

Exploring the Unexplored: A Story Map of the Deep-Sea Canyons of the Mid-Atlantic

Complementing the MARCO Portal Ocean Story, *Shining a Light on the Region's Deep-Sea Corals*, authored by MARCO Portal staff, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program GIS staff created a story map entitled *Exploring the Unexplored: Deep-Sea Canyons of the Mid-Atlantic*. Like the MARCO Portal Ocean Story, this story map highlights the results of tow cam surveys of Mid-Atlantic canyons recently completed by biologists from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, with support from NOAA and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean.

“What is a story map?” you might ask. A story map combines narrative information, maps, and other multimedia content to tell an interactive story which can highlight spatial relationships, create awareness about specific issues, and engage its audience in an immersive educational experience. This particular story map leverages ESRI’s Story Map Journal template, which is ideal for combining narrative text with maps, pictures, and other content. A Story Map Journal features a map with a scrolling side panel, including narrative information and photos, organized into sections that correspond with areas on the map.

Exploring the Unexplored: Deep-Sea Canyons of the Mid-Atlantic was designed to be easily comprehended by the general public, to fill in any knowledge gaps they might have about deep-sea canyons and corals, and to hopefully pique their interest in the tow cam survey work and deep-sea coral conservation. The story map features an initial map of all eight canyons included in the tow cam survey, along with a narrative section introducing the project and describing deep-sea canyons in general. Following that are two slightly more detailed sections explaining deep-sea topography and deep-sea corals. Then as you scroll down, the map zooms to each canyon, from North to South, and provides narrative information describing each canyon and including photos of the interesting creatures that call them home. The story map ends with a final section on deep-sea coral conservation and includes links for more information.

Visitors to the MARCO Portal will be able to find a link to the story map at the end of the related Ocean Story, and visitors to the MARCO website will find a link on the *Marine Habitats* page under the *Shared Regional Priorities* tab. Experience the story map for yourself right now by following this link:

<https://arcg.is/1DTzyS>