



# MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN FORUM

## SUMMARY REPORT

### **MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN FORUM WEBINAR**

Tuesday, May 19  
10:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

### **MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN FORUM SUPPLEMENTAL WEBINAR**

Tuesday, June 23  
10:00 A.M. - 11:30 P.M.

MID-ATLANTIC  
COMMITTEE  
ON THE OCEAN



**MARCO**  
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL  
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

## THE 2020 MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN FORUM

The Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean (MACO) is a committee established by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO), the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean partnership (ROP), to foster collaboration among states, federal agencies, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), and federally recognized tribes, and with stakeholders. The purpose of MACO is to facilitate coordination and collaboration among governmental entities and stakeholders, advance regional ocean planning, and enhance the vitality of the region's ocean ecosystem and economy through increased communication.

The goals of the 2020 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum were to:

1. Generate a greater awareness of future regional ocean policy issues and activities; and
2. Review MACO collaboration efforts in addressing regional issues and seek stakeholder input on further collaboration needs and opportunities.

**SEE:** [Forum Webinar Agenda](#), [Supplemental Forum Webinar Agenda](#)

MACO strives to host an in-person Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum each year in one of the five Mid-Atlantic states. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the May 19, 2020, Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum was held as a webinar with interactive technology to facilitate virtual participation and engagement opportunities for attendees. Prior to the webinar, [background information](#) describing MACO and summarizing its collaborative activities was made available to participants and the public. The webinar was recorded and [posted](#), along with the PowerPoint presentations, at [www.midatlanticocean.org/2020-mid-atlantic-ocean-forum/](http://www.midatlanticocean.org/2020-mid-atlantic-ocean-forum/).

Because the number of registrants exceeded the maximum capacity of the May 19 webinar platform, a supplemental webinar was held on June 23 to provide another opportunity for stakeholders to participate. The supplemental webinar used the same interactive format as the original session to provide consistency and allow attendees to contribute their ideas on current and potential MACO collaboration efforts. Registrants for the June 23 webinar were referred to the May 19 webinar recording for the keynote remarks and plenary panel presentations and the earlier [background information](#). Following feedback from the May 19 Forum, the [Work Group Priorities](#) from the screen layout were provided in advance to permit registrants more time to think about their responses. The supplemental webinar was also recorded and [posted](#) at [www.midatlanticocean.org/2020-mid-atlantic-ocean-forum/](http://www.midatlanticocean.org/2020-mid-atlantic-ocean-forum/).

## WELCOME AND OVERVIEW



**Kisha Santiago-Martinez**

New York State Deputy Secretary of State,  
Chair, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) Management Board



**Kevin Hassell**

Environmental Specialist, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,  
Chair, Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean (MACO)

Kisha Santiago-Martinez welcomed the participants and gave an overview of regional collaboration in the MARCO priority issue areas. MARCO and MACO acknowledged the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation for their support of the 2020 Ocean Forum.

Kevin Hassell expressed appreciation for the stakeholder interest shown through participation in an ocean issue survey in January and a [pre-Forum webinar](#) in February. He let participants know that stakeholder input on ocean issues of greatest interest (collected previously through the webinar and survey) would be provided to existing MACO work groups and the Steering Committee for consideration.

## KEYNOTE REMARKS



**Alicia Barton**

President and CEO, New York State Energy  
and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA)

Alicia Barton expressed strong support for the work of MARCO and MACO and stressed the importance of regional collaboration to address ocean issues effectively in the Mid-Atlantic. She summarized the actions that NYSERDA is taking to address planning for offshore wind in the Mid-Atlantic.

## PLENARY PANEL

### POLICY, CLIMATE AND TECHNOLOGY: PERSPECTIVES ON FUTURE OCEAN MANAGEMENT



**Facilitator: Darryl Francois**

Chief of Engineering and Technical Review  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)  
Office of Renewable Energy Programs

Darryl Francois facilitated the panel discussion.



**Deerin Babb-Brott**

Principal Assistant Director for Oceans and Environment,  
White House Office of Science and Technology Policy



**Charles Stock**

Research Oceanographer,  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory



**Walt Musial**

Researcher VI-Mechanical Engineering, National Renewable Energy  
Laboratory (NREL)

Mr. Babb-Brott reviewed the federal government’s efforts related to mapping, exploring and characterizing the U.S. EEZ and Alaska, as well as the development of recommendations to improve the efficiency in authorizations for research, mapping, and exploration. His remarks stressed the importance of regional and national data and decision-making capacity. The foundations for these efforts were set out in the *Executive Order 13840 Ocean Policy to Advance the Economic, Security, and Environmental Interests of the United States*, the *2018 Science and Technology for America’s Oceans: A Decadal Vision* report, the *2019 White House Summit on Partnerships for Ocean Science and Technology*, and the *Presidential Memorandum on Ocean Mapping of the EEZ and Shoreline/Nearshore of Alaska*.

Dr. Stock reviewed the state of the science regarding oceans and climate including biota, the ocean as a regulator of CO<sub>2</sub>, and the impact of a changing climate on ocean ecosystems. Specific examples included the impact of increasing temperatures on important fisheries and the potential impacts of ocean acidification to scallop fisheries. Other climate topics for further study included rising sea levels, potential increased hurricane risks and increased river flow extremes, altered seasonality and amount of ocean productivity, and changes in ocean salinity. Dr. Stock also noted significant advances in ocean predictions and projections, as well as opportunities to mitigate the risks of climate variability and change on coastal communities and coastal ecosystems.

Mr. Musial reviewed the Mid-Atlantic’s potential to support offshore wind energy development and how the market for offshore wind energy could increase significantly as the industry develops technology that will enable it to go to much deeper waters with potentially fewer conflicts. He explained how numerous interconnected, smaller technological advances are supporting the development of larger, more efficient and less expensive offshore wind facilities. These include advanced light-weight material, advanced controls to limit loads and protect vital systems, high-fidelity design and analysis tools, material and manufacturing innovations, automated service and logistics, remote diagnostics and robotic repairs, and industrialization of the supply chain.

**Downloadable Materials:**

- [Speaker biographies](#) (PDF)
- [Presentations Slides](#) (PDF)

# STAKEHOLDER INPUT: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MANAGEMENT

## PART I: BUILDING ON CURRENT MACO AND WORK GROUP EFFORTS



**Facilitator: Tony MacDonald**  
Director,  
Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute

The [background information](#) provided prior to the webinar included updates on activities, progress and work plans of MACO's collaborative work groups.

The [Work Group Priorities](#) for the coming year were shown on the side of the screen. Leads from the current collaborative efforts gave a quick review of their priorities.



**Michael Snyder**  
Ocean and Great Lakes Program Manager,  
New York State Department of State  
**Offshore Renewable Energy - May 19, 2020**



**Peter Clouse**  
Ocean and Great Lakes Program Staff,  
New York Department of State  
**Offshore Renewable Energy - June 23, 2020**



**Jerry Barnes**  
Marine Planner, U.S. Coast Guard  
Fifth District  
**Maritime Commerce and Navigation Safety**



**Mary Ford**  
Director of Engagement and External Relations,  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Association Coastal Ocean Observing System (MARACOOS)  
**Ocean Acidification - May 19, 2020**



**Kirsten Wakefield**  
Engagement Coordinator – Special Projects  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System (MARACOOS)  
**Ocean Acidification - June 23, 2020**



**Kevin Hassell**

Environmental Specialist, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,  
Chair, Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean (MACO)  
**Non-consumptive Recreation**



**Laura McKay**

Program Manager,  
Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program  
**Marine Debris**

**Sample View: Interactive Session White Board from May 19 Webinar**

The screenshot shows an Adobe Connect meeting window titled "Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum - Adobe Connect". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Attendee List (99):** Lists active speakers including Nancy Martel, Nicole Rodi, P. Clouse, peter hill, Peter Rowe, Piero Mazzini, Rachel Keylon, and Robin Jones.
- Chat (Everyone):** Contains messages from Margaret Flanagan, Joan Bondareff, and others.
- Whiteboard Panels:**
  - Building on MACO & Current Work Group Efforts:** Asks participants to review a list and answer a question: "What else can we be doing to advance these or other priorities on this topic?".
  - Offshore Renewable Energy (Everyone):** Discusses prioritizing participation in existing structures (MARCO, ROSA, etc.) and local activities to fill knowledge gaps.
  - Non-Consumptive Recreation (Everyone):** Features comments from Tom Herrington, Talya ten Brink, and Kevin Hassell.
  - Marine Debris (Everyone):** Discusses a reduction plan and mentions resources like PreventBalloonLitter.org.
- Current Work Groups & Priorities:** A summary panel on the right listing priorities for:
  - OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY** (Lead: MICHAEL SNYDER): Facilitate interagency information exchange, develop/host webinars, work with MARCO, facilitate info exchange.
  - MARITIME COMMERCE & NAVIGATION** (Lead: JERRY BARNES): Data-sharing on Coast Guard studies, fill OA research gaps, develop/conduct education.
  - OCEAN ACIDIFICATION** (Lead: MARY FORD): Serve as regional information hub, fill OA research gaps, establish working groups.
  - NON-CONSUMPTIVE RECREATION** (Lead: KEVIN HASSELL): Finalize database of states.

**SUMMARY**

Each work group lead reviewed their current priorities and requested input from the participants. Each work group was given a chat box in which participants could post their comments and suggestions. Participants were asked to answer the question: "What else can we be doing to advance these or other priorities on this topic?" The resulting exchanges included, but were not limited to: participants' recommending additions to work plans; asking technical or clarifying questions for work group leads; and suggesting resources for work groups to reference. Listed below are the suggestions gathered during both Forums. The work groups agreed to consider all of the ideas generated but made no commitments to pursue them.

**OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Stakeholders who attended the 2020 Ocean Forums identified the following areas for collaborative action related to offshore wind development. Please note that the list below contains direct suggestions to the Offshore Wind Regional Collaboration from attendees of the webinar and does not include existing work being done in the region related to these topics.

- Identify permitting impediments to offshore wind development? What impact does COVID-19 have? Clarify the difference between efforts that belong in a planning process versus those that fit within a permitting process.
- Support coordination of various transmission and station needs for bringing offshore wind energy ashore into the grid in a way that minimizes impacts on shoreside ecosystems and communities.
- Implement the best practices identified in the 2016 Ocean Action Plan for early stakeholder engagement, such as by developing a working group to help address and/or resolve stakeholder conflicts (for example, conflicts with fishing industry).
- Identify and share knowledge gaps and funding opportunities for research related to marine and/or offshore impacts of offshore wind development. For example, consider pursuing research related to impacts of offshore wind on terrestrial wildlife like birds and bats.
- Develop a focus on research related to offshore wind development:
  - Identify knowledge gaps and research needs in the region.
  - Share opportunities for funding for research focused on offshore wind.
  - Clearly communicate with the public on what research is being done on offshore wind.
- Promote the use of universal regional standards for ocean baseline/monitoring efforts undertaken at the state and/or individual Wind Energy Area scale.
- Identify opportunities to enhance interstate coordination and relationships between state and BOEM processes and communicate those relationships better to the public.
- Identify and coordinate with different groups, regional entities, and organizations working on offshore wind to improve information sharing, improve coordination, and avoid redundancy among programs. This is a current objective of MACO's Offshore Wind Regional Collaboration.
- Collaborate with agencies and other organizations to ensure that studies related to offshore wind siting, such as navigation studies, are utilizing appropriate data. It was specifically recommended that navigation studies do not overly-rely on AIS data, as it might not be inclusive of all fishing activity.
- Assist states in prioritizing participating in existing regional collaborations (e.g. MARCO and ROSA) to leverage available research funds and identify actions to address state-level needs and knowledge gaps.
- Develop a comprehensive list of all stakeholders throughout the region, including those that are not involved directly with ocean planning such (e.g. developers). Include these other stakeholders in communications about MACO's webinars and other distributed information.
- Host regular, regional updates with stakeholders, including wind energy project representatives.
- Coordinate with Maritime Commerce and Navigation Safety group.

## **MARITIME COMMERCE AND NAVIGATION SAFETY**

Stakeholders who attended the 2020 Ocean Forums identified the following areas for collaborative action related to maritime commerce and navigation safety. Please note that the list below contains direct suggestions to the Maritime Commerce and Navigation Safety work group from attendees of the webinar and does not include existing work being done in the region related to these topics.

- Research new technologies and coordination efforts that would help reduce marine mammal ship strike occurrences.
- Help the maritime industry connect to the ocean planning process, perhaps by reinvigorating the maritime information exchange, which was previously coordinated by District 5 of the Coast Guard.
- Work with the maritime industry to collectively identify conflicts, including those with anchorage areas and transmission cables, early.
- Address issues related to navigation safety and offshore wind development, including marine

radar interference, changing traffic patterns, access to ports etc. It was suggested that these issues need to be addressed both in the short- and long-term through studies as well as lessons learned for future sites.

- One stakeholder recommended that this group consider recommending a 2-mile setback and vessel throughways in offshore winds leases.
- Evaluate whether there are conflicts presented by Wind Energy Areas that were sited before port access routes and navigational lanes were established.
- Comment on, or consider the [recent federal notice](#) on new Fairways along the Atlantic Coast.
- Coordinate with New York's Maritime Technical Working Group.

## OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

Stakeholders who attended the 2020 Ocean Forums identified the following areas for collaborative action related to ocean acidification. Please note that the list below contains direct suggestions to the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network from attendees of the webinar and does not include existing work being done in the region related to these topics.

- Identify studies related to the impact of ocean acidification on prospects for expanded shellfish aquaculture in the Mid-Atlantic.
- Identify sources of information (for example, a national ocean chemistry database) that provide historic data/observations of pH, dissolved oxygen, water temperature, salinity, and other metrics near the Mid-Atlantic coast.
- Research the negative effect of ocean acidification on fish sensorial capacity, such as predator and prey awareness, and also its impacts on growth and reproduction (especially on commercial fishes).
- Connect with State Historic Preservation Offices.

## NON-CONSUMPTIVE RECREATION

Stakeholders who attended the 2020 Ocean Forums identified the following areas for collaborative action related to non-consumptive recreation. Please note that the list below contains direct suggestions for the Non-Consumptive Recreation work group from attendees of the webinar and does not include existing work being done in the region related to these topics.

- Complete the actions that were identified in the 2016 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan
- Identify geographical areas where users recreate (for example, similar to AIS data), which would highlight areas for planning and policy issues.
- Work with Surfrider Foundation to update their recreation study; one stakeholder suggested that this could be also used to update recreation data on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal.
- Identify existing GIS analyses of recreational areas; if none exist, facilitate the development of such an analysis at a regional scale. One stakeholder recommended including an economic impact component to such a study.
- Develop a whitepaper that examines how the tourism and recreation industry are threatened by climate change in the Mid-Atlantic.

## MARINE DEBRIS

Stakeholders who attended the 2020 Ocean Forums expressed the following areas for collaborative action or discussion related to marine debris. Please note that the information presented below are direct suggestions for the Marine Debris work group from attendees of the webinar and does not include information about existing work being done in the region related to these topics.



- Address plastic usage
- Disseminate materials to curb personal protective equipment litter (gloves, masks, etc. Note: The Marine Debris Work Group is addressing COVID-19 related litter through the [PreventBalloonLitter.org](https://www.preventballoonlitter.org) website.)
- One stakeholder suggested that a strong educational component will be necessary to reduce marine debris.
- Decide whether to direct efforts on either cleanup or reduction strategies.
- Focus on microplastics. One stakeholder suggested that the group target synthetic clothing as a source of microplastics.
- Consider developing recommendations for compliance and enforcement, at the state or local levels.
- Create educational materials that define how plastic is made, and potentially include plastic as a list of threats posed by offshore drilling.

Participants were reminded that a transcript of all the actual comments made will be provided to the Work Groups and other collaborative efforts for their consideration. If you have a particular question about participating on a work group, please contact the Work Group lead.

*(Continued on next page)*

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN MANAGEMENT

### PART II: BRAINSTORMING OTHER COLLABORATION NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

During the welcome section, participants were asked to prioritize among the issues that were identified in the stakeholder survey and pre-Forum webinar by choosing their top three for additional action. Based upon the poll results, additional input would be solicited for the three highest-prioritized topic areas.

Participants were asked to brainstorm other collaboration opportunities by answering the following question for each issue: *“What collaborative actions could MACO undertake to address this issue?”*

#### Poll Results for Forum Webinars

Issue Choice	May 19	June 23
Ocean habitats and special areas, including artificial reefs	52%	68%
Climate-driven ocean changes	51%	52%
Improved ocean health, and health indicators including ocean water quality	46%	40%
Research on important recreational and commercial fisheries	37%	48%
Healthy ocean wildlife, including marine mammals	34%	40%
Offshore sand resources, coastal restoration and resilience	31%	12%
Restoration of damaged ocean areas/habitats	22%	20%
Aquaculture	15%	4%

The top two issues for potential collaboration ranked on both May 19 and June 23 were:

- Ocean Habitats (52%, 68% respectively)
- Climate-driven Ocean Changes (51%, 52% respectively)

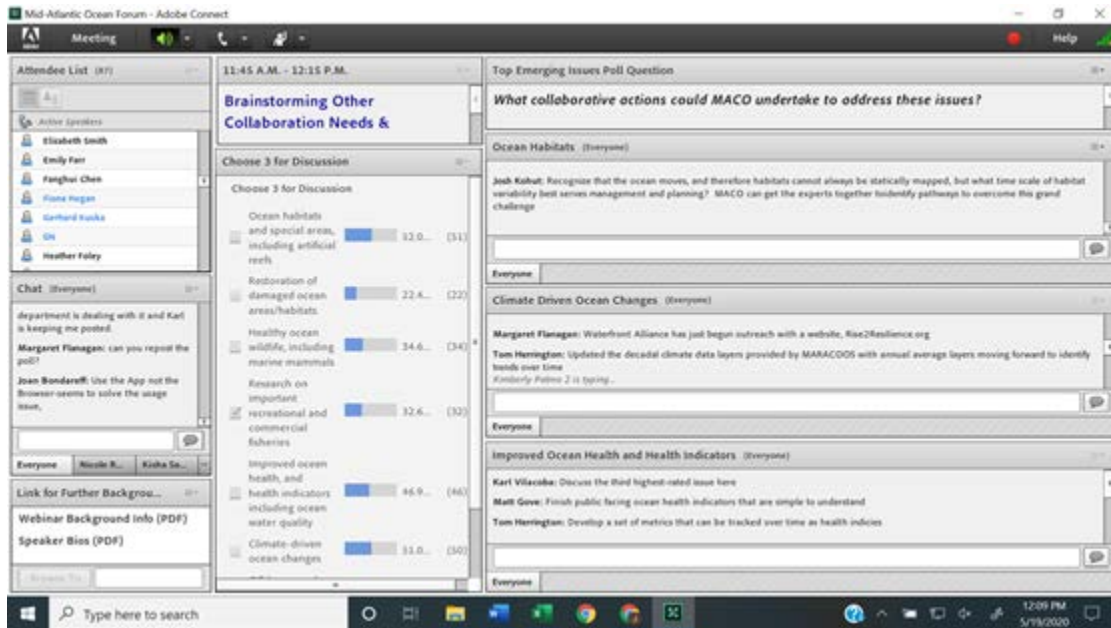
The third-ranked issue for potential collaboration differed between May 19 and June 23:

- May 19: Improved Ocean Health and Health Indicators (47%)
- June 23: Research on important recreational and commercial fisheries (48%)

However, these two issues were ranked either third or fourth by participants in both webinars.

For continuity in the collection of feedback from both webinars, the top three issues ranked on May 19 were used again on June 23.

## Sample View: Issue Brainstorming Session from May 19 Webinar



The suggestions made for potential collaborative action for MACO are listed under each issue area.

### OCEAN HABITATS

- Connect the ocean observing and species survey communities with each other to ensure that habitat products represent the expertise of both.
- Study the impacts of ocean engineering and beach replenishment projects on ecosystems and then address them.
- Focus on salt marshes as habitat and buffers and helping them survive sea level rise by migration or engineering to increase elevation.
- Include submerged historic cultural resources as artificial reefs and habitat.
- Bring together experts to develop an appropriate time scale for planning and management of a habitat that moves.
- Determine where the inconsistencies in ocean habitat protection regulations are across Mid-Atlantic States.
- Build on prior regional efforts to identify critical ocean wildlife habitats and add them to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal so that the data can be used in new industry siting and actions to ensure that these places stay healthy.
- Continue to update data and tools to identify areas of core abundance of species and changes over time.
- Regionally address flooding due to stormwater runoff from an increased frequency of storms and increases in precipitation.

### CLIMATE-DRIVEN OCEAN CHANGES

- Develop public outreach visuals and materials to explain why climate-driven ocean changes impact everyone living near or far from the ocean, with a simple explanation of the science of how that happens.
  - Examples were suggested by other participants:
    - Waterfront Alliance website, [Rise2Resilience.org](https://www.rise2resilience.org)

- Mid-Atlantic Portal’s decadal climate data layers with annual average layers moving forward can show trends over time.
- Put the graphics of past and present fish populations at the same scale in the Mid-Atlantic Portal. For instance, some show a larger abundance up north which is actually stock expansion while the more southern stock stayed the same.
- Outline an approach to managing shifting stocks.
- Identify existing or develop Coastal Resiliency Management Plans for local government officials.

### IMPROVED OCEAN ECOSYSTEM HEALTH INDICATORS

- Develop a public-facing, easy to access and simple to understand set of regionally consistent metrics tracked over time as indicators of health of the ocean ecosystem. Build on prior MARCO work on a dashboard so viewers can know at a glance how the region is faring and where improvements are needed.

Participants were reminded that a transcript of the actual comments and questions from the participants will be provided to the MACO Steering Committee for consideration. These comments about emerging challenges will help MACO align data more effectively for decision-making.

### WRAP-UP AND NEXT STEPS

As Tony MacDonald, the Ocean Forum facilitator, wrapped up the webinar by reviewing the key points from the day, one last interactive poll was presented to the participants. Participants were asked whether or not they thought this webinar was effective for sharing information and gathering input (see below for results).

#### May 19 Results



#### June 23 Results



Lists of upcoming engagement opportunities including scheduled webinars hosted by MACO Work Groups and MARCO were provided at the conclusion of both webinars. Participants were informed that MACO would make available recordings of the webinars and that a summary report would be sent via email and posted on the MARCO website. Work groups and collaborative efforts will consider relevant suggestions. The Steering Committee will consider suggestions that do not fit into existing work groups. Additional suggestions and specific ideas for how to advance current efforts may always be sent to: [info@midatlanticocean.org](mailto:info@midatlanticocean.org).