

MARCO's Marine Habitat Priority

Kate Killerlain Morrison
Executive Director
April 7, 2016

MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN



Inter-state Partnership

Partnership of 5 states-

- Virginia
- Delaware
- Maryland
- New Jersey
- New York

Working to enhance the vitality of the region's ocean ecosystem and economy



Shared Regional Priorities

- Protect important **habitat** and sensitive and unique offshore areas
- Support the sustainable development of **offshore renewable energy**
- Prepare the region's coastal communities for the impacts of **climate change** on ocean and coastal resources
- Promote coastal **water quality** improvements



Shared Regional Priorities

- Protect important **habitat** and sensitive and unique offshore areas
- Support the sustainable development of **offshore renewable energy**
- Prepare the region's coastal communities for the impacts of **climate change** on ocean and coastal resources
- Promote coastal **water quality** improvements



Marine Habitats

- Emphasis on submarine canyons
- Gather, analyze and apply the best available science (e.g. NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*)
- *Course of Action*
- Canyons science summit (Sept. 2014)
- WHOI partnership
- MARCO Ocean Data Portal

Statement on a Course Of Action

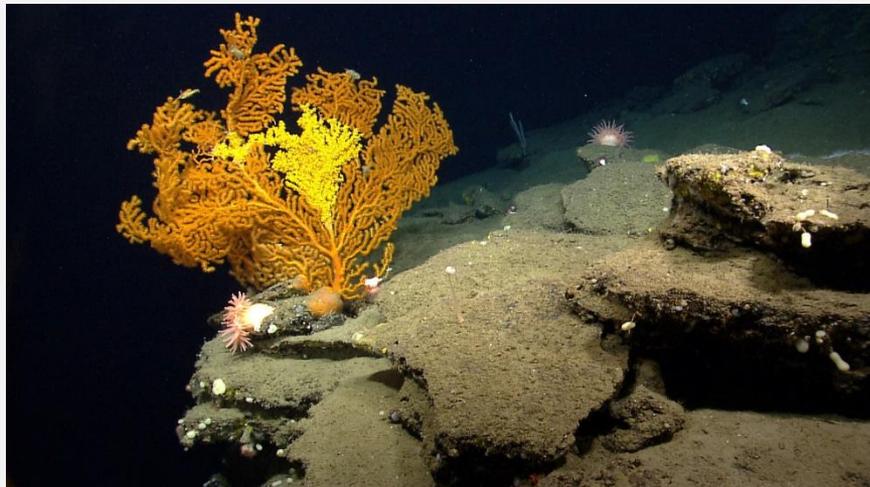


Goal:

- Ensure the key ocean habitats of the Mid-Atlantic are protected from the effects that threaten their sensitive and unique features, biological populations and ecological processes.

Statement on a Course Of Action

- Gather, analyze and apply the best available science to identify important submarine canyon habitats, processes and features including those supporting high biomass and biological diversity, and clearly define both their ecological and economic benefit to the Mid-Atlantic region.



Statement on a Course Of Action

- Determine where gaps in data exist, and with the intention of closing those gaps, encourage and guide a sustained process of scientific exploration and research to inform the ongoing assessment of management priorities.



Statement on a Course Of Action

- Gather, analyze and apply the best available science to identify and understand the effects of current and potential human activities on submarine canyon habitats in the Mid-Atlantic region.



Statement on a Course Of Action

- Consider potential mechanisms that strengthen protection of submarine canyon habitats. MARCO may develop recommendations to federal agencies to protect canyon habitats from certain harmful effects.



Statement on a Course Of Action



- As the economy and environment are inextricably linked, we must further characterize the importance of submarine canyons, and the ocean areas they occupy, to fisheries, tourism and recreation, shipping and waterborne transportation, and potential for future activities.

State of Knowledge of the Mid-Atlantic Submarine Canyons

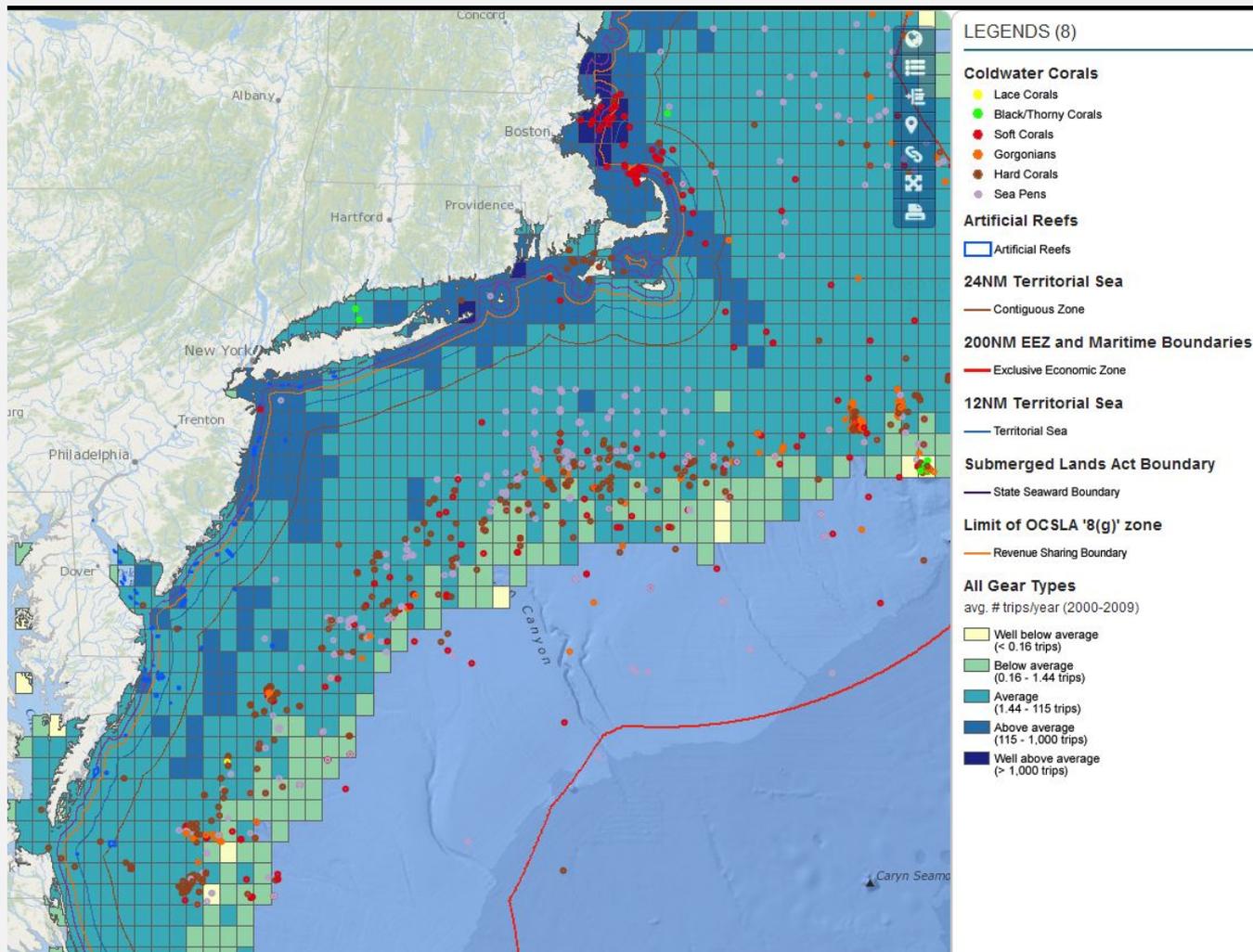
- Sept 2014- Baltimore, MD
- **Understanding the data** that have been and are scheduled to be collected about the canyons in the Mid-Atlantic region, and
- Discussing **what is known** about important canyon features and their **vulnerability to disturbance**

Canyons Data Analysis Project

- Dr. Timothy Shank et al- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI)
- 2013 & 2014 exploration information
- Analysis of *TowCam* imagery from *Bigelow* expeditions
- Improves understanding of canyons in region

MARCO Portal

<http://portal.midatlanticocean.org>



Thank you

For more information:

MARCO

www.MidAtlanticOcean.org

Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal

portal.midatlanticocean.org

Kate Morrison

kmorrison@midatlanticocean.org