approach in Step A.
 - Workshop to identify a pilot ERA if grant funds are secured.





Update on HOE Action 2 – Mapping Species Shifts

- **Summary** – Map shifts in ocean species and habitats.
- **Next steps**
 - MDAT completing literature review by end of 2016.
 - Complete formation of Work Group, conduct first call to review available data by spring 2017.
 - Work Group makes recommendations to RPB on how available data could be displayed in portal and provides a list of recommended priority data gaps to be filled.
- **Stakeholder engagement**
 - Convene stakeholders to preview data before posting and to identify any additional data gaps, as resources allow.

Update on HOE Action 3 – Ocean Acidification

- **Summary** – Develop a Mid-Atlantic Ocean Acidification Monitoring Network.
- **Next steps**
 - Identify and prioritize questions that the regional OA network should address - ***Dec 2016-Mar 2017***
 - Compile list of current monitoring, research technologies and data gaps - ***Dec 2016-Aug 2017***
 - Develop comprehensive plan for monitoring infrastructure - ***June-Dec 2017***
- **Stakeholder engagement**
 - Webinar series will aid prioritization discussions and understanding research needs among stakeholders.
 - ***Dec. 20; Jan. 17; Feb. 21; and March 21***
 - Mid-Atlantic Ocean Acidification workshop for all interested parties to present workgroup findings and gather stakeholder input to develop a comprehensive monitoring plan and infrastructure.
 - ***May 2017***





Update on HOE Action 4 – Marine Debris

- **Summary** – Develop a regionally appropriate strategy for marine debris reduction.
- **Next steps**
 - Create inventory of existing efforts in Mid-Atlantic in February 2017.
 - Identify gaps/needs in March 2017.
 - Host workshop to identify priority strategy to recommend to the RPB in June 2017.
 - Secure RPB approval of recommended strategy in July 2017.
 - Begin implementation in August 2017.
- **Stakeholder engagement**
 - Workshop to identify recommended marine debris strategy for full RPB approval.

Update on Ocean Energy Actions

- **Summary** – Identify key intersections of federal programs; use the Data Portal; engage fishing industries
- **Next steps** – actions underway in coordination with:
 - the DOE/DOI Offshore Wind Strategy action to post a **regulatory roadmap** on BOEM’s website by summer 2017
 - the interagency White House Offshore Wind Working Group
 - BOEM **updating its SOP** on Area Identification for offshore wind energy leasing, and linking to **website guidelines** pages
 - BOEM created an Atlantic Fishing Industry Communication and Engagement **webpage**
 - BOEM will leverage the DOE/DOI Offshore Wind Strategy action for **stakeholder meetings in fall 2017** to gather input for BOEM’s decision on the path forward for potential future Atlantic planning and leasing
- **Stakeholder engagement** – BOEM will convene scoping meetings, open houses, environmental studies meetings; accept online public comments; and consult with stakeholders and partners in state, tribal, local governments, and the MAFMC



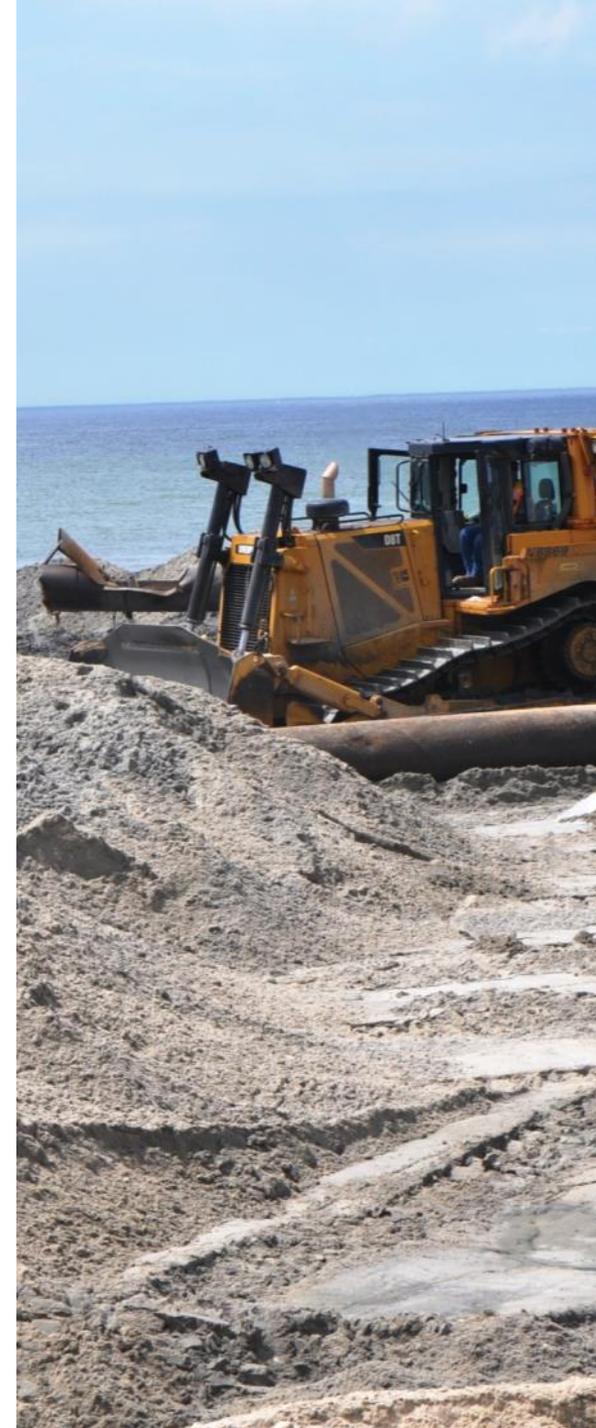


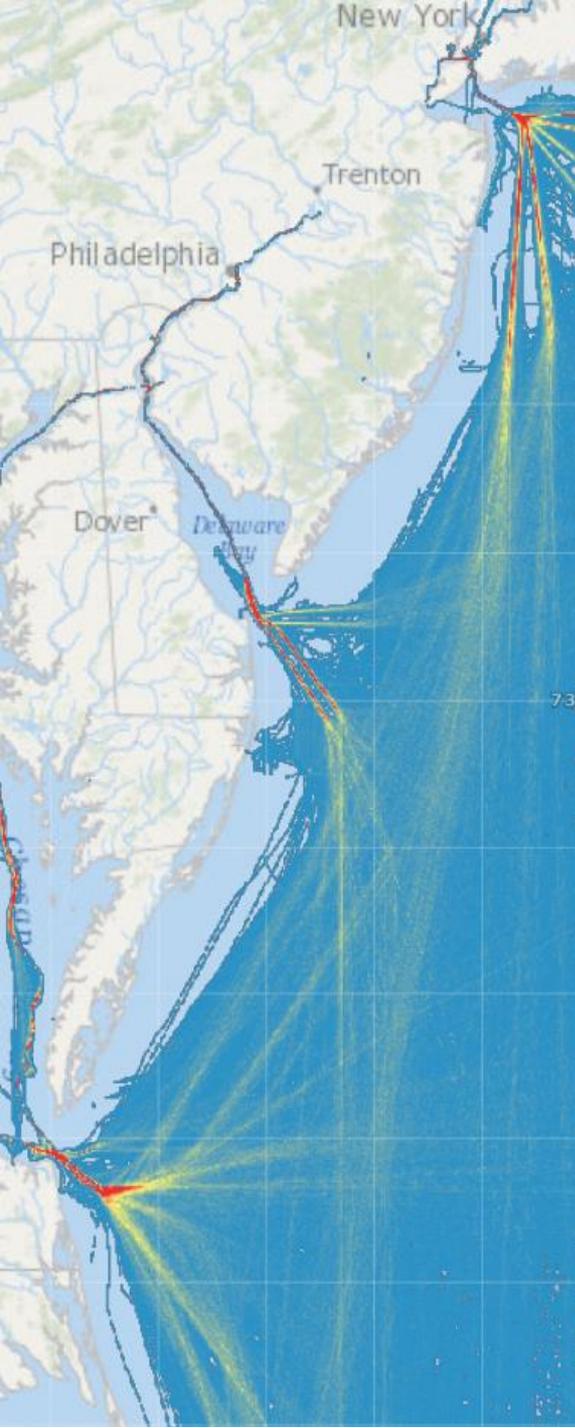
Update on Sand Management Actions

- **Summary** – Promote strategic stakeholder engagement and regional partnering initiatives
- **Next steps** – and recent related actions:
 - BOEM will convene **regional sand management working group**; convene meeting of fishermen about issues off NJ, likely in early 2017
 - BOEM will meet with the USACE New York District in early 2017 to **discuss collaboration** on upcoming projects on Long Island needing OCS sand resources
 - BOEM has been coordinating with the USACE Philadelphia District on **locations of potential OCS sand resource areas** for future NJ projects
- **Stakeholder engagement** – BOEM will facilitate enhanced coordination among coastal jurisdictions, federal and state regulatory agencies, and tribal entities on the use of sand and gravel resources in the Mid-Atlantic in the context of coastal adaptation and resilience planning and implementation

Update on Ocean Energy Action 3 and Sand Management Action 3

- **Summary** – Partner in studies, identify knowledge gaps, and increase access to research planning cycles related to ocean energy / Conduct studies to support sustainable management of offshore sand resources
- **Next steps** – and recent related actions:
 - BOEM held public *Atlantic Ocean Energy and Mineral Science Forum November 2016* on studies used in preparation of NEPA documents and consultations, and helped to identify new BOEM environmental studies to fill information needs
 - Related to DOE/DOI Offshore Wind Strategy action to **collect more comprehensive baseline data** through BOEM’s Environmental Studies Program to support **regional ocean planning**, NEPA processes, and predictive modeling
- **Stakeholder engagement** – BOEM solicits input from the RPB entities and public to its annual National Studies List and **sent a note to stakeholders** inviting ideas for future environmental studies for FY 2018-2020





Update on Maritime Commerce & Navigation Action I

- **Summary** – Enhance institutional awareness of the impact that maritime commerce exerts on the national and Mid-Atlantic economies and ensure that new and updated maritime commerce and navigational information is available at the local and regional levels, for integration into regional ocean planning.
- **Next steps** – Development of Implementation strategy for following Actions:
 - Monitor marine commerce trends and traffic patterns to identify and address emerging commerce and navigation needs
 - Maintain reliable ocean use data sets relevant to navigation
 - Catalogue intersections between entities whose authorities influence marine commerce and navigation and identify opportunities for improved coordination
 - Identify impacts to navigation and port infrastructure stemming from the Panama Canal expansion
- **Stakeholder engagement** –
 - Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Public forums
 - Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan Maritime Commerce and Navigation Safety Group:
 - Provide regional stakeholders with updated info on our OAP section 2.4.5 implementation progress
 - Provide forum for regional stakeholders to provide feedback and engage in the implementation process
 - Champion continued development of AIS data on MARCO Data Portal to assess and facilitate the compatibility among competing ocean uses.

Update on Non-Consumptive Recreation Action

- **Summary** – To account for the importance of nearshore and offshore non-consumptive recreational uses and their economic contributions to the Mid-Atlantic.
- **Next steps** – Survey non-consumptive recreational users to identify important areas and uses, develop best management practices that minimize potential conflicts with other uses and resources, and pursue opportunities for improvements in federal/state/tribal practices.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – Surveying, stakeholder meetings.



A dramatic photograph of a massive ocean wave crashing over a rocky shore. The wave is curling into a barrel, with a deep green and blue hue to its face. The sky is a dark, stormy blue, and the water is white with foam as it breaks. The overall mood is powerful and intense.

Questions?
Comments?

Please submit your questions or comments via
the webinar Q&A function.



Recap Webinar Materials

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A large, powerful ocean wave is crashing over a rocky shore. The wave is curling over, creating a tunnel-like structure. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the foam is white. The sky is a clear, deep blue.

Thank you!

<https://www.boem.gov/mid-atlantic-regional-planning-body/>

<https://www.boem.gov/Ocean-Action-Plan/>

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