



Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning:

Regional Planning Body
(RPB) Meeting

March 22-24, 2016

Baltimore Marriott Inner
Harbor at Camden Yards
110 South Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland

Working draft content of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP)

These slides will support RPB discussion during the March 22-24 meeting in Baltimore, MD and serve as the main meeting material. They also provide an update to the public about draft working content of the OAP.

This draft OAP content is still being considered and discussed by the RPB. Members of the public have opportunities to provide input on the content of these slides, specifically by:

- Submitting comments via email to the RPB at MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov.
- Providing verbal comments in informal small group discussion with RPB members during the Tuesday, March 22 workshop-style public engagement component of the RPB meeting.
- Providing formal public comment for the record during public comment sessions on Wednesday, March 23 and Thursday, March 24 of the RPB meeting.

Written comments to the RPB are welcome at any time. Public input on the content of these slides is encouraged by COB April 1, 2016.

Sections are numbered for reference only. Organization of the draft OAP may change.

OAP Context

- The MidA Regional Planning Body recognizes the value of working across Federal, State and Tribal boundaries and believes success depends upon ongoing collaboration into the future.
- The OAP is not an endpoint -- it is a statement of what we care about and where we intend to go. This OAP is an initial investment in collaborative actions we can take to improve our collective management of the ocean.
- In some cases, we need to do additional work before we can decide what specific steps could and should be taken. As a result, the OAP also highlights a number of opportunities to work collaboratively to identify further specific steps in the future.

OAP Overview

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Regional overview (including Regional Ocean Assessment, brief description with link)

1.2 The need for ocean planning

Chapter 2: Ocean Planning in the Mid-Atlantic

2.1 Planning process

- National ocean policy
- Establishment of the MidA RPB
- Key Partners in the regional planning process
- Stakeholders in the regional planning process

2.2 Ocean Action Plan (OAP) purpose and goals

- Geographic focus
- Principles
- Goals and Objectives
- Approach to the OAP

2.3 Overview of the OAP

OAP Overview (continued)

Chapter 3: Interjurisdictional Coordination Actions

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Actions to promote a Healthy Ocean Ecosystem

3.3 Actions to foster Sustainable Ocean Uses

Chapter 3 – Interjurisdictional Coordination Overview

The MidA RPB has identified actions that enhance the capacity of state, federal and tribal entities to carry out their missions, work together more effectively, and serve the needs of stakeholders. These actions support the ocean planning goals and objectives identified for the Mid-Atlantic.

- IJC actions **do not** change existing authorities or create new mandates at the federal, state, and tribal levels
- IJC actions work to 1) Increase early coordination for better and more predictable decision making 2) Increase awareness of RPB entity needs, interests, and resources and 3) Develop new products and practices
- IJC actions are organized by Goals and Objectives in the RPB Framework.
- In many cases, IJC actions support the achievement of multiple objectives. Because the OAP seeks to address management issues that typically involve multiple authorities, agencies, programs, and affected parties, there are in all cases direct or indirect linkages among the actions.

Chapter 3 – Interjurisdictional Coordination Overview (continued)

With regard to timing for implementation, sub-action steps are labeled according to the following definitions:

- Underway = has already commenced
- Short-term = to be completed within 2 years of approval of the OAP
- Long-term = to be completed within 5 years of approval of the OAP
- Ongoing = involves periodic maintenance into the future

Sub-action steps identified as “underway” or “ongoing” are also marked as either “short-term” or “long-term” to provide sufficient clarity about the timeframe for completion.

Throughout the actions described in this OAP, Lead Entities are identified, which will:

- Serve as the lead responsible party and point of contact
- Provide leadership for any related working groups
- Communicate implementation progress
- Support public outreach and communication on those specific actions

Actions to promote a Healthy Ocean Ecosystem

Six IJC actions address three Healthy Ocean Ecosystem objectives:

Objective 1 – Discover, understand, protect, and restore the ocean ecosystem

Enhance understanding of ecosystem functionality and the key roles of Mid-Atlantic ocean habitats and physical, geological, chemical, and biological ocean resources through improved scientific understanding and assessments of naturally occurring processes and changes and the effects of ocean uses. Foster collaboration and coordination for protection and restoration of ocean and coastal habitats that are important for improving ecosystem functioning and maintaining biodiversity.

Objective 2 – Account for ocean ecosystem changes and increased risks

Facilitate enhanced understanding of current and anticipated ocean ecosystem changes in the Mid- Atlantic. These include ocean-related risks and vulnerabilities associated with ocean warming (including sea level rise, coastal flooding/inundation), ocean acidification (including effects on living marine resources), and changes in ocean wildlife migration and habitat use.

Objective 3 – Value traditional knowledge

Pursue greater understanding and acknowledgment of traditional knowledge, along with other cultural resources and values, and incorporate such knowledge and values in the ocean planning process.

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

Action 1: Identify ecologically rich areas and region-wide ecological features of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean and increase understanding of those areas to foster more informed decision-making

Lead entities: *To be determined.*

Note: Stakeholder and scientific engagement is central to this action. Areas are not "established" or "designated" with permanent boundaries, but rather identified only for assessment purposes.

- A. Define, evaluate, and refine the marine life data synthesis approach, including developing terms, references, and general components of ecologically rich areas/region-wide ecological features, in coordination with Mid-Atlantic scientific experts, stakeholders, the public, and the Northeast RPB. (**underway and short-term**)
- B. Identify and recommend to the RPB at least one pilot ecologically rich area/region-wide ecological feature for more in-depth assessment. (**short-term**)
- C. Assess the pilot area in greater detail in consultation with stakeholders by identifying and characterizing human uses and marine ecology in that area, as well as key authorities and current management practices. (**short-term**)
- D. Develop a comprehensive factual report to inform management authorities in decision-making. (**short-term**)
- E. Evaluate usage of the pilot report in informing decision-making and make any necessary improvements to the process. (**long-term**)
- F. Identify additional ecologically rich areas/regional ecological features, conduct assessments, and develop reports, incorporating relevant new information and engaging scientific experts, stakeholders, and the public. (**long-term and ongoing**)

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

Action 2: Develop and publish indicators of the health of the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean ecosystem

Lead Entities: *To be determined*

- A. Summarize existing and identify needed indicators of ocean health. Vet with scientists and stakeholders. **(short-term)**
- B. Submit indicators to RPB for consideration and endorsement. **(short-term)**
- C. Develop final indicators and details for a monitoring and assessment program. **(short-term)**
- D. Create web-based “dashboard” to display indicators. **(short-term)**
- E. Identify responsible parties that will continue to collect and post baseline data for indicators to the Data Portal, as appropriate . **(short-term and ongoing)**
- F. Evaluate and update data and indicators. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- G. Review progress, challenges, and opportunities and adjust the program as needed. **(long-term and ongoing)**

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

Action 3: Develop a Mid-Atlantic Ocean Acidification Monitoring Network to address one aspect of climate change

Lead Entities: *To be determined*

- A. Identify questions a monitoring network should address. **(underway and short-term)**
- B. Identify current regional ocean acidification monitoring efforts and technologies, research, and data gaps as well as opportunities for partnerships and funding. **(underway and short-term)**
- C. Convene scientists, stakeholders, and the public to develop and vet options. **(short-term)**
- D. Develop and launch a regional ocean acidification monitoring network. **(short-term)**
- E. Review progress, challenges, and opportunities and adjust the program as needed. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

Action 4: Map shifts in ocean species and habitats to address one aspect of climate change

Lead Entities: *To be determined*

- A. Identify information sources. **(short-term)**
- B. Recommend ways to make current information more accessible to RPB members and the general public. **(short-term)**
- C. Convene managers, scientists, and stakeholders to discuss (1) data and methodologies that can be used to create draft maps of existing, expected, or potential shifts in marine life distribution and habitats; (2) potential management applications of the maps; (3) additional data or information needed to enhance utility of draft maps; and (4) caveats for their use. **(underway, short-term, and ongoing)**
- D. Develop an approach to the production, peer review, and publication of draft maps that illustrate regional climate change-related biological and ecological changes. **(underway and short-term)**
- E. Facilitate the publication of maps on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal ("Data Portal"). **(short-term)**
- F. Recommend methods to support updates of maps. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

Action 5: Develop a regionally appropriate strategy for marine debris reduction

Lead Entities: *To be determined*

- A. Identify and prioritize options for regional marine debris reduction strategies. (**underway and short-term**)
- B. Present options for strategies and implementation mechanisms to stakeholders and the RPB. (**short-term**)
- C. Implement selected strategies with the engagement of responsible parties, as identified in the strategies themselves. (**short-term and ongoing**)

Healthy Ocean Ecosystems

Action 6: Incorporate Traditional Knowledge of Tribes regarding ocean health in regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Document processes and identify barriers for including traditional knowledge in decision making. **(short-term)**
- B. Identify measures to increase inclusion of traditional knowledge of ocean health in decision-making, while protecting sensitive information. **(short-term)**
- C. Determine traditional knowledge documentation needs. **(short-term)**
- D. Inform tribes and indigenous communities about proposed projects, prior to application/permitting, to enable traditional knowledge holders to provide input. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- E. Develop training for best practices on integration of traditional knowledge. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- F. Identify mechanisms to support engagement of tribes and Indigenous Peoples in federal ocean-related science investments and services. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- G. Identify training for agency staff about working with tribes and Indigenous Peoples on ocean initiatives involving traditional knowledge. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Actions to promote Sustainable Ocean Uses

Thirty-one IJC actions address nine objectives related to:

- National security
- Ocean energy
- Commercial and recreational fishing
- Aquaculture
- Maritime commerce
- Offshore sand management
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Tribal interests and uses
- Critical undersea infrastructure

National security

Objective: Account for national security interests in the Mid-Atlantic through enhanced coordination, increased transparency, and sharing of information across RPB member entities.

Action 1: Use the Mid-Atlantic OAP and Data Portal data to guide and inform Department of Defense programs, initiatives, and planning documents.

Lead entity: Department of Defense

- A. Identify the OAP and Data Portal to DoD agencies as important sources of information in decision making. **(ongoing)**
- B. Consult the Mid-Atlantic OAP and the Data Portal in preparation of internal agency guidance, existing procedures, and environmental planning. **(ongoing)**
- C. Use the Data Portal to obtain supplemental regional stakeholder information related to proposed actions and activities. **(ongoing)**

National security

Objective: Account for national security interests in the Mid-Atlantic through enhanced coordination, increased transparency, and sharing of information across RPB member entities.

Action 2: Identify Department of Defense points of contact for the range of national security data layers in the Data Portal.

Lead entity: Department of Defense

- A. Update the national security portions of the OAP and Data Portal on a 5-year Marine Mammal Protection Act permit cycle. **(ongoing)**
- B. Identify appropriate points of contact for the national security data layers on the Data Portal and continually update. **(completed and ongoing)**

Ocean Energy

Objective: Facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid-Atlantic.

Action 1: Identify key intersections of relevant Federal programs and authorities that affect wind energy development.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Describe leasing, environmental review, and regulatory entities, including where and when relevant authorities play roles in decisions related to offshore wind energy. **(short-term)**
- B. Identify intersections of key federal programs and statutes related to offshore wind energy. **(short-term)**
- C. Post information and diagrams on above to the Data Portal and BOEM websites. **(short-term)**

Ocean Energy

Objective: Facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid- Atlantic.

Action 2: Develop internal agency guidance on integrating the OAP-developed best practices for using the Mid-Atlantic Data Portal in management, environmental, and regulatory reviews.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

A. Using best practices developed in the OAP, BOEM will increase use of the Data Portal in management, environmental, and regulatory reviews. **(underway and short-term)**

Ocean Energy

Objective: Facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid-Atlantic.

Action 3: Partner in on-going and planned studies, identify knowledge gaps, and increase access to BOEM research planning cycles.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Solicit and consider regional input (including RPB members) to the BOEM annual national studies list. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Identify opportunities for collaboration on federal joint funding. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Work with the RPB member entities to develop a Mid-Atlantic regional studies list. **(short-term)**
- D. Maintain up-to-date maps, data, and information that represent leasing areas on the Outer Continental Shelf, including authoritative data on administrative boundaries and results of completed environmental studies, and ensure those data are provided to the appropriate repository. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Ocean Energy

Objective: Facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid- Atlantic.

Action 4: Use the Data Portal to enhance access to data, environmental reports, and proposed offshore wind development activities.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Link the Data Portal with the BOEM Geospatial Environmental Studies Program Information System (Geo-ESPIS). **(short-term)**
- B. Place and maintain links to agency announcements about proposed offshore development activities on the Data Portal. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Ocean Energy

Objective: Facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid-Atlantic.

Action 5: Improve consultations and communication with Tribes in the region.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Continue to implement BOEM's internal renewable energy policy of inviting Federally-recognized Tribal partners to be cooperating agencies in the preparation of NEPA documents, requiring lessees to invite Federally-recognized Tribes to pre-survey meetings, and including Post-Review Discoveries Clauses with Tribal partners for each stage of BOEM's renewable energy process. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Coordinate closely with Tribal partners to protect sites from impact and resolve any impact in consultation with the Tribes, pursuant to the agreements. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Ocean Energy

Objective: Facilitate greater collaboration around ocean energy issues in the Mid-Atlantic.

Action 6: BOEM better engage fishing industries through improved data and specific interactions.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Supplement existing public engagement strategies, especially those associated with fishing activities and resources and offshore wind plans and projects. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Continue to work with fishermen and Atlantic offshore wind lease holders in the implementation of BOEM guidelines to lessees. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Communicate BOEM's science strategy for fisheries studies in its annual Studies Development Plan. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Commercial and Recreational Fishing

Objective: Foster greater understanding of the needs of Mid- Atlantic fishers and fishing communities in the context of the full range of ocean uses and conservation efforts.

Action 1: Improve the sharing of information and ideas between governments on fisheries science and management

Lead entities: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

- A. Convene annual meetings between regional NOAA leadership and state fisheries directors to identify shared interests and build collaboration. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Offer to meet with Tribes to discuss fishery management, and invite state officials to participate in meetings with Tribes. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Explore with the MAFMC the possibility of RPB members participating as technical advisors to the Council's Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee for the purpose of identifying and monitoring fishing impacts on the environment and the impacts of other human activities on fishing. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Commercial and Recreational Fishing

Objective: Foster greater understanding of the needs of Mid- Atlantic fishers and fishing communities in the context of the full range of ocean uses and conservation efforts.

Action 2: More actively engage stakeholders in fisheries science and management, and seek ways to make fishermen's knowledge available for planning

Lead entities: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

- A. Convene fishery managers and recreational fishing leaders to discuss concerns, provide information, and identify engagement opportunities. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Capture and reflect fishing community knowledge, including Tribal knowledge, in ocean management and data products and Data Portal as appropriate. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Commercial and Recreational Fishing

Objective: Foster greater understanding of the needs of Mid-Atlantic fishers and fishing communities in the context of the full range of ocean uses and conservation efforts.

Action 3: Improve collaboration for the conservation of essential fish habitat

Lead entities: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

A. Provide additional training for Federal agencies in the identification and conservation of essential fish habitat.
(short-term and ongoing)

Offshore Aquaculture

Objective: Inform ocean aquaculture siting and permitting in the Mid- Atlantic through greater coordination among stakeholders and management authorities to address compatibility issues.

Action 1: Use data and information in the OAP and Data Portal information to support offshore aquaculture siting and permitting.

Lead entity: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- A. Refer potential applicants for offshore aquaculture permits to the Data Portal as a source of information about factors affecting siting decisions. (**short term and ongoing**)

Maritime Commerce and Navigation

Objective: Enhance institutional awareness of the impact maritime commerce exerts on the national and Mid-Atlantic economies and ensure new and updated maritime commerce and navigational information is available at the local and regional levels for integration into regional ocean planning.

Action 1: Monitor marine commerce trends and traffic patterns to identify and address emerging commerce and navigation needs.

Lead entities: U.S. Coast Guard and Department of Transportation

- A. Annually review “type of vessel” categories, density layers of vessel types, and provide findings to RPB member entities with authorities that influence marine commerce. **(underway and short-term)**
- B. Develop a lifecycle process that provides timely, useable, relevant vessel traffic data for the Mid-Atlantic. **(underway and short-term)**
- C. Determine whether enhanced data analysis is financially sustainable. **(underway and short-term)**

Maritime Commerce and Navigation

Objective: Enhance institutional awareness of the impact maritime commerce exerts on the national and Mid-Atlantic economies and ensure new and updated maritime commerce and navigational information is available at the local and regional levels for integration into regional ocean planning.

Action 2: Maintain reliable ocean use data sets relevant to navigation.

Lead entities: U.S. Coast Guard and Department of Transportation

- A. Develop processes to review available data layers and identify changes in marine commerce trends and needs. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Provide information regarding needed data updates to relevant RPB member entities. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Develop a lifecycle process that provides timely, useable, relevant ocean use data for the Mid Atlantic, and updates to the Data Portal as appropriate. **(short-term)**

Maritime Commerce and Navigation

Objective: Enhance institutional awareness of the impact maritime commerce exerts on the national and Mid-Atlantic economies and ensure new and updated maritime commerce and navigational information is available at the local and regional levels for integration into regional ocean planning.

Action 3: Catalogue intersections between entities whose authorities influence marine commerce and navigation and identify opportunities for improved coordination.

Lead entities: U.S. Coast Guard and Department of Transportation

- A. Catalog interagency coordination agreements that influence or are influenced by navigation. **(short-term)**
- B. Provide to the RPB a list of coordination gaps and other information for review and further distribution to appropriate entities. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Develop a process to annually review RPB entity coordination practices to improve efficiency and stakeholder engagement. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Maritime Commerce and Navigation

Objective: Enhance institutional awareness of the impact maritime commerce exerts on the national and Mid-Atlantic economies and ensure new and updated maritime commerce and navigational information is available at the local and regional levels for integration into regional ocean planning.

Action 4: Identify impacts to navigation and port infrastructure stemming from the Panama Canal expansion.

Lead entities: U.S. Coast Guard and Department of Transportation

- A. Monitor marine commerce trends and traffic patterns to identify and address emerging commerce and navigation needs. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Identify and track Mid-Atlantic ports conducting deepening projects to assess impacts of marine commerce disruption or rerouting measures. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Assess coastal approaches against proposed port depths to predict whether offshore transit routes will change. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Offshore Sand Management

Objective: 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.

Action 1: Promote strategic stakeholder engagement and regional partnering initiatives

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Promote strategic stakeholder engagements to improve coastal planning and information sharing, implement effective resource management strategies, and facilitate efficient processes to best serve the public's short and long term coastal resiliency needs. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Serve as a liaison among state and federal agencies and other stakeholders to facilitate communication, share information, and leverage resources to provide access to OCS resources in an environmentally sustainable manner. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Offshore Sand Management

Objective: 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.

Action 2: Develop a comprehensive inventory of sand resources to support planned and future restoration and resilience projects, provide availability for emergency use, and manage competing use challenges.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Leverage BOEM's Marine Minerals Program geodatabase to serve as a central repository for OCS sand resource data it has collected and continues to collect through state cooperative agreements and environmental studies to better facilitate offshore sand management. Make information on borrow site and potential sand resource locations available for use in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. **(underway and short-term)**
- B. Develop strategic approaches to optimize sand resources management. **(long-term)**

Offshore Sand Management

Objective: 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.

Action 3: Conduct studies to support sustainable management of offshore sand resources.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Routinely collaborate through BOEM's Environmental Studies Program with other Federal agencies with mutual study interests and the Mid-Atlantic states to leverage funds and maximize research project investments. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Work with RPB Federal agencies to develop an integrated regional ocean research agenda, including identifying opportunities as appropriate for coordination/collaboration with the Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (SOST) on the overall agenda and working with the National Ocean Partnership Program (NOPP) to facilitate discussion and support of specific research projects. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Enhance access to a range of data and studies by linking the Data Portal to the BOEM Geospatial Environmental Studies Program Information System (Geo-ESPIS). **(short-term and ongoing)**

Offshore Sand Management

Objective: 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.

Action 4: Identify and improve existing state/federal interactions and cooperative agreements in the Mid-Atlantic.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Identify new and improve existing stakeholder relationships related to coordination for beach nourishment and coastal restoration projects. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Continue to collaborate with the USACE regarding coastal resiliency needs in the Mid-Atlantic region and identify priority investments. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Pursue future budget initiatives to continue Cooperative Agreements with Mid-Atlantic States to continue building the comprehensive inventory of OCS resources. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- D. Collaborate with federal partners to leverage funding where applicable and align resources towards priority regional needs. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Offshore Sand Management

Objective: 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.

Action 5: Engage fishing communities in planning and environmental review of proposed activities.

Lead entity: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- A. Communicate BOEM's sand resource management strategy to avoid use conflicts with fishing grounds. **(ongoing)**
- B. Communicate BOEM's science strategy for fisheries studies and solicit feedback from fishery stakeholders on priority research gaps. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Continue to inform and solicit feedback from NMFS and the MidA FMC and develop best management practices to avoid and/or minimize fishery impacts associated with dredging. **(ongoing)**
- D. Use data and information from the Data Portal and OAP to support enhanced engagement with commercial and recreational fishermen in planning and environmental review of proposed activities. **(short-term)**
- E. Identify potential conflicts or concerns through review of data used for scoping and environmental analyses and work with fishermen to identify high use areas early on to avoid use conflicts. **(short-term)**

Non-Consumptive Recreation

Objective 7: Account for the importance of near-shore and offshore non-consumptive recreational uses, and their local and regional economic contributions in the Mid-Atlantic; and in the management of other ocean uses and resources, consider impacts on non-consumptive recreational activities, (e.g., surfing, boating, whale watching, birding, diving).

Action 1: Identify, characterize, and share information about measures to maintain the recreational value of important non-consumptive recreational areas and the activities they sustain.

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Define, in collaboration with stakeholders, what it would mean for uses and areas to be considered “high-value” for non-consumptive recreation. Complete identification and mapping of such uses and areas. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Identify and assess potential impacts and use conflicts to high value recreational use areas. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Identify and catalogue authorities, standards, and processes for maintaining recreational uses, and potential improvements to practices and processes. **(short-term)**
- D. Convene stakeholders, the public, and RPB entities to review findings and improve communications to increase understanding of recreational uses. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- E. Develop report(s) on potential improvements to practices and processes as determined necessary, feasible, and appropriate. **(long-term and ongoing)**

Tribal Interests and Uses

Objective: Recognize and respect the right of Tribal Nations to free, prior, and informed consent while taking into account important Tribal uses and submerged cultural resources in the planning process.

Action 1: Identify, review and, if appropriate, recommend updates to tribal consultation policies as they pertain to ocean planning.

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Compile and review tribal consultation policies from federal and state agencies. **(short-term)**
- B. Identify how agencies can improve existing policies, and provide outreach to tribes about how to engage with agencies under existing/improved policies. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Tribal Interests and Uses

Objective: Recognize and respect the right of Tribal Nations to free, prior, and informed consent while taking into account important Tribal uses and submerged cultural resources in the planning process.

Action 2: Develop tribal and agency 'marine planning' contact directories.

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Develop a Tribal Directory of tribal contacts and a process for updating the current status of contact information for all state and federally recognized Tribes in the Mid-Atlantic region who wish to participate. **(underway and short-term)**
- B. Develop a directory of contacts in federal agencies and state government to post on the RPB website and a process for updating the contact information. **(underway and short-term)**

Tribal Interests and Uses

Objective: Recognize and respect the right of Tribal Nations to free, prior, and informed consent while taking into account important Tribal uses and submerged cultural resources in the planning process.

Action 3: Work with Tribes to develop Tribal Ocean Planning Network (TOPN) to facilitate coordination between Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Tribes in the ocean planning process.

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Develop a Tribal Ocean Planning Network in coordination with the Northeast region. **(short-term)**
- B. Identify delegates and alternates to the Network from all federally recognized and state recognized Tribes in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Tribal Interests and Uses

Objective: Recognize and respect the right of Tribal Nations to free, prior, and informed consent while taking into account important Tribal uses and submerged cultural resources in the planning process.

Action 4: Enhance understanding of Tribal rights

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Post historical, legal, and other documents detailing Tribal rights on the RPB website or similar media; documents will include a timeline of Treaties with tribes in the region specific to marine uses. **(short-term)**

Tribal Interests and Uses

Objective: Recognize and respect the right of Tribal Nations to free, prior, and informed consent while taking into account important Tribal uses and submerged cultural resources in the planning process.

Action 5: Federal and state governments meet with Tribes to discuss issues related to tribal participation in regional ocean planning and management, including policy and technical matters and grant opportunities.

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Federal agencies contact the Tribes in the Mid-Atlantic region to seek informal meetings. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Convene Federal and state governments for informal meetings with Tribal government officials. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Share reports of meetings with the RPB. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Tribal Interests and Uses

Objective: Recognize and respect the right of Tribal Nations to free, prior, and informed consent while taking into account important Tribal uses and submerged cultural resources in the planning process.

Action 6: Account for historic resources under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Engage Tribal historic preservation offices in updates of the OAP and ongoing regional ocean planning to ensure that historic and cultural resources are accounted for and to facilitate any NHPA consultations that may be needed. **(long-term)**

Tribal Interests and Uses

Objective: Recognize and respect the right of Tribal Nations to free, prior, and informed consent while taking into account important Tribal uses and submerged cultural resources in the planning process.

Action 7: Identify and address data gaps pertaining to tribal use of the ocean.

Lead entities: To be determined

- A. Conduct participatory GIS workshops for engagement of Tribes in generating geospatial data mapping. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Develop a plan for future cultural and natural resource research to address Tribal concerns. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Develop best practices on the appropriate use of tribal historical, archeological and spiritual information compiled during the ocean planning process. **(long-term)**

Undersea Infrastructure

Objective: Facilitate greater understanding of the current and potential future location of submerged infrastructure, such as submarine cables, (e.g., for communication and electricity) and pipelines.

Action 1: Engage the submerged pipelines and submarine cables industries to understand their current and projected needs for ocean space, and conduct an inventory of obsolete structures.

Lead entity: To be determined

- A. Obtain data to support regional ocean planning efforts, including the identification of “in-service” versus “out-of-service” pipelines, pipeline name, and owner information. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Reflect that information through the Data Portal. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Update NASCA cables data in the Data Portal as needed. **(long-term and ongoing)**

Undersea Infrastructure

Objective: Facilitate greater understanding of the current and potential future location of submerged infrastructure, such as submarine cables, (e.g., for communication and electricity) and pipelines.

Action 2: Ensure early consultation with relevant undersea infrastructure interests in the regulatory review of marine development projects.

Lead RPB entities: All RPB member entities

A. Use data and information from the Data Portal and OAP to inform regulatory review of marine development activities related to undersea infrastructure. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Chapter 4: Science, Data, and Tools to Support Decision Making

Data and information are the foundation of the OAP. The region has developed and continues to enhance a significant body of spatial data and other information that serves to frame and inform the IJC actions the RPB has developed. The MidA RPB has identified some specific tools and data that are needed to support IJC actions. The actions in this document are based upon best available data with recognition that additional information and research could further inform future actions.

4.1 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal

- Overview and summary of content

4.2 Data Products and Tools

- Marine Life Distribution and Abundance Synthesis Products
- Human Use Data Synthesis Products

4.3 Actions related to the Data Portal and science and research

- Actions related to the Data Portal
- Actions related to science and research

4.1 Data Portal Content

The public Data Portal is vital to implementation of the OAP. The Data Portal contains: a marine planner with 8 data themes and 2 synthesis themes; data catalogue; data needs and priorities; Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment; Ocean Stories and Blog; joinable map groups; calendar of events; and links to other data sources.

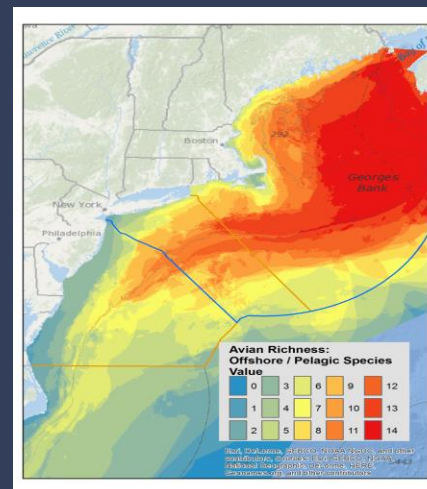
Data Theme	Types of Data Available
Administrative	Marine jurisdictions, administrative boundaries, federal lease blocks
Fishing	Commercial and recreational fishing concentrations, artificial reef locations, fathom lines
Maritime	Navigational aid locations, shipping data, anchorage areas, federal sand/gravel borrow areas, North Atlantic right whale management zones, submarine cable routes, disposal sites, port facility sites, shipwreck density
Recreation	Coastal recreation locations, recreational boating routes and destinations
Renewable Energy	Federal offshore wind planning areas, offshore wind lease areas, coastal energy facility locations, wind speeds
Security	Military danger zones/restricted areas, unexploded ordnance locations
Human Use Synthesis Products	Data synthesis products for five themes: Fishing, Maritime, Recreation, Renewable Energy, and Security (HUDS effort)
Marine Life	Benthic organism habitats, coldwater coral locations, essential fish habitats, seafloor topography, sediment grain size, submarine canyons, migratory fish, birds, sea turtles and marine mammals
Ecological Synthesis Products	Synthesis products for marine mammals, seabirds, and fish (MDAT effort)
Oceanography (coming soon)	Bathymetry, ocean fronts, sea surface temperature

Draft ideas under RPB deliberation

Marine Life Distribution and Abundance

Describes the first phase of MDAT work, completed in January 2016, which includes:

- New species level products for marine mammals, seabirds, and fish
- New synthesis level products by:
 - Species groups abundance (regulated, ecological, stressor sensitivity)
 - Species richness and diversity
 - Abundance or biomass core area richness
- Initial steps toward identification of ecologically rich areas

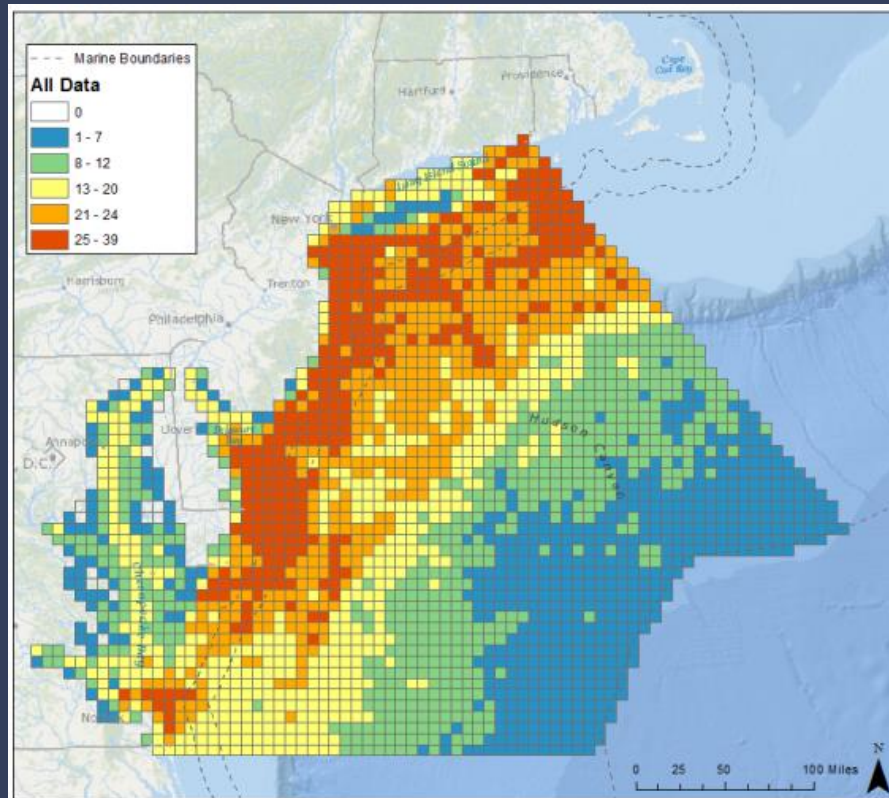


MARCO is pursuing a second phase of work with the MDAT team to further explore these themes.

Human Use Data Synthesis

Describes the HUDS work, completed in January 2016, which includes:

- The first time human use data have been synthesized in a comprehensive manner, highlighting what we do and do not know about ocean uses
- A step toward a quantitative, as opposed to anecdotal, understanding of overlapping human uses in the Mid-Atlantic
- A clear picture of data availability as well as data collection biases and gaps



This analysis was based on available information on human uses. In the future, new data addressing existing gaps could be added.

Actions Related to the Data Portal

Action 1: Develop and implement a plan to sustain Data Portal operations and maintenance.

Lead entity: *To be determined*

- A. Develop a range of levels of Data Portal maintenance and updating options and associated costs ranging from the base level to addition of new features and stakeholder engagement. **(underway and short-term)**
- B. Convene entities likely to support continued maintenance and updating of Data Portal to discuss funding options. **(underway and short-term)**
- C. Identify funding and collaboration commitments. **(underway, short-term, and ongoing)**

Actions Related to the Data Portal

Action 2: Maintain operational components including web services, data development and integration, outreach, content creation, management, and web maintenance.

Lead entity: *To be determined*

- A. Continue to develop and integrate new data and updated layers from a variety of sources in consultation with RPB entities and stakeholders. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- B. Continue and/or expand efforts to manage and publish authoritative Federal agency data in a timely and readily useable form (web services), e.g., by developing data sharing agreements among RPB entities. **(short-term and ongoing)**
- C. Further explore opportunities to capture Tribal data on the Data Portal. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Actions Related to the Data Portal

Action 3: Continue to engage in agency outreach and public engagement to enhance data and functionality to effectively support decisions related to ocean management as needed.

Lead entity: *To be determined*

- A. Compile and post on the portal user success stories of applications of the portal to ocean planning decisions through engagement with RPB member entities and stakeholders, including but not limited to: ocean stories, news, calendar events, and other information for stakeholder engagement purposes. **(short-term)**
- B. Expand Federal agency data managers' participation in the relevant RPB work groups and the MARCO Ocean Mapping and Data Team and help leverage their agencies' data assets. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Actions related to Science and Research

Action 1: Identify and prioritize applied science and research needs

Lead entities: *To be determined*

- A. Identify applied science and research needs and review existing regional research agendas to identify areas of common interests, opportunities for collaboration, and other factors. **(short term)**
- B. Convene scientists, resource managers, and stakeholders to review and prioritize applied research needs identified in step A that will help address management questions. **(short term)**

Chapter 5: Plan Implementation

5.1 Plan Administration

5.2 Application of the OAP under existing authorities (including best practices for agency coordination, use of data and information, and opportunities under the CZMA)

5.3 Performance monitoring and evaluation

5.1 Plan Administration

To support efficient implementation of the OAP, the RPB will:

- A. Maintain coordination and administrative functions for plan implementation and updates
- B. Continue to operate by consensus
- C. Work with partners and stakeholders to leverage existing programs
- D. Build on the efforts of other regional entities wherever possible

RPB member entities will continue to participate in RPB discussions and work collaboratively to meet their obligations as described in the plan.

RPB Co-leads will continue to provide leadership, oversight, and guidance and ensure the RPB convenes regularly.

Transparency and stakeholder engagement will continue to be priorities.

5.1 Plan Administration (continued)

During implementation, the RPB is responsible for ensuring that:

- Progress is made in implementing the actions articulated in the plan
- Stakeholders are appropriately engaged in implementation and any plan updates/amendments.
- Coordination continues among RPB entities, with partners, and with adjacent planning processes; and expertise and resources from within and outside of governmental entities are being leveraged appropriately.
- Work plans for implementation are updated to reflect new information and evolving context.

5.1 Plan Administration (continued)

Lead entities identified for specific actions in the OAP will:

- Serve as the lead responsible party and point of contact
- Provide leadership, including staffing and other resources, for any related workgroups
- Communicate implementation progress
- Support public outreach and communication on those specific actions

5.2 Application of OAP Under Existing Authorities

Action 1: Implement best practices to enhance coordination and the use of data and information.

Best practices are flexible but consistent guidance for intergovernmental coordination in the use of data and information under existing planning, management, and regulatory authorities. They address: agency coordination, use of data and information, coordination with stakeholders, and federal-state coordination. (Best practices for federal-tribal coordination are also addressed under HOE 5 and SOU 7.)

- A. Federal RPB members will implement best practices consistent with their existing authorities; states, Tribes and private applicants, where referenced, may do so at their discretion. **(on-going)**
- B. The RPB will periodically review best practices, with stakeholder and public input, and make revisions as appropriate. **(short-term and on-going)**

Example: Project proponents should seek to identify, engage, and incorporate information from stakeholders before filing a permit application or otherwise formally initiating the environmental review and permitting process to ensure that stakeholder information helps inform both the project application and subsequent public, stakeholder, and agency review.

5.2 Application of OAP Under Existing Authorities

Action 2: Evaluate management options under the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Lead RPB Entities: NOAA and Mid-Atlantic states

- A. Assess potential opportunities to: 1) enhance federal notice to states and Tribes, 2) inform CZMA coastal effects determinations, and 3) streamline CZMA federal consistency requirements. **(short-term)**
- B. Establish new practice(s) and implement as appropriate **(short-term/long-term)**

5.3 Performance monitoring and evaluation

Action 1: Develop OAP performance monitoring and evaluation plan.

"The MidA RPB will track progress towards meeting established planning objectives and use the information gained to modify and adapt MidA RPB actions." – Regional Ocean Planning Framework

Lead RPB Entities: *To be determined*

- A. Develop, in consultation with experts and stakeholders, the components of an OAP performance and monitoring evaluation plan, including performance measurements or metrics, parties responsible for monitoring results, and a schedule and process for evaluating results and making recommendations to the RPB. **(short-term)**
- B. Review draft components with experts, stakeholders, and the public. **(short-term)**
- C. Develop and implement a final performance and monitoring evaluation plan. **(short-term and ongoing)**

Potential appendices

- Charter
- Framework
- Approach
- Stakeholder engagement report
- Regulatory context summary
- Summaries of actions (matrix)
- MARCO data and information products
- CZMA discussion paper