

# The New Oceans Executive Order: Impacts for the Mid-Atlantic

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# Executive Order Regarding the Ocean Policy to Advance the Economic, Security, and Environmental Interests of the United States

— LAND & AGRICULTURE | Issued on: June 19, 2018



Sec. 2. Policy. It shall be the policy of the United States to:

- (a) coordinate the activities of executive departments and agencies regarding ocean-related matters to ensure effective management and to provide economic, security, and environmental benefits for present and future generations;
- (b) continue to promote the lawful use of the ocean by agencies;
- (c) exercise rights and jurisdiction and perform duties in accordance with applicable law;
- (d) facilitate the economic growth of coastal communities and promote ocean industries, advance ocean science and technology, feed the American people, transport American goods, expand recreational opportunities, and enhance America's energy security;

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CTND. Sec. 2. Policy. It shall be the policy of the United States to:

- (e) ensure that Federal regulations and management decisions do not prevent productive and sustainable use of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes waters;
- (f) modernize the acquisition, distribution, and use of the best available ocean-related science and knowledge, in partnership with marine industries; the ocean science and technology community; State, tribal, and local governments; and other ocean stakeholders;
- (g) facilitate, as appropriate, coordination, consultation, and collaboration regarding ocean-related matters, consistent with applicable law, among Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, marine industries, the ocean science and technology community, other ocean stakeholders, and foreign governments and international organizations.

# MARCO to provide forum for regional coordination and collaboration on ocean management

Posted on Jun 27, 2018



WASHINGTON, D.C. – *The following statement was issued by Elizabeth Semple, Chair of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO), in reaction to President Trump's Executive Order Regarding the Ocean Policy to Advance the Economic, Security, and Environmental Interests of the United States*

- ↓ Since 2009, MARCO has worked, as a Regional Ocean Partnership, across the five states of VA, MD, DE, NJ and NY to enhance the vitality of the region's ocean ecosystem and economy
- ↓ Over the past several years, MARCO States have championed major elements of regional ocean planning, including: (1) Coordination and collaboration at a Mid-Atlantic regional scale, (2) Effective engagement with all ocean stakeholders and (3) Public access to best available data and information.
- ↓ MARCO is ready and willing to keep moving ahead as the Mid-Atlantic's State-led Regional Ocean Partnership to coordinate and collaborate on issues of shared regional concern.
- ↓ MARCO looks forward to engaging partners across diverse interests to advance shared regional issues of importance.
- ↓ We look forward to hosting a forum to convene continued discussions of regional importance.

# Vision for a Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Forum



- ↓ To engage the diverse interests in the region and enhance the vitality of the region's ocean ecosystem and economy
- ↓ Meet on periodic, as-needed basis to discuss emerging and ongoing issues requiring enhanced coordination and attention
- ↓ The Forum will focus on issues of importance to MARCO, state, federal and tribal partners, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and other ocean stakeholders
- ↓ The Forum will provide a venue for regional information sharing, coordination, and collaboration, and enhance the region's ability to leverage existing efforts and information
- ↓ The goal for each entity participating in the Forum is to identify and discuss existing and forthcoming challenges to the Mid-Atlantic's ocean ecosystem and economy and opportunities to collaborate that are consistent with the entity's mission and priorities

MARCO looks forward to engaging partners across diverse interests to advance shared regional issues of importance to the states, including, but not limited to...

- ↓ The reduction and prevention of **marine debris**
- ↓ The continued development of a comprehensive **ocean acidification** monitoring network and research plan
- ↓ Increased consideration of the importance of **non-consumptive recreation**
- ↓ On-going dialogues on **offshore renewable energy, coastal resilience and the beneficial reuse of sand resources**
- ↓ Continued operations, maintenance and updating of the **Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal**
- ↓ The collection and analysis of marine life and habitat data including **shifts in ocean species** distribution
- ↓ The development of **indicators to measure ocean health**

# Marine Debris

## BALLOON DEBRIS: A RISING CONCERN IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

### Why Focus on Balloons?

Balloon marine debris is of immediate concern to the Atlantic Coast because of its potentially severe impact on marine life. More than 270 experts in marine debris, averaging 12 years of experience in their field, were asked by the Ocean Conservancy to rank the severity of impacts of marine debris on seabirds, sea turtles and marine mammals. Balloons were ranked in the number three spot due to the likelihood of entanglement or ingestion by marine life.

Balloons are unique among all the man-made litter and debris found in the ocean and on the land because helium-filled balloons (and their attachments including plastic valves, disks and ribbons) are a form of litter that people actually purchase with the intent to release them into the environment. Some people make the connection that when balloons go up they come back to Earth as potentially harmful litter. However, too many participate in balloon releases without making this connection.

### Balloon Debris by the Numbers

In 2016-2017, volunteers participating in the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) found and reported more than 14,700 littered balloons in Mid-Atlantic states - New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Of these, 7,383 balloons were found in New York. New Jersey volunteers reported 2,832 balloon litter items, and Virginia volunteers found 2,414 balloons.

ICC data in one mid-Atlantic state—Virginia—reveals that most of the balloon litter is found on its beaches, demonstrating that balloon litter accumulates in coastal environments. During a recent survey (2013-2017)

monitoring project on remote islands of Virginia, up to 272 balloons were recorded per mile of beach. The study, which documented a total of 11,441 balloons and balloon-related pieces of litter (e.g., plastic ribbons), also found that balloon litter was the top marine debris item on the beaches that were surveyed. Plastic beverage bottles were in second place.

### Impacts of Balloon Debris

Released balloons can drift hundreds of miles and out over our oceans. Latex balloons burst in the atmosphere (photo top right), so that when they fall into the water they resemble jelly fish, a favorite food of sea turtles like the Kemp's Ridley shown above with plastic ribbon attached to a balloon protruding from its mouth. Birds are also easily entangled in the balloons and their ribbons. Most of the osprey chick's nest at right is filled with balloons and ribbons. For balloons that become entangled in power lines can cause wide-spread power outages.



During the signing of a new video on balloon debris, researchers Christina Trappes and Katie O'Brien share some of the many balloons they have documented and collected on Virginia beaches.



### What is Marine Debris?

Our oceans are filled with items that do not belong there, making marine debris one of the most widespread pollution problems facing the world's oceans and waterways. According to NOAA's Marine Debris Program, marine debris is defined as any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes. Marine debris is a global problem, and it is an everyday problem.

## BALLOON DEBRIS: A RISING CONCERN IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

### Why Focus on Joyful Events?

All balloon releases become litter, yet many planning balloon releases to celebrate or memorialize life events do not think about it as littering. When people are grieving isn't an appropriate time to approach them about their decisions on how to commemorate their loss. The Joyful Send-off campaign, informed by extensive research and piloted in Virginia, uses Community-Based Social Marketing to change balloon release behavior during celebratory events, the campaign "sells" memorabilia, joyful, picture-perfect and litter-free celebrations.



### Expanding the Campaign

Prior to expansion, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO), which includes Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, began working with the founder of Community-Based Social Marketing, Doug McKenzie-Mohr, to evaluate the Joyful Send-off campaign pilot strategy and outcomes to date. The partners are also working with a marketing firm to conduct additional research and testing to confirm that the Joyful Send-off campaign

strategy will be effective in reducing balloon releases and debris in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The Mid-Atlantic expansion is being funded by a grant from NOAA's Marine Debris Program to MARCO. The Mid-Atlantic partners plan to implement a campaign they hope will be scalable beyond the target communities and transferable to other regions of the United States.

Since balloons can travel great distances, measuring success presents challenges. Project partners will measure current balloon litter on beaches and monitor this litter during the implementation of the regional campaign (June 2021). All the states will use a Balloon Debris Monitoring Protocol developed by Virginia.

[www.JoyfulSendoff.org](http://www.JoyfulSendoff.org)



This campaign is supported by a grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program to MARCO, with matching support from the Mid-Atlantic states. Funding for the Virginia research and pilot was supported by a previous grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program, and additional grants from the NOAA Office of Coastal Management to the Virginia CEM Program at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, with support from partners, including Clean Virginia Watersheds, OysterWorks, Virginia Aquarium and volunteers.

September 2018

### Why Balloon Releases Occur

A lack of knowledge—many people do not understand that no balloon is "environmentally friendly if released," and that every released balloon becomes litter and can be harmful.

Some who are aware that balloons often become litter and that balloons have a harmful impact justify or rationalize their actions.

People assume "biodegradable" means "harmless."

Balloon release events are primarily planned by associations, families and schools, with women planning about 85% of releases.

Balloons are released mainly at parks, school grounds, churches and wedding venues.

Some rural residents think their distance from the ocean makes balloon releases acceptable.

Spring has the highest number of balloon releases, followed by the fall.

The majority of balloon releases are at "soft" events (e.g., funerals, memorials), are organized to raise awareness, or are at "happy events" (e.g., weddings, graduations).

The sight of balloons rising into the sky stirs strong emotions.

### Campaign partners also heard:

Although balloon releases elicit strong emotional responses, if balloon releases are not done as part of a ceremony, participants find a release less meaningful—indicating that the ceremony may be the more important part of the balloon release for those participating.

Betical outages caused by foil balloons coming in contact with power lines is a concern to many.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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But Katie Register has more...

# The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network (MACAN)

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HOME ABOUT US OVERVIEW MONITORING RESOURCES REGIONAL CONDITIONS MORE ▾

## About Us

### Developing a Regional Perspective

The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network (MACAN) is a nexus of scientists, tribal, federal, and state agency representatives, resource managers, and affected industry partners who seek to coordinate and guide regional observing, research, and modeling of ocean and coastal acidification. MACAN works to develop a better understanding of the processes associated with estuarine, coastal, and ocean acidification, predict the consequences for marine resources, and devise local adaptation strategies that enable communities and industries to better prepare and adapt. MACAN also helps to fulfill the needs of other regional entities where objectives align, such as working with the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body \(RPB\)](#) to help fulfill their needs as laid out in the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan](#).

MACAN serves as an information hub and exchange among research, industry, and resource managers focusing on waters and impacted species from south of Long Island to and including Virginia. Network members work collaboratively on identifying and pursuing opportunities to address coastal and ocean acidification in the Mid-Atlantic, building upon the skills and interests of individual members and providing a forum to share best practices in monitoring and sampling collection.



# Non-Consumptive Recreation

## Mid-Atlantic Non-Consumptive Recreation Workshops Regional Summary

Between September and November 2017, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) and the Surfrider Foundation, held a series of four public stakeholder workshops in the Mid-Atlantic region on behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body's (RPB)<sup>1</sup> Non-Consumptive Recreation Work Group. Workshops engaged the public in a discussion in support of implementation of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP)<sup>2</sup> action on Non-Consumptive Recreation to "*Identify, characterize, and share information about measures to maintain the recreational value of important non-consumptive recreational areas and the activities they sustain*" (OAP pages 69-71)<sup>3</sup>.

Workshop objectives included:

- To begin to define what it would mean for ocean and coastal uses and areas to be considered important for non-consumptive recreation;
- To solicit ideas for a process to identify and assess potential impacts and use conflicts to important non-consumptive recreational uses and marine and coastal resources; and
- To explore ideas for effective two-way engagement processes to share information with and solicit input from ocean recreation users.

This report provides a summary of themes from each of the four workshops. Themes and concepts included are not necessarily listed in priority order. More detailed individual summaries of each of the four workshops are included here as Appendices I-IV (Appendix I- New York, Appendix II- Maryland and Delaware Joint Workshop, Appendix III- New Jersey, Appendix IV- Virginia).



## Non-Consumptive Recreational Use Survey Results

Mid-Atlantic States Non-Consumptive Recreational Use Survey

Survey conducted from July 5, 2017 to September 5, 2017

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Offshore renewable energy, Coastal resilience and the Beneficial reuse of sand resources



# Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal

MARCO MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN DATA PORTAL

MAP NEWS DATA HELP LOG IN

OCEAN STORY #1

Every map tells a story. We help you share yours.

View data layers in Marine Planner

↩ But Chris Bruce has more...

# Shifts in Ocean Species

**Workshop Summary:  
Changing Ocean Conditions Related to Fisheries  
held at  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
New Brunswick, NJ  
April 4-5, 2017**

*Supported as part of the “Mid-Atlantic Regional Resilience: Linking Coastal Ocean Information to Enhance Economic, Social and Ecological Resilience” project, funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through a Regional Coastal Resilience Grant (Award No. NA16NOS4730014).*

*Led by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Association Coastal Ocean Observing System (MARACOOS).<sup>1</sup>*

## Exploring Species Range Shifts in the U.S. Mid Atlantic: Existing Literature, Web Portals, and Data

Report prepared for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO)

April 2017

Jesse Cleary, Sarah Roberts, Corrie Curtice, Patrick Halpin

Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University



# Indicators for Ocean Health

Options for indicator development, monitoring, assessment, and reporting for the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean ecosystem

## LIVING OCEAN

1. Biodiversity, including functional diversity
2. Habitat diversity
3. Protected species
4. Deep sea corals
5. Shifts in species, habitats, community structure
6. Distribution/abundance of indicator species (e.g., economically-commercially and recreationally-valuable species, menhaden, seabird community, North Atlantic right whale)
7. Productivity

## OCEAN CONDITIONS

1. Physical conditions
  - a. Sea surface and bottom temperature
  - b. Dissolved oxygen
  - c. Acidification
  - d. Sea level
2. Patterns and cycles
  - a. El Niño/La Niña
  - b. North Atlantic Oscillation
3. Water quality
  - a. Nutrients and estuarine plumes
  - b. Regional beach and shellfish closures
  - c. Harmful algal blooms
  - d. EPA Coastal Water Quality Index, adapted to ocean data

## HUMAN FOOTPRINT

1. Marine debris
2. Water quality
  - a. Coastal discharges
  - b. Contaminants
3. Sound
4. Ocean uses and socioeconomics
  - a. Fixed structures
  - b. Socioeconomics
  - c. Vessel traffic (e.g., size, quantity, and number of trips)

# Thank you!

Contact: [kgoldsmith@midatlanticocean.org](mailto:kgoldsmith@midatlanticocean.org)

MidAtlanticOcean.org

