



# Delaware Ocean and Bay Plan

## Spring/Summer 2026 Updates

The ocean and bay planning effort continues through parallel initiatives to develop a GIS-based ocean and bay planning tool and address priority information gaps. These efforts will inform the Plan, which will guide responsible management and conservation practices to support the sustainable use of marine resources off Delaware’s coast. Find out more at [de.gov/obp](https://de.gov/obp)

### Tackling Marine Debris

Addressing marine debris aligns with Plan goals and is an important part of improving coastal water quality. Check out the initiatives below to learn how you can contribute to Delaware’s marine debris reduction efforts.

#### Marine Debris Webpage



DNREC Coastal Programs recently launched a marine debris webpage where viewers can learn about different types of marine debris found in Delaware waters, identify what’s being done to keep our coast and waterways clean, and learn ways that we all can help. Visit the Marine Debris webpage to learn more: [de.gov/marine-debris](https://de.gov/marine-debris)

#### Rethink Your Drink



We can help to decrease the amount of bottles in our waterways by switching to refillable water bottles. Water refill stations funded through our partnership with [MARCO](https://marco.org) (the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean) have been installed at Slaughter Beach and Grove Park Canal in Rehoboth Beach as part of the [Rethink Your Drink](https://rethinkyourdrink.org) campaign.

The ocean planning team (Kristi and Sara) will be promoting *Rethink Your Drink* at Slaughter Beach on June 6<sup>th</sup> from 9am - noon, and Grove Park in Rehoboth Beach on June 9<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 2pm. Come see us with your reusable water bottle and get a one-of-a-kind Rethink Your Drink sticker!



### Welcome Sara!

Sara Weinberg is the **Ocean Planning Outreach Coordinator** in the Coastal Section and leads public engagement and communications efforts to support Delaware’s ocean planning initiatives.

She is originally from Los Angeles, CA, and holds a bachelor's degree in media science from Boston University. She will graduate from the University of Delaware with a master's degree in communication in May of 2027.

Outside of school and work, Sara enjoys hiking, yoga, indoor cycling, and trying new coffee shops.



### MyCoast Heading to the beach?

Don't forget to add your photos to MyCoast! Submit photos of wildlife or recreational activities during your visit to help us better understand how people and wildlife interact with our coast. Learn more at: [mycoast.org/marco](https://mycoast.org/marco)



# Plan Development Updates



## Recreational Shellfish Survey Completed

At the end of March, researchers from the University of Delaware, hired by DNREC, completed a 2025 recreational shellfish survey that provides recreational harvest data which will be used by fisheries and coastal managers. This presents a clearer picture of how shellfish resources are used and will support informed decisions about sustainable harvest levels. Report highlights are below.

### Crabbing:

In 2025, recreational crabbers harvested 4.3 million crabs (86% were males). Pots or traps were the main method of harvest.



Of the anglers surveyed, 39% participated in recreational crabbing. Crabbing activity occurred primarily in the Inland Bays (with Indian River Bay as the most popular location) with an average 7 crabs per day.

#### Additional Notes:

- Crabbers broadly support current regulations but expressed concerns with labeling requirements
- Top management concerns include water quality, crab abundance and abandoned crab pots
- Crabbers lost an estimated 56,000 pots and traps in 2025

### Clamming:

In 2025, recreational clambers harvested 1.7 million clams (evenly spread across topnecks, cherrystones, chowders and littlenecks).



Of the anglers surveyed, 14% participated in recreational clamming. Clamming activity occurred primarily in the Inland Bays (with Indian River Bay and Rehoboth Bay as the most popular locations). The average harvest per clammer was 115 clams per day.

#### Additional Notes:

- Clammers broadly support current regulations but expressed concerns with time-of-day and location restrictions
- Top management concerns include water quality and abundance of clams
- Clammers mostly view the quality of the fishery as being good, but in decline



### Economic Impacts

Total crabbing expenditures: \$19 million

Total clamming expenditures: \$4.8 million

Estimated value of crabbing \$36 million

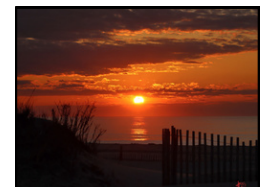
Estimated value of crabbing: \$6.3 million

## Marine Valuation Roadmap Completed

A roadmap to guide future projects and research on marine non-market economic values was completed by economists from the University of Maryland, hired by DNREC, to fill our gap in understanding the value the marine environment provides to humans.

The project highlights that many Delawareans value marine species and habitats simply because they exist. From horseshoe crabs and wildlife viewing to fishing and artificial reefs, the “non-market values” of the benefits derived from the environment remain largely unmeasured in Delaware. This report identified a major opportunity to better understand how much residents value preserving marine and coastal environments for future generations.

Recommended research questions were generated to help us in evaluating these intrinsic values and we will continue to build on this work into the future.



Bethany Beach  
Photo by Ab Binder  
[Voices of the Tide](#)

For more information about these projects, contact Kristi Lieske at [kristi.lieske@delaware.gov](mailto:kristi.lieske@delaware.gov).

# Ocean Month Social Media Campaign



For the past three years, Delaware has celebrated [Ocean Month](#) throughout the month of June, highlighting the importance of our ocean and marine environments to communities across the state.

As summer approaches, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is excited to share plans for this year's Ocean Month and invite YOU to participate in a collaborative social media engagement campaign to celebrate the ocean and foster a sense of community among Delawareans.



Posted information and topics will include marine species highlights, community voices, climate education, and more!

We hope you'll join us to celebrate the ocean and our coastal resources! To participate, visit the social media platforms below during the month of June.

Check out past Ocean Month celebrations at [de.gov/oceanmonth](https://de.gov/oceanmonth)



Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve Instagram  
[@delawarenerr](https://www.instagram.com/@delawarenerr)



DNREC Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy Facebook  
[facebook.com/DNRECClimate](https://facebook.com/DNRECClimate)

## Delaware Ocean-Climate Connections

Delaware's [2025 Climate Action Plan](#) was developed by DNREC's Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy, in collaboration with technical experts, stakeholders and residents. The Plan (updated from the 2021 Plan) provides the state with a playbook to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect communities, and prepares Delawareans for a changing climate.

To strengthen resilience to ocean and coastal acidification and other climate hazards, the ocean related strategies below are included in Delaware's Climate Action Plan.

**Strategy:** Research and monitor the impacts of coastal acidification

**Strategy:** Use ocean acidification research to inform planning and preparedness efforts

**Strategy:** Advance the development and scaling of offshore wind

**Strategy:** Protect and enhance carbon-storage of coastal ecosystems

**Strategy:** Assess marine carbon dioxide removal technologies

### Moving Forward

The next steps for Delaware's Ocean and Bay Plan effort will be to continue compiling information on the relationships between the various marine activities off our coast, as well as suggested practices to minimize conflict. This information will be included in reports associated with the GIS-based Ocean and Bay Planning Tool.

Planned listserv updates will continue to be sent out bi-annually and as new information becomes available.

To view Ocean and Bay Plan progress and information, visit [de.gov/obp](https://de.gov/obp).