

# Planning for the Many Needs of our Ocean

Demands to use the ocean, both its waters and natural resources, are expanding rapidly. Offshore shipping traffic is growing, ocean mining is increasing dramatically, plans for large offshore wind energy projects are becoming a reality, and our region's government agencies are making big decisions that will greatly impact the health of our ocean and coasts for decades to come.

At the American Littoral Society, conserving the ocean and coast from harm is part of our fundamental mission. We believe the best way to fulfill that mission, in light of these increasing demands, is with careful, coordinated ocean planning.

## Ocean Planning Makes Sense

Besides creating a more informed and coordinated approach to how we manage our ocean's resources, ocean planning ensures we make smart decisions about future uses. Specifically, ocean planning helps:

### Preserve the Ocean, Bays, and Coasts We Love:

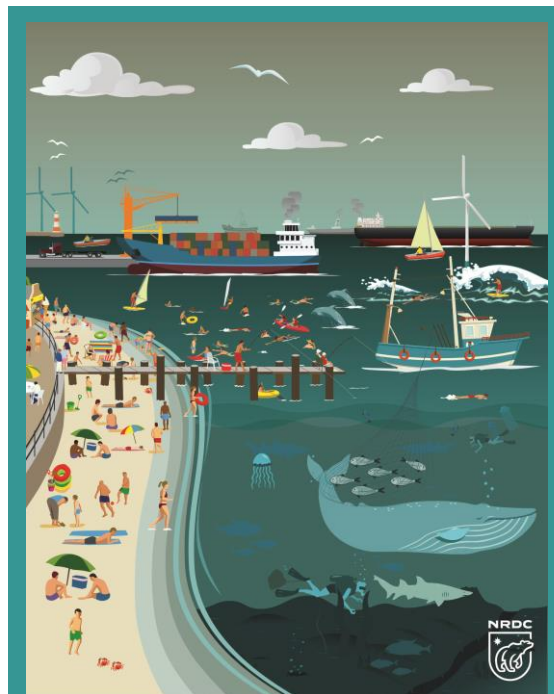
The Mid-Atlantic is home to a rich variety of fish and wildlife—from blue crabs to endangered North Atlantic right whales. But there are increasing demands for use of our ocean's resources. Regional ocean planning provides decision-makers with better information and tools to protect our coasts, ocean and bays.

### Ensure more Efficient Government Decisions:

Dozens of different agencies have overlapping and sometimes conflicting responsibilities for addressing ocean development. With the introduction of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan and Ocean Data Portal, state leaders across New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, as well as regional fisheries managers, tribal nations, and federal agencies, are more efficiently and effectively managing ocean use and conservation.

### Give Ocean Communities and Interests a Voice:

Just as towns come up with plans for how to use shared space, ocean planning provides a process to do the same across our shared waters. The regional ocean planning process provides citizens and organizations interested in ocean and coastal issues—such as beach goers and surfers, recreational and commercial fishing communities, businesses, and conservationists—a platform for voicing their needs and concerns in ensuring healthy ocean ecosystems and sustainable ocean uses. Now, as we move to the plan's implementation, continued open, public participation process is critical for its success.



Our region's ocean is an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$48 billion to the Mid-Atlantic region's gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 700,000 jobs. In New Jersey alone, ocean resources support more than 123,000 jobs and generate more than \$4.4 billion in wages annually.

**“I’ve seen firsthand how knowledge sharing and proactive ocean planning will greatly improve the execution of sand mining projects offshore.”**

**“With greater input and coordination among all of us who rely on special places off our coast, I’m more confident we won’t unnecessarily sacrifice our fishing spots to replenish our beaches.”**

- Ken Warchal, vice president of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association

## Avoiding Conflicts: Wind Energy

New Jersey—as well as many other coastal states concerned with rising sea levels and more frequent hurricanes—is pursuing wind energy development as a source of clean energy to help mitigate global climate change.

One challenge with wind energy is deciding where to place wind farms so they pose the least risk to the ocean, local communities and other industries. For example, poor placement of future wind farm projects could constrain the state's fishing industry, which annually adds \$1.7 billion to the economy. Construction could eliminate prime fishing spots and ecologically special places by damaging ocean bottom structures, and large wind farms could impair whale and bird migrations, and force fishermen to burn more fuel—adding additional costs and emitting more greenhouse gases—in order to travel around them.

To avoid such risks, regional ocean planning uses a suite of tools, information and processes to examine the entire picture of how we use, manage and conserve the ocean and coasts. Through enhanced data and stakeholder input, the plan can strengthen the protection of ocean and coastal habitats and encourage sustainable ocean practices and recreational opportunities. Using this tool and having all stakeholders participate can mitigate unintended consequences while moving new projects forward.



## SUPPORT REGIONAL OCEAN PLANNING

### A Solution we Built. A Solution that Works.

Ocean planning is for everyone. It's a tool we need to ensure healthy ocean ecosystems and sustainable ocean economies. From local municipalities to recreational fishing groups, ocean planning can help us protect the ocean environment, support a blue economy, and work better with our state and federal agencies.

Since 2013, the Mid-Atlantic states have worked with federal agencies, tribal nations and citizens to identify priorities and actions that will lead to the long-term health of our Mid-Atlantic ocean. The region developed a blueprint in 2016, called the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan. While voluntary, it is the region's vision for a healthy ocean and sustainable use through concrete action.

Regional ocean planning needs us to make it work: our voices, our involvement. Help us make Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning work for all.

### Mid-Atlantic Council on the Ocean (MARCO)

Formed in 2009, MARCO is a partnership committed to addressing shared regional priorities relating to climate resiliency, protection of important marine habitats, sustainable development of renewable energy in offshore areas, and promoting improvement in water quality.

The council represents a collective voice from the Mid-Atlantic and includes leadership from New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. MARCO spearheads the work to continue and grow the region's ocean planning work. The American Littoral Society supports MARCO in its efforts to continue implementation of the Ocean Action Plan. We invite you to join us.

Contact Helen Henderson at [Helen@littoralsociety.org](mailto:Helen@littoralsociety.org) to find out how you can ensure that Regional Ocean Planning reflects your vision of a healthy ocean.



[littoralsociety.org](http://littoralsociety.org)