



# 2021-2026 Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan

## Mid-Plan Update

*Photo: Cynthia Smith, George Mason University*



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### Acknowledgements

The Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan (Action Plan), originally published in 2021, was developed through a collaborative effort by stakeholders from Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia. In accordance with the monitoring and evaluation strategy, a Mid-Plan Review was conducted in October 2023 to assess progress towards actions, and realign efforts across the region to achieve the goals laid out in the original Action Plan. The minor updates made to the Action Plan following that workshop are fully reflected in this document. Funding for the development of the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan was provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program (NOAA MDP). Many thanks to the Mid-Atlantic regional stakeholders who contributed to the development of the Action Plan and those who are participating in its implementation, as well as the workshop planning and support team.

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### For more information, please contact:

NOAA Marine Debris Program  
Office of Response and Restoration  
National Ocean Service  
1305 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
<https://MarineDebris.noaa.gov/>

Katie Morgan, Mid-Atlantic Regional Coordinator  
[Katie.Morgan@noaa.gov](mailto:Katie.Morgan@noaa.gov)

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Several actions contained herein reference potential legislative changes. These actions will be carried out by interested partner organizations and are not affiliated with NOAA or the Marine Debris Program.

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# Introduction

In the United States (U.S.), marine debris is defined as any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes. It is one of the most widespread pollution problems facing the world's ocean and waterways across the Mid-Atlantic region, communities, habitats, and species.

The Mid-Atlantic region is home to over 10,000 miles of coastline, including the Chesapeake Bay (the largest estuary in the United States), Barnegat Bay, Delaware Bay, Hudson Bay, and several large rivers that flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The region covers the coastal states of Delaware (DE), Maryland (MD), New Jersey (NJ), New York (NY), Virginia (VA), and the District of Columbia (DC). This area is also home to diverse industries, large urban cities, such as Baltimore, MD; Newark, NJ; New York City, NY; and Washington, DC, and beaches popular for tourism along the Atlantic coast. Several commercially and ecologically important species inhabit this region, including shrimp, crabs, lobsters, sturgeon, flounder, seabass, oysters, whales, sea turtles, seabirds, and many more. Habitats vary from freshwater rivers, estuaries, bays, and wetlands, to coasts and the Mid-Atlantic Bight.

Marine debris is a transboundary problem across the Mid-Atlantic, shared throughout the region despite vast differences in geographic expanse, communities, state and local governments, legislation, and marine and coastal habitats. A shared regional community approach is needed to effectively address this problem. Marine debris impacts all communities, both coastal and inland, from rural areas to large cities. The commonly found types of debris are consistent across the region, including consumer debris, derelict fishing gear, microplastics and microfibers, and abandoned and derelict vessels and vessel-related debris.

## Action Plan Purpose

The Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan (Action Plan) establishes a comprehensive framework for strategic action to ensure the Mid-Atlantic and its coasts, people, and wildlife are free from the impacts of marine debris. This Action Plan is centered on the development and maintenance of collaborative and diverse partnerships to address marine debris in the Mid-Atlantic region, including Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. This Action Plan encompasses work undertaken over the course of five years (2021-2026).

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program (NOAA MDP) Planning Team undertook multiple steps to coordinate the development of the Action Plan, including: collaborating with the Mid-Atlantic community through one-on-one feedback calls; engaging through regionally specific events, forums, and channels; aligning with state and watershed marine debris plans; reviewing marine debris data sources; holding virtual workshops; and providing opportunities for written partner feedback to prioritize and finalize the actions, based on their relevance across the region.

Due to the complexity of marine debris issues, many stakeholders can play a role in the Action Plan's implementation, including federal, state, and local governments; private businesses and industry; and nongovernmental and academic organizations. All are welcome to participate in these efforts, and can engage directly by emailing the NOAA MDP Mid-Atlantic Regional Coordinator, Katie Morgan, at [katie.morgan@noaa.gov](mailto:katie.morgan@noaa.gov).



# Vision

To keep the Mid-Atlantic region, coasts, communities, habitats, wildlife, and our ocean free from marine debris.

# Mission

To reduce marine debris and strengthen regional partnerships to understand, prevent, remove, and mitigate marine debris through increased research, preventive actions, reductions in impacts, and collaborative efforts of diverse groups.

## Action Plan Structure

The Action Plan is structured into goals, strategies, objectives, and actions. The sections below are the core of the Action Plan, outlining the actions, leads, and partners that contribute to achieving the Action Plan's vision and mission.

# Goals

In the context of this Action Plan, goals are priorities outlined by the marine debris community.

**Goal 1:** Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Consumer Debris

**Goal 2:** Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear

**Goal 3:** Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Microplastics and Microfibers

**Goal 4:** Prevent and Mitigate the Contributions of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels, Shrink Wrap, Fiberglass, and Other Related Debris

# Strategies

Strategies are cross-cutting methods for achieving the outlined goals. The strategies are: Prevention, Education, and Outreach; Research and Monitoring; Proper Disposal and Infrastructure; Removal; and Policy and Management. Strategies are shared across debris types and goals, and they will be used to facilitate sharing of best practices across the goal areas.

# Objectives

Objectives define how each strategy will be achieved. Typically, there are several objectives per strategy.

# Actions

Actions are discrete projects/activities supporting an objective undertaken to achieve the associated strategy and goal. These specific, one- or multi-year steps are needed to advance or complete each objective by the conclusion of the Action Plan. Completed actions are marked with the year they were archived.

# Leads and Partners

In this Action Plan, leads and partners are entities that have volunteered to carry out a specific action, pending the availability of resources and capacity (e.g., funding, staff, time, materials). Leads are responsible for undertaking actions that fulfill the Objectives and reporting on the progress, challenges, and completion of the actions. Leads, when listed, are represented in bold letters. Please note, If there is no organization in bold, there's no lead identified for that specific action. Partners are responsible for supporting and undertaking actions that fulfill the objective and for providing input on progress. The NOAA MDP will facilitate the Action Plan, monitor progress, update the Action Plan, and promote information-sharing to bring the Mid-Atlantic marine debris community together.

## Action Plan Implementation and Monitoring

The Mid-Atlantic marine debris community has emphasized that promoting justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, regular communication, capacity building, and coordination of diverse stakeholders is essential to maintain the strategic partnerships needed to accomplish the goals of this Action Plan.

**Promote Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** As part of a holistic approach to combating marine debris in the region, the Action Plan community is committed to promoting inclusion and serving a diverse community by including new voices and actions to support underserved communities and nontraditional stakeholders. The Action Plan will incorporate the principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as core values across all goals. The Action Plan calls for enhanced support for projects that engage underrepresented and underserved communities with the aim of advancing diversity and inclusion at all levels to achieve our mission. The local, regional, and global challenges of marine debris can impact some communities more than others. The Action Plan partners will increase collaboration with people and communities with diverse experiences and backgrounds to foster innovative and creative ideas to reach the best possible solutions to help us address marine debris. Additionally, partners will seek diverse collaborators in culturally competent ways, including language considerations and materials best suited for different communities.

**Communicate:** The Action Plan will promote and utilize existing and new regionally and state-relevant communication platforms to share best practices, curriculum and educational resources, and regionally-relevant research. This will support engagement opportunities for partners to communicate activities, share lessons learned, and document work being done in specific locations across the region. This includes the [Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal](#), e-newsletters, and other communication platforms.

**Build Capacity:** The Action Plan will identify and share opportunities to develop and expand capacity building for the marine debris community, including short- and long-term dedicated funding sources and other resources for implementing the Action Plan actions and other marine debris activities in the region. Additionally, it will identify opportunities to engage with nontraditional stakeholders and organizations to share information, knowledge, and resources to build future generations of marine debris practitioners and leaders.



**Coordinate:** The Action Plan process will include regular meetings and webinars to highlight progress and identify opportunities in the implementation of the Action Plan, spread awareness about ongoing research in the region, and disseminate education and outreach products on public-facing websites, such as the [Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal](#). Additionally, the Action Plan will support integration and alignment with other local, state, and regional plans. This includes the Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan, an initiative of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University, and funded by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management. This also includes the Long Island Sound Marine Debris Action Plan, which is led by New York and Connecticut Sea Grants and was developed with funding provided through a partnership of National Sea Grant and NOAA MDP. In addition to the Action Plan, the NOAA MDP also has facilitated and developed [resources for marine debris emergency preparedness](#) for storm events and other natural disasters and works to ensure the Mid-Atlantic marine debris community is aware of these resources.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The NOAA MDP will facilitate the overall coordination of check-ins and reporting. Progress will be compiled by the NOAA MDP on a semi-annual basis and recorded in an annual progress report. This role may be adapted as the Action Plan proceeds. The Mid-Atlantic marine debris community recognized the need for this Action Plan to be evaluated and revisited within the five-year timeframe through a Mid-Plan Review, as unforeseen challenges or gaps may arise in its implementation. A proceedings document was published from the Mid-Plan Review, and as a result four actions were deemed complete ([Appendix C](#)). Upon the conclusion of the five years, the Action Plan will undergo a final evaluation and an accomplishments report will be generated.



# Goal 1: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Consumer Debris

**Consumer debris** consists of ubiquitous human-made materials and single-use plastics. In the Mid-Atlantic region, common debris items include single-use bags and bottles, polystyrene cups, balloons, cigarettes, food containers, straws, and hygiene and medical waste, as well as larger debris, such as tires, large appliances, and other consumer products.

*Consumer debris piling up along a waterfront in Washington, DC (Photo: NOAA).*

Strategy 1.1. Prevention, Education, and Outreach	
Objective 1.1.1. By the end of 2026, promote information-sharing and support coordinated messaging outreach and educational campaigns targeted at consumer debris items to raise public awareness of available science, data collection, research, laws, and regulations as steps leading to long-term changes to behavior.	
Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
1.1.1.1. By the end of 2026, create or adapt and disseminate at least 25 outreach products on consumer debris that are relevant to or could be replicated across the region, including fact sheets, infographics, one-pagers, and manuals of best practices, and make them available online for diverse audiences on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other sources.	Alliance for a Living Ocean, B&D Environmental, Barnegat Bay Partnership, Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority, Bronx River Alliance, Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, Clean Ocean Action, Delaware Sea Grant, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, District of Columbia Mayor’s Office of the Clean City, Sprehe Engineering, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), National Park Service, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, NOAA MDP, Ocean Conservancy, Ocean County Parks, New Jersey, Oceanic Global, Prince George’s County Department of the Environment, Prince William County Department of Public Works, Surfrider Foundation, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, Wildlife Conservation Society’s New York Aquarium



**Objective 1.1.1. By the end of 2026, promote information-sharing and support coordinated messaging outreach and educational campaigns targeted at consumer debris items to raise public awareness of available science, data collection, research, laws, and regulations as steps leading to long-term changes to behavior.**

Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
<p>1.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, engage at least 500,000 Mid-Atlantic residents in meaningful interactions that promote source reduction of common consumer debris items, including single-use plastics, and encourage increased use of sustainable alternatives, such as reusable items.</p>	<p><b>National Aquarium</b>, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Barnegat Bay Partnership, Clean Ocean Action, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City, Eco Maniac Company/ Keep It Beachy Clean, George Mason University, Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor &amp; Estuary Program, Keep Prince William Beautiful, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Coastal Bays Program, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), National Park Service, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, New York Marine Rescue Center, Ocean Conservancy, Oceanic Global, Our Last Straw, Prince William County Department of Public Works, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Surfrider Foundation, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Virginia Aquarium, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium</p>
<p>1.1.1.3. By the end of 2026, support outreach, advocacy, and education campaigns based on community-based social marketing techniques to prevent the intentional release of balloons using strategies developed with regional partners and promoted through <a href="https://preventballoonlitter.org">preventballoonlitter.org</a>.</p> <p><b>Completed May 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group</b>, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, EcoAmbassadors Program at Columbia University, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), National Aquarium, National Park Service, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Oceanic Global, Virginia Aquarium, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium</p>

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<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
1.1.1.4. By the end of 2026, Action Plan leads and partners will promote sustainable and waste-reducing initiatives in their respective office operations and events to reduce consumer debris and single-use plastic.	Bronx River Alliance, Clean Ocean Action, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City, EcoAmbassadors Program at Columbia University, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), National Aquarium, National Park Service, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA MDP, Our Last Straw, Prince George's County Department of the Environment, Prince William County Department of Public Works, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium

**Objective 1.1.2. By the end of 2026, educate youth and adults through formal and non-formal education methods by using existing curricula and developing regionally-specific educational materials, art exhibits, resources, and professional learning opportunities.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
1.1.2.1. By the end of 2026, share educational materials that have been successfully demonstrated through online platforms, in-person events, educator workshops, school programs and visits, summer camps, and field trips with at least 500 educators and 10,000 preschool through twelfth grade (P-12) Mid-Atlantic students, and make them available online for diverse audiences on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.	<b>NOAA MDP</b> , Alice Ferguson Foundation, Alliance for a Living Ocean, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Bronx River Alliance, Clean Ocean Action, Delaware Sea Grant, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, Elizabeth River Project, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), Maryland Sea Grant, Mid-Atlantic Marine Education Association, National Aquarium, National Park Service, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, New York Marine Rescue Center, New York Sea Grant, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Ocean Conservancy, Ocean County Parks, New Jersey, Oceanic Global, Operation SPLASH, Prince George's County Department of the Environment, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Appalachian Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium



**Objective 1.1.2. By the end of 2026, educate youth and adults through formal and non-formal education methods by using existing curricula and developing regionally-specific educational materials, art exhibits, resources, and professional learning opportunities.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
1.1.2.2. Each year of the Action Plan, share professional opportunities, such as internships and educational programs, with at least 50 high schools and universities across the region, especially serving schools in underserved and underrepresented communities.	Bronx River Alliance, Clean Ocean Action, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, Ocean Conservancy, RISE Rockaway, NOAA MDP, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium

**Objective 1.1.3. By the end of 2026, identify and promote industry partnerships in supply chain and production operations to promote reusable systems and extended producer responsibility in sectors such as food service, hotels, tourism, retail, manufacturing, and wholesale.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
1.1.3.1. By the end of 2026, engage at least 250 private sector partners in the food service, travel, and tourism industries in conversations to understand barriers, implement single-use plastic reduction practices, and share lessons learned with regional partners and the public.	Clean Ocean Action, Eco Maniac Company/Keep It Beachy Clean, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Ocean Conservancy, Oceanic Global, Our Last Straw, Sierra Club DC Chapter, Surfrider Foundation, Virginia Aquarium, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium

## **Strategy 1.2. Research and Monitoring**

**Objective 1.2.1. By the end of 2026, complete at least five new research projects identifying opportunities, research gaps, data collection and monitoring efforts, and impacts of consumer debris.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
1.2.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, compile existing consumer debris research on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal to enable analysis of information gaps, best practices, and available resources.	Anacostia Riverkeeper, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Chesapeake Bay Program Plastic Pollution Action Team, Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, NOAA MDP, Operation SPLASH, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, Virginia Aquarium

**Objective 1.2.1. By the end of 2026, complete at least five new research projects identifying opportunities, research gaps, data collection and monitoring efforts, and impacts of consumer debris.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
1.2.1.2. By the end of 2026, promote consumer debris research by conducting stream, river, and shoreline monitoring surveys, monitoring study sites, promoting citizen science, and collecting stormwater data to better inform decision-makers and raise public awareness.	B&D Environmental, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Bronx River Alliance, Clean Fairfax, Clean Ocean Action, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program, Sprehe Engineering, Keep Prince William Beautiful, Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, NOAA MDP, Prince William County Department of Public Works, Rutgers University, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**Objective 1.2.2. By the end of 2026, conduct at least six social science research projects related to consumer debris, such as an assessment of the effectiveness and best practices of behavior change efforts, techniques of community-based social marketing, and identification of target audiences for additional marine debris prevention interventions.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
1.2.2.1. By the end of 2026, analyze the effectiveness of community-based social marketing techniques and behavior change campaigns to target, inform, transfer, and influence at least six consumer debris campaigns that are inclusive of the Mid-Atlantic regional community.	<b>District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City,</b> Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, Bronx River Alliance, Keep Prince William Beautiful, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, National Aquarium, Prince George's County Department of the Environment, Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center at George Mason University, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Virginia Aquarium



### Strategy 1.3. Proper Disposal and Infrastructure

**Objective 1.3.1. By the end of 2026, promote and increase proper disposal, interception technologies, and sustainable disposal options for consumer debris by identifying hotspots, adequately maintaining and emptying disposal receptacles, providing job opportunities, and supporting public services.**

Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
1.3.1.1. By the end of 2026, complete at least 25 projects that use available data to install interception technologies, tools, receptacle bins, and capture devices that support data collection and monitoring across the Mid-Atlantic, including through identifying funding sources, conducting surveys, and sharing lessons learned.	<b>Sprehe Engineering</b> , B&D Environmental, Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority, Bronx River Alliance, Clean Fairfax, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City, Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program, Keep America Beautiful, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), Ocean Conservancy, Operation SPLASH, Prince George's County Department of the Environment, Public Works Department, Prince William County, Virginia, Surfrider Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Virginia Aquarium, Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore
1.3.1.2. Each year of the Action Plan, promote and share existing toolkits and mapping software to identify landfill and recycling facilities across the region.	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1.3.1.3. By the end of 2026, compile a list of extended producer responsibility or waste collection opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic region, and identify those suitable for inclusion in marine debris efforts.	National Aquarium, Rutgers Cooperative Extension
1.3.1.4. Each year of the Action Plan, examine existing data, such as total daily maximum loads, as well as the effectiveness of local, state, and regional policies, and identify the need to create new or enhanced litter plans.	B&D Environmental, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Clean Fairfax, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program, Sprehe Engineering, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Prince William County Department of Public Works, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Strategy 1.4. Removal

**Objective 1.4.1. By the end of 2026, support and coordinate removal cleanup efforts of consumer debris, mobilizing 100,000 people to remove 200,000 pounds of debris from land, waterways, coasts, and our ocean.**

Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
1.4.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, support and coordinate at least 125 cleanup events (large-scale, small-scale, or virtual campaigns) around land-based litter and collect data on debris weight removed, including the International Coastal Cleanup.	<b>Ocean Conservancy</b> , Alliance for a Living Ocean, American Littoral Society, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Barnegat Bay Partnership, Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority, Bronx River Alliance, Clean Fairfax, Clean Ocean Action, Clean Virginia Waterways, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City, Eco Maniac Company/Keep It Beachy Clean, Keep America Beautiful, Keep Prince William Beautiful, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), National Aquarium, National Park Service, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Oceanic Global, Operation SPLASH, Prince George's County Department of the Environment, Prince William County Department of Public Works, Prince William County Soil and Water Conservation District, RISE Rockaway, Surfrider Foundation, Virginia Aquarium, Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium
1.4.1.2. Each year of the Action Plan, coordinate with local and state groups to reach new audiences and host cleanup events in new locations to serve underserved areas and communities.	Alice Ferguson Foundation, American Littoral Society, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, B&D Environmental, Clean Ocean Action, District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City, Eco Maniac Company/Keep It Beachy Clean, Keep America Beautiful, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), National Aquarium, Ocean Conservancy, Prince George's County Department of the Environment, Prince William County Department of Public Works, Surfrider Foundation

## Strategy 1.5. Policy and Management

**Objective 1.5.1. By the end of 2026, assess, share, and build awareness of existing policies to improve compliance rates and engage with local, state, regional, and federal decision-makers and political leadership to increase awareness and adopt new policies, education, and advocacy campaigns.**

Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
1.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, engage with at least 500 local, county, state, and/or federal elected officials and policy-makers to increase awareness of consumer debris policies and advocacy campaigns.	Anacostia Riverkeeper, B&D Environmental, Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority, Bronx River Alliance, Clean Fairfax, Clean Ocean Action, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, Sprehe Engineering, LitterFreeVA, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), National Aquarium, Oceana, Oceanic Global, Operation SPLASH, Sierra Club DC Chapter, Surfrider Foundation, Trash Free Maryland, Virginia Aquarium, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium
1.5.1.2. By the end of 2026, inform the development of at least 10 new local and state policies and management plans that are aimed at source reduction, prevention, and interception practices using available data and information.	<b>District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City,</b> Bronx River Alliance, Clean Ocean Action, Clean Virginia Waterways, LitterFreeVA, National Aquarium, Oceana, Oceanic Global, Prince William County Department of Public Works, Surfrider Foundation, Trash Free Maryland, Wildlife Conservation Society's New York Aquarium





# Goal 2: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear

**Derelict fishing gear** refers to nets, monofilament or braided lines, crab pots, lobster traps, aquaculture equipment, and other recreational or commercial fishing equipment that has been lost, abandoned, or discarded in the marine or coastal environment. Modern gear is generally made of synthetic materials and metal, and it can persist for a very long time. Lost gear also can contribute to the issue of ghost fishing, collecting both target species and non-target bycatch.

*Derelict lobster traps removed from the Long Island Sound (Photo: Cornell Cooperative Extension).*

Strategy 2.1. Prevention, Education, and Outreach	
Objective 2.1.1. By the end of 2026, create and promote outreach products, educational workshops, and information campaign projects with coordinated messaging to reach members of the regional management bodies and recreational and commercial communities to prevent derelict fishing gear and reduce ghost fishing, habitat loss, and threats to navigation.	
Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
2.1.1.1. By the end of 2026, promote at least 10 new outreach products to be shared at targeted outreach events to engage the public and recreational fishing and boating communities in derelict gear prevention. Make them available online for diverse audiences through the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.	BoatUS Foundation, Delaware Sea Grant, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NOAA MDP, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Ocean Conservancy, Stockton University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science

**Objective 2.1.1. By the end of 2026, create and promote outreach products, educational workshops, and information campaign projects with coordinated messaging to reach members of the regional management bodies and recreational and commercial communities to prevent derelict fishing gear and reduce ghost fishing, habitat loss, and threats to navigation.**

Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
2.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, support translation of at least five new outreach products, signage, and/or digital campaigns to non-English languages identified by the community.	Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
2.1.1.3. By the end of 2026, develop and share at least five new outreach products on proper disposal and recycling of monofilament line to fishers, boaters, and the general public, and conduct outreach to organizations and businesses in order to build partnerships on recycling monofilament line and soft bait.	BoatUS Foundation, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways
2.1.1.4. By the end of 2026, establish at least 10 new partnerships between the commercial fishing industry, recreational fishers, local municipalities, metal recyclers, and waste-to-energy companies to recycle, install receptacles for, and properly dispose of fishing gear.	BoatUS Foundation, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful), NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Stockton University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science
2.1.1.5. By the end of 2026, engage with at least 10 aquaculture organizations across the region to better understand debris issues, storm preparedness, and information gaps.	New Jersey Aquaculture Innovation Center at Rutgers University, Stockton University, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways



## Strategy 2.2. Research and Monitoring

**Objective 2.2.1. By the end of 2026, advance research and promote data collection, citizen science, and monitoring efforts on known derelict fishing gear hotspots and wildlife entanglement reports to identify key geographic areas to target removal and prevention efforts.**

Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
2.2.1.1. By the end of 2026, conduct at least one study to analyze historical stranding records to investigate interactions between marine mammals, sea turtles, and marine debris, and make the results available on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.	<b>Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, New York Marine Rescue Center</b> , NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
2.2.1.2. By the end of 2026, develop or adapt existing methods to document wildlife interactions with derelict fishing gear and make them available on public-facing platforms.	<b>Atlantic Marine Conservation Society</b> , Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Project Terrapin, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
2.2.1.3. By the end of 2026, publish at least one study to document the local knowledge of fishers, lobstermen, watermen, and crabbers regarding ghost fishing and species impacted by derelict fishing gear.  <b>Completed October 2021</b>	Cornell Cooperative Extension, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Stockton University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science
2.2.1.4. By the end of 2026, complete at least three studies on derelict fishing gear hotspots, share the results with the boating community to enhance navigational safety, and make them available to the public.	Barnegat Bay Partnership, Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Project Terrapin, Stockton University



**Objective 2.2.2. Each year of the Action Plan, promote the use, identify barriers, and explore development of new and innovative technologies, bycatch reduction devices, and other remote sensing alternatives to detect and prevent derelict fishing gear.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
2.2.2.1. By the end of 2026, implement two new projects to partner with fishers, lobstermen, watermen, and crabbers to use innovative technologies to prevent and remove derelict fishing gear in coastal and marine environments.	<b>Stockton University</b> , Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Delaware Center for Inland Bays, Delaware Sea Grant
2.2.2.2. By the end of 2026, distribute bycatch reduction devices proven to prevent ghost fishing to recreational and commercial fishers, and/or develop a pilot program to assess their effectiveness.	Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Delaware Sea Grant, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, Project Terrapin, Stockton University, The Wetlands Institute, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, William & Mary Keck Environmental Field Laboratory
2.2.2.3. Publish a report that examines various state policy approaches to bycatch reduction devices to minimize the impact of derelict fishing gear on diamondback terrapins.  <b>Completed Spring 2022</b>	Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William & Mary Law School

### **Strategy 2.3. Proper Disposal and Infrastructure**

**Objective 2.3.1. Each year of the Action Plan, promote proper disposal and increase infrastructure and capacity to collect end-of-life or derelict fishing gear in both the commercial and recreational sectors.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
2.3.1.1. By the end of 2026, install and monitor at least 75 monofilament collection bins at priority locations identified by partners, including signage in English and non-English languages.	BoatUS Foundation, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Elizabeth River Project, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Ocean Conservancy, Surfrider Foundation

**Objective 2.3.1. Each year of the Action Plan, promote proper disposal and increase infrastructure and capacity to collect end-of-life or derelict fishing gear in both the commercial and recreational sectors.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
2.3.1.2. Each year of the Action Plan, coordinate with at least 10 state and local authorities, metal recyclers, waste-to-energy companies, or haulers to return recovered gear when possible, properly dispose of collected gear, and identify sustainable alternatives.	Cornell Cooperative Extension, Delaware Sea Grant, Stockton University, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey

### **Strategy 2.4. Removal**

**Objective 2.4.1. Each year of the Action Plan, remove derelict fishing gear from coastal areas and waterways through innovative technology, remote sensing, and engagement with recreational and commercial fishing and aquaculture communities.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
2.4.1.1. By the end of 2026, support the removal of derelict fishing gear in collaboration with recreational fishing and boating communities, promote and implement volunteer collection events, and employ alternative disposal options (e.g., recycling, return to owner, repurposing) when possible.	BoatUS Foundation, Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Delaware Center for Inland Bays, Delaware Sea Grant, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NOAA MDP, Ocean Conservancy, The Wetlands Institute
2.4.1.2. By the end of 2026, support at least five removal projects working alongside commercial fishing and aquaculture communities, employ alternative disposal options (e.g., recycling, return to owner, repurposing) when possible..	Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Oyster Recovery Project, Stockton University

## **Strategy 2.5. Policy and Management**

**Objective 2.5.1. Each year of the Action Plan, engage with regional and state government bodies, policy-makers, and decision-makers to raise awareness of the issue of derelict fishing gear and build support for sustained programs and funding to prevent, mitigate, and remove derelict fishing gear.**

### **Actions**

### **Lead(s) and Partner(s)**

2.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, attend regional fishery meetings to bring awareness to issues, impacts, prevention approaches, and proper disposal of derelict fishing gear.

Cornell Cooperative Extension, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NOAA MDP, Stockton University, University of Delaware / Delaware Sea Grant

**Objective 2.5.2. Each year of the Action Plan, facilitate information-sharing across the region to improve awareness and promote best management practices in similar fisheries, including proven regulations, legislation, and public outreach strategies to reduce derelict fishing gear and its impacts.**

### **Actions**

### **Lead(s) and Partner(s)**

2.5.2.1. Each year of the Action Plan, research and promote funding mechanisms to support derelict fishing gear removal to 10 regional, state, and local entities.

Cornell Cooperative Extension, Stockton University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science





# Goal 3: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Microplastics and Microfibers

**Microplastics** are small plastic particles less than five millimeters in size. They include microbeads, pellets, or small fragments from larger plastic items breaking up in the marine environment. **Microfibers** can be synthetic fibers, such as polyester or nylon, which are used to make clothing, furnishings, and even fishing nets and lines. Through general wear or washing and drying, fibers may break apart from larger items.

*Microplastics filtered from beach sand in Virginia (Photo: Cynthia Smith, George Mason University).*

Strategy 3.1. Prevention, Education, and Outreach	
Objective 3.1.1. By the end of 2026, develop education and outreach materials with coordinated messaging on microplastics and microfibers to raise public awareness of available science, data collection, research, laws, and regulations as steps leading to long-term changes in behavior.	
Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
3.1.1.1. By the end of 2026, create and implement at least 15 outreach products and/or education campaigns that are relevant to or could be replicated across the region that raise awareness of microplastic and microfiber issues among Mid-Atlantic residents as an initial step to lead to long-term changes in behavior, and make them available on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.	Anacostia Riverkeeper, Bronx River Alliance, Clean Ocean Action, Delaware Sea Grant, George Mason University, Keep Virginia Beautiful, Maryland Sea Grant, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean’s Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA MDP, University of Delaware, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory

**Objective 3.1.1. By the end of 2026, develop education and outreach materials with coordinated messaging on microplastics and microfibers to raise public awareness of available science, data collection, research, laws, and regulations as steps leading to long-term changes in behavior.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
3.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, share educational materials through online platforms, in-person events, educator workshops, school programs and visits, summer camps, and field trips with 10,000 preschool through twelfth grade (P-12) Mid-Atlantic students and 500 educators, and make resources available online for diverse audiences on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal.	Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, Clean Ocean Action, Delaware Sea Grant, Maryland Sea Grant, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, NOAA MDP, Stony Brook University, University of Delaware, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory
3.1.1.3. By the end of 2026, complete at least three microplastic and microfiber education, prevention, and outreach projects and/or courses for undergraduate and graduate university students to build the capacity of next-generation leaders.	American University, New York Marine Rescue Center, NOAA MDP, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory

**Objective 3.1.2. By the end of 2026, identify industry partnerships and pilot projects to promote opportunities to reduce the generation of microplastics or microfibers in supply chains and operations in the private sector, such as in the clothing industry, manufacturing, and wholesaling.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
3.1.2.1. By the end of 2026, engage at least five community groups or the private sector in pilot projects for education and/or prevention of microfibers from clothing and textiles in wastewater.	Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Oceanic Global, Surfrider Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Strategy 3.2. Research and Monitoring

### Objective 3.2.1. By the end of 2026, identify and address research opportunities for data collection, monitoring, and detection of microplastics and microfibers.

Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
3.2.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, share microplastic research, best practices, literature, resources, and funding sources on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal.	Bronx River Alliance, Clean Ocean Action, Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, NOAA MDP, U.S. Geological Survey, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, Virginia Institute of Marine Science
3.2.1.2. By the end of 2026, conduct at least one microplastic and microfiber research webinar to share research and discuss future needs in the region.	<b>New York Sea Grant</b> , Anacostia Riverkeeper, Clean Ocean Action, Sprehe Engineering, NOAA MDP, Stockton University, U.S. Geological Survey
3.2.1.3. By the end of 2026, complete at least 15 research projects that address a regional informational gap, including but not limited to studies on pathways, measurement and sampling techniques, quantification, fate and transport, modeling, chemical and physical traits, impacts to wildlife and human health, and vectors for invasive species.	American University, Anacostia Riverkeeper, Anacostia Watershed Society, Catholic University of America, Chesapeake Bay Program Plastic Pollution Action Team, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program, Sprehe Engineering, Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University, NOAA MDP, Ocean Research Project, Stockton University, Stony Brook University, SUNY Maritime, TetraTech, U.S. Geological Survey, University of Delaware, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Virginia Institute of Marine Science
3.2.1.4. By the end of 2026, create and/or expand citizen science projects and programs related to nurdles, or pre-production plastic pellets, to include at least one site in the Mid-Atlantic region.	Clean Ocean Action, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Delaware Coastal Programs, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve



### **Strategy 3.3. Proper Disposal and Infrastructure**

**Objective 3.3.1. By the end of 2026, work with municipal, local, and natural resource agencies to conduct at least one study to identify the costs, benefits, and barriers of using interception technologies in stormwater management to reduce microfibers and microplastics entering waterways.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
3.3.1.1. By the end of 2026, conduct at least one study alongside academia, the private sector, and/or stormwater management agencies to collect observational data and analyze the cost-benefit for remediation, innovative technologies, and/or barriers to using intercept technologies to reduce microfibers and microplastics entering waterways.	Delaware Sea Grant, Sprehe Engineering, University of Delaware

### **Strategy 3.4. Removal**

**Objective 3.4.1. By the end of 2026, identify and distribute innovative technologies to capture and remove microfibers and microplastics from identified sources, such as washing machine filters and wastewater treatment technologies, and other microfiber and microplastic discharge hotspots.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
3.4.1.1. By the end of 2026, identify and distribute innovative products and technology proven to be effective that can be used in consumer homes and in commercial laundry establishments, such as washing machine filters, to reduce microfiber entry into waterways.  <b>Completed Fall 2022</b>	Delaware Sea Grant, Ocean Conservancy

### **Strategy 3.5. Policy and Management**

**Objective 3.5.1. By the end of 2026, develop and share resources that communicate the impacts of microplastics and microfibers with policy and management officials to guide policy decisions, build political will, and cultivate champions.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
3.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, engage in meaningful interactions with at least 25 local and state decision-makers to better understand impacts and management considerations for microplastics and microfibers in waterways.	Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, Clean Ocean Action, Stony Brook University



# Goal 4: Prevent and Mitigate the Contributions of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels, Shrink Wrap, Fiberglass, and Other Related Debris

An **abandoned and derelict vessel (ADV)** is any vessel in significant disrepair that may pose a threat to the public or the environment. “Derelict” frequently refers to vessels that are dilapidated with an identifiable owner, while “abandoned” vessels are those where the owner is unknown or has surrendered rights of ownership. ADVs litter ports, waterways, and estuaries all over the Mid-Atlantic region. They threaten our ocean, coasts, and waterways by obstructing navigational channels, causing harm to the environment, and diminishing commercial and recreational activities. Vessel-related debris components, such as **fiberglass** and **shrink wrap**, are also of concern. For these debris types, it is important that both recreational and commercial vessel owners and operators take precautions to reduce potential impacts.

*An abandoned boat discovered on a Maryland shoreline (Photo: Maryland Department of Natural Resources).*

Strategy 4.1. Prevention, Education, and Outreach	
Objective 4.1.1. By the end of 2026, share best practices and outreach and educational materials to the boating community and relevant jurisdictions to address ADVs and related debris.	
Actions	Lead(s) and Partner(s)
4.1.1.1. By the end of 2026, create outreach products, such as fact sheets and educational materials, highlighting best practices for responsible boat ownership, including proper disposal, reusable alternatives to single-use boat covers, and storm preparedness. Share with marinas, boating shops, boat shows, yacht clubs, and other relevant private sector entities.	BoatUS Foundation, Clean Ocean Action, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Marine Trades Association of New Jersey, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Clean Marina Initiative, New York Sea Grant, Ocean Conservancy, Operation SPLASH, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Virginia Clean Marina Program

**Objective 4.1.1. By the end of 2026, share best practices and outreach and educational materials to the boating community and relevant jurisdictions to address ADVs and related debris.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
4.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, identify relevant local and state jurisdictions that address ADVs and other vessel-related debris, document gaps and challenges, and use new information to update the <a href="#">ADV InfoHub</a> website.	Maryland Department of Natural Resources Abandoned Boat and Debris Program, NOAA MDP, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways

### **Strategy 4.2. Research and Monitoring**

**Objective 4.2.1. Each year of the Action Plan, identify hotspots for ADVs, promote data collection, explore options for an inventory program of known vessel locations, and share on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
4.2.1.1. By the end of 2026, identify opportunities to create state inventory programs and identify derelict vessel hotspots with state and local authorities and share resources with the Mid-Atlantic community.	<b>Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways</b> , American Littoral Society, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Abandoned Boat and Debris Program, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, NOAA MDP, U.S. Coast Guard, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

### **Strategy 4.3. Proper Disposal and Infrastructure**

**Objective 4.3.1. Each year of the Action Plan, increase proper disposal capacity and infrastructure for ADVs, shrink wrap, fiberglass, and other related debris across the region.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
4.3.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, identify local and state funding opportunities and contact information for disposal, hauling, and vessel recycling to be shared with the marine debris community.	BoatUS Foundation, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Clean Marina Initiative, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



**Objective 4.3.1. Each year of the Action Plan, increase proper disposal capacity and infrastructure for ADVs, shrink wrap, fiberglass, and other related debris across the region.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
4.3.1.2. By the end of 2026, engage with at least three recycling centers to understand issues and opportunities to increase sustainable disposal alternatives for shrink wrap.	BoatUS Foundation, Clean Ocean Action, Marine Trades Association of Maryland, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Clean Marina Initiative, Operation SPLASH
4.3.1.3. By the end of 2026, explore the development of at least three new partnerships to increase fiberglass recycling and other sustainable vessel disposal alternatives across the Mid-Atlantic region.	BoatUS Foundation, Maryland Clean Marina Initiative in partnership with Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Marine Trades Association of Maryland, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways

**Strategy 4.4. Removal**

**Objective 4.4.1. Each year of the Action Plan, remove ADVs from the ocean, waterways, and coasts in coordination with relevant federal, state, and local jurisdictions, and disseminate funding opportunities.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
4.4.1.1. By the end of 2026, remove ADVs that local, state, and federal agencies deem priorities from waterways by providing technical assistance and sharing information on funding opportunities.	American Littoral Society, BoatUS Foundation, Elizabeth River Project, Lynnhaven River NOW, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Abandoned Boat and Debris Program, New York City Parks and Recreation, NOAA MDP, Stockton University, U.S. Coast Guard, Vessel Disposal and Reuse Foundation, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

## **Strategy 4.5. Policy and Management**

**Objective 4.5.1. By the end of 2026, engage with state and local agencies to explore lessons learned on ADV removal and prevention approaches, and explore opportunities for new policies.**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead(s) and Partner(s)</b>
4.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, document the successful techniques and legislative approaches of at least five federal, state, and local agencies to share lessons learned on ADV removal, disposal options, and prevention approaches, and explore opportunities for new legislation.	Maryland Department of Natural Resources Clean Marina Initiative, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Abandoned Boat and Debris Program, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group, New York City Parks and Recreation, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, Operation SPLASH, U.S. Coast Guard, Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William & Mary Law School, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways

# Appendix A: Participants

List of organizations participating in the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan.

Organization Name	Location
Alice Ferguson Foundation	Maryland
Alliance for a Living Ocean	New Jersey
American Littoral Society	Regional
American University	Washington, D.C.
Anacostia Riverkeeper	Washington, D.C.
Anacostia Watershed Society	Washington, D.C.
Atlantic Marine Conservation Society	Regional
Balloon Mission	Regional
B&D Environmental	Maryland
Baltimore City Department of Public Works	Maryland
Baltimore City Department of Public Works, Bureau of Solid Waste	Maryland
Barnegat Bay Partnership	New Jersey
BoatUS Foundation	Regional
Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority	New Jersey
Bronx River Alliance	New York
Catholic University of America	Washington, D.C.
Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University	New York
Chesapeake Bay Program Plastic Pollution Action Team	Regional
Clean Fairfax, LitterFreeVA	Virginia
Clean Ocean Action	New Jersey
Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University	Virginia
Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey	New Jersey
Cornell Cooperative Extension	New York
Delaware Center for Inland Bays	Delaware
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control	Delaware
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Delaware Coastal Programs	Delaware
Delaware Sea Grant	Delaware

Organization Name	Location
District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment	Washington, D.C.
District of Columbia Mayor's Office of the Clean City	Washington, D.C.
Eco Maniac Company/Keep It Beachy Clean	Virginia
Elizabeth River Project	Virginia
Fairfax County Government	Virginia
George Mason University	Virginia
Georgetown University	Virginia
Hudson River Foundation/New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program	Regional
Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve	New Jersey
Keep America Beautiful	Regional
Keep Prince William Beautiful	Virginia
Keep Virginia Beautiful	Virginia
Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University	New York
Lynnhaven River NOW	Virginia
Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science	New Jersey
Marine Trades Association of Maryland	Maryland
Marine Trades Association of New Jersey	New Jersey
Maryland Clean Marina Initiative in partnership with Maryland Department of Natural Resources	Maryland
Maryland Coastal Bays Program	Maryland
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Keep Maryland Beautiful)	Maryland
Maryland Department of Natural Resources	Maryland
Maryland Department of Natural Resources Chesapeake & Coastal Service	Maryland
Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Fishing and Boating Service, Abandoned Boat and Debris Program	Maryland
Maryland Sea Grant	Maryland
Mid-Atlantic Marine Education Association	Regional
Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean	Regional
National Aquarium	Maryland
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Regional



Organization Name	Location
National Park Service	Regional
New Jersey Aquaculture Innovation Center at Rutgers University	New Jersey
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection	New Jersey
New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium	New Jersey
New York City Parks and Recreation	New York
New York Department of Environmental Conservation	New York
New York Marine Rescue Center	New York
New York Sea Grant	New York
New York State Office of Planning and Development	New York
NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office	Regional
NOAA Marine Debris Program	Regional
NOAA Office for Coastal Management	Regional
Ocean Conservancy	Regional
Ocean County Parks	New Jersey
Oceana	Regional
Oceanic Global	Regional
Operation SPLASH	New York
Our Last Straw	Washington, D.C.
Oyster Recovery Partnership	Regional
Prince George's County Department of the Environment	Maryland
Prince William County Department of Public Works	Virginia
Prince William County Soil and Water Conservation District	Virginia
Project Terrapin	New Jersey
RISE Rockaway	New York
Riverkeeper	New York
Rutgers Cooperative Extension	New Jersey
Rutgers University	New Jersey
Save Barnegat Bay	New Jersey
Stony Brook University, School of Marine & Atmospheric Sciences	New York
Sierra Club DC Chapter	Washington, D.C.
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center	Regional

Organization Name	Location
Sprehe Engineering	Regional
Stockton University	New Jersey
SUNY Maritime	New York
Surfrider Foundation (Mid-Atlantic Region)	Regional
TetraTech	Regional
The Wetlands Institute	New Jersey
Trash Free Maryland	Maryland
U.S. Coast Guard	Regional
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters	Regional
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 2	Regional
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 3	Regional
U.S. Geological Survey	Regional
University of Delaware	Delaware
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science	Maryland
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Appalachian Office	Maryland
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory	Maryland
Vessel Removal and Disposal Foundation	Virginia
Virginia Aquarium	Virginia
Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	Virginia
Virginia Institute of Marine Science	Virginia
Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Virginia Clean Marina Program	Virginia
Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore	Maryland
Wildlife Conservation Society	Regional
William & Mary Keck Environmental Field Laboratory	Virginia

# Appendix B: Action Plan Metric Tracking

The following action metrics are used to voluntarily track Action Plan success, in addition to qualitative data, depending on each organization's activities and capacity.

Goal 1: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Consumer Debris	
Action	Suggested Metrics for Tracking
1.1.1.1.	Number of outreach products Number of individuals reached Number of sectors/groups reached Number of outreach materials translated
1.1.1.2.	Number of residents reached through meaningful interactions
1.1.1.3.	Number of individuals reached Number of organizations reached
1.1.1.4.	Number of single-use plastics diverted from the landfill Number of Action Plan organizations involved in sustainable efforts Number of zero waste events held Number of zero waste guidance documents produced
1.1.2.1.	Number of P-12 students reached Number of teachers reached Number of educational materials shared
1.1.2.2.	Number of high schools and/or universities reached Number of forums where opportunities were shared
1.1.3.1.	Number of private sector businesses engaged Number of single-use plastics diverted from the landfill
1.2.1.1.	Continuous, annual update
1.2.1.2.	Number of monitoring sites Number of surveys conducted Number of citizen scientists or monitoring volunteers
1.2.2.1.	Number of campaigns Number of studies completed Number of individuals reached Number of sectors/groups reached
1.3.1.1.	Number of completed projects
1.3.1.2.	Continuous, annual update

## Goal 1: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Consumer Debris

Action	Suggested Metrics for Tracking
1.3.1.3.	Number of public sector partners reached Number of private sector partners reached
1.3.1.4.	Number of total maximum daily load reports published Number of studies completed Number of individuals reached Number of sectors/groups reached Number of litter plans created
1.4.1.1.	Number of cleanup events Pounds removed Number of volunteers
1.4.1.2.	Number of cleanup events Pounds removed Number of new communities engaged
1.5.1.1.	Number of policy-makers engaged Number of policies advanced or advancing through the public process
1.5.1.2.	Number of state and/or local plans or policies supported

## Goal 2: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear

Action	Suggested Metrics for Tracking
2.1.1.1.	Number of new outreach products Number of educational workshops Number of individuals reached
2.1.1.2.	Number of outreach products translated
2.1.1.3.	Number of outreach products Number of organizations/businesses engaged
2.1.1.4.	Number of new partnerships Pounds removed Number of traps/pots removed Percentage of alternatively disposed debris Number of new bin installations
2.1.1.5.	Number of aquaculture organizations engaged



## Goal 2: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear

Action	Suggested Metrics for Tracking
2.2.1.1.	Number of studies published Number of individuals reached Number of sectors/groups reached
2.2.1.2.	Number of methods implemented
2.2.1.3.	Study published Number of individuals reached Number of sectors/groups reached
2.2.1.4.	Number of studies created Number of individuals reached Number of sectors/groups reached
2.2.2.1.	Number of projects Number of low-cost sonars distributed
2.2.2.2.	Number of bycatch reduction devices distributed
2.2.2.3.	Number of reports produced
2.3.1.1.	Number of bins
2.3.1.2.	Number of organizations engaged
2.4.1.1.	Pounds removed Number of traps/pots removed Percentage of alternatively disposed debris
2.4.1.2.	Pounds removed Number of traps/pots removed Percentage of alternatively disposed debris
2.5.1.1.	Number of meetings attended or presented at
2.5.2.1.	Number of entities engaged

## Goal 3: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Microplastics and Microfibers

Action	Suggested Metrics for Tracking
3.1.1.1.	Number of outreach products and education campaigns created Number of individuals reached Number of sectors/groups reached

### Goal 3: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Microplastics and Microfibers

Action	Suggested Metrics for Tracking
3.1.1.2.	Number of P-12 students reached Number of educators reached Number of workshops or field activities conducted
3.1.1.3.	Number of projects/programs/internships Number of university students supported/advised
3.1.2.1.	Number of new partners engaged Number of pilot projects
3.2.1.1.	Continuous, annual update
3.2.1.2.	Number of research webinars hosted
3.2.1.3.	Number of research projects initiated Number of research projects completed
3.2.1.4.	Number of monitoring sites Number of citizen scientists participating
3.3.1.1.	Number of studies completed Number of individuals reached
3.4.1.1.	Number of innovative products and technologies distributed
3.5.1.1.	Number of policy- and decision-makers engaged in meaningful interactions

### Goal 4: Prevent and Mitigate the Contributions of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels, Shrink Wrap, Fiberglass, and Other Related Debris

Action	Suggested Metrics for Tracking
4.1.1.1.	Number of outreach products created Number of partners (e.g., marinas, boat shops, insurance companies) engaged
4.1.1.2.	Continuous, annual update
4.2.1.1.	Number of studies completed Number of individuals reached
4.3.1.1.	Continuous, annual update
4.3.1.2.	Number of recycling centers engaged
4.3.1.3.	Number of new partnerships

#### **Goal 4: Prevent and Mitigate the Contributions of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels, Shrink Wrap, Fiberglass, and Other Related Debris**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Suggested Metrics for Tracking</b>
<b>4.4.1.1.</b>	Number of vessels removed
<b>4.5.1.1.</b>	Number of local and state agencies engaged Continuous, annual update of an inventory and summary of successful techniques and legislative approaches

# Appendix C: Complete Actions

The following information reflects actions that were deemed 'complete' at the Mid-Plan Review of the Action Plan. In some cases, such as those related to developing outreach materials or implementing campaigns, work on these actions will continue passively throughout the region.

## Goal 1: Consumer Debris

### Strategy 1: Prevention, Education, and Outreach

**Action 1.1.1.3. By the end of 2026, support outreach, advocacy, and education campaigns based on community-based social marketing techniques to prevent the intentional release of balloons using strategies developed with regional partners and promoted through [preventballoonlitter.org](http://preventballoonlitter.org).**

Summary: The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) implemented a community-based social marketing campaign focused on the intentional release of balloons alongside aquariums and conservation partners from 2018 to 2023. Materials from this campaign can be accessed at [www.preventballoonlitter.org](http://www.preventballoonlitter.org) or by reaching out to staff at MARCO for more information.

Number of individuals reached:

- 76,578 visitors at aquariums in New York, Baltimore, and Virginia Beach received balloon messaging from aquarium docents and staff throughout the life of the campaign.
- 10,833 people participated in conversations with non-aquarium organizations through the use of a campaign outreach kit for tabling.

Number of organizations reached:

- A total of 3 aquariums and 17 organizations received outreach materials for this project.

## Goal 2: Derelict Fishing Gear

### Strategy 2: Research and Monitoring

**Action 2.2.1.3. By the end of 2026, publish at least one study to document the local knowledge of fishers, lobstermen, watermen, and crabbers regarding ghost fishing and species impacted by derelict fishing gear.**

Summary: The Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences [published a study](#) assessing local knowledge of watermen in the Virginia portion of Chesapeake Bay regarding ghost fishing and species impacted by derelict fishing gear. They created an [outreach flyer](#) as well. Additional work may continue on this action moving forward, but for the purposes of this Action Plan, this action is considered "complete".

**Action 2.2.3.3. Publish a report that examines various state policy approaches to bycatch reduction devices to minimize the impact of derelict fishing gear on diamondback terrapins.**

Summary: The Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William & Mary Law School [published a report](#) in the spring of 2022 that examined various state policy approaches to bycatch reduction devices. This report fulfilled this action.



### Goal 3: Microplastics and Microfibers

#### *Strategy 4: Removal*

**Action 3.4.1.1. By the end of 2026, identify and distribute innovative products and technology proven to be effective that can be used in consumer homes and in commercial laundry establishments, such as washing machine filters, to reduce microfiber entry into waterways.**

Summary: Delaware Sea Grant, the primary organization implementing this action, distributed several types of products as part of outreach activities related to educating and engaging the public on microfibers in local waterways. In total, around 60 products were distributed.





Gina M. Raimondo  
United States Secretary of Commerce

Dr. Richard W. Spinrad  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
and NOAA Administrator

Nicole R. LeBoeuf  
Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services  
and Coastal Zone Management

*Photo: Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University*