



## 2022 Non-Consumptive Recreation Work Group Progress Report and Ongoing Work Plan

**Reporting Period:** January - June 2022

**Work Group Webpage:** <https://www.midatlanticocean.org/ocean-planning/work-groups-collaborative-efforts/6720-2/>

**Work Group Leads:** Kevin Hassell (NJDEP)

**Work Group Members:** Work group membership is open to government and non-governmental entities operating in the five Mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia that are willing to participate in work group activities. Members are expected to contribute on monthly work group calls and assist with project implementation.

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**Work Group Goals, Objectives and Actions:** MACO's Non-Consumptive Recreation working group is conducting activities in continuation and support of the 2016 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan's Section 2.4.7: Non-Consumptive Recreation, Objective 7, which states, *"Account for the importance of nearshore and offshore non-consumptive recreational uses, and their local and regional economic contributions in the Mid-Atlantic; and in the management of other ocean uses and resources, consider impacts on non-consumptive recreational activities (e.g., surfing, boating, whale watching, birding, diving)."* The Non-Consumptive Recreation work group seeks to identify, characterize, and share information about measures to maintain the value of important non-consumptive recreational areas and the activities they sustain to users and the Mid-Atlantic economy.

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**ACTIVITY 1** - Map areas where whale and dolphin watching businesses operate. Given the increase of juvenile humpbacks in the nearshore, data on the Portal could be useful to maintain the recreational and economic value of these non-consumptive recreational areas.

**Expected Completion Date:** June 2022

**A1 Progress Period:** January - June 2022

Based on AIS tracks for vessels and input from industry members and experts, the Portal Team created a draft map of priority tour zones for whale/dolphin watch areas. On Feb. 11, the Portal Team held the final in a series of meetings with the region's whale watch operators to gather input on a draft map of the four priority tour zones. The Mid-Atlantic data was combined with the Northeast Ocean Data Portal's data to create a consolidated map covering Maine through Virginia, merging the two Portal's datasets and metadata to publish the single joint map layer. The Data Catalog description was added and [an announcement](#) for the map was published in June.

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**ACTIVITY 2** - Identify and map data illustrating coastal recreation and tourism (boat launches, water trails, etc.)

**Expected Completion Date:** Fall 2022

**A2 Progress Period:** January - June 2022

The Portal team recently surveyed GIS sites from the five states in search of potential data illustrating coastal recreation and tourism to update the current data on the Portal. Data supplied by states and located through the team's research include the locations of boat launches/ramps and water trail routes. The data is being merged and refined, with review and release anticipated in fall 2022. Work to identify data from federal and state sources for protected lands and coastal parks was also begun during this reporting period.

**ACTIVITY 3 - Convene the work group on collaborative calls on an as needed basis.**

**Expected Completion Date:** Ongoing

**A3 Progress Period:** January - June 2022

During this period, activities have been accomplished or are underway by the Portal Team and the NCR Work Group Lead. Work group members did not meet during this reporting period and it is anticipated that the previous workgroup membership will be reconvened in the second half of 2022.

