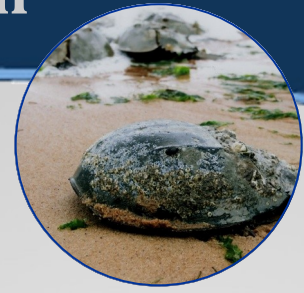


# Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean

## *A Partnership in Ocean Conservation*



### **Importance:**

The varied ocean habitats of the Mid-Atlantic region support a rich diversity of marine life. Some of the most remarkable ocean habitats in the Mid-Atlantic region are its submarine canyons. These canyons are located 70-100 miles offshore along the edge of the continental shelf, and vary in size and length with some as deep as 10,000 feet and as large as the Grand Canyon. The canyons are physically complex with outcrops, steep slopes, varying substrates, and support a rich diversity of marine life. Over a dozen offshore canyons span from New England's offshore waters south to waters off Virginia's coast. The offshore ocean area also serves as an important migratory corridor for fish, turtles, birds and marine mammals and contains species and critical habitats that have not been robustly studied.

### **Objectives:**

One of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's (MARCO's) goals is to ensure that key ocean habitats of the Mid-Atlantic are protected from activities that threaten their sensitive and unique features, marine populations, and ecological processes.

MARCO objectives to address this goal are to

- Protect the region's major offshore canyons from harmful or damaging activities.
- Identify other key Mid-Atlantic habitats and migratory pathways at risk from harmful or damaging activities and seek appropriate protection measures.
- Create a regional internet habitat mapping system to aid in identifying and protecting key habitats and migratory pathways.
- Develop Mid-Atlantic marine habitat protection and restoration policies to guide the management of key priority habitats.

### **First Steps:**

As a starting point for accomplishing the habitat objectives, the Mid-Atlantic States agreed to begin with the following tasks:

1. Work with federal agencies to ensure federal participation and action needed to protect key offshore habitats and identify emerging threats.
2. Improve sharing and management of data needed for offshore habitat identification and protection.
3. Secure the necessary resources, including funding, to enable and ensure successful ongoing regional and federal coordination to protect unique and valuable habitats.

# Habitats

# Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Habitats

