



Humpback whale in school of menhaden © Sutton Lynch

## HEALTHY OCEANS

The Nature Conservancy prioritizes sustainable use of fishery and ocean resources by diverse stakeholders. Conservation challenges, including climate change and new ocean uses like offshore wind energy, demand our attention. TNC's Virginia-based Mid-Atlantic Seascape team pursues two overarching strategic priorities:

1. Create and install innovative strategies for fisheries management and conservation
2. Protect vulnerable animals and ecosystems while supporting diverse ocean use

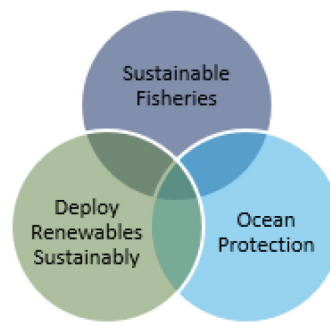
Over the past decade, TNC has worked to improve fisheries and the habitats that support them. Recently, our Virginia program added staff to meet challenges created by a changing climate and a burgeoning offshore wind industry.

## INNOVATIVE OCEAN MANAGEMENT IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

The Mid-Atlantic Seascape is defined by ecological and geopolitical boundaries and a unique maritime culture stretching from Cape Hatteras, NC, to Long Island, NY. The Mid-Atlantic shares some characteristics and conservation concerns with both the South Atlantic and New England, and delineations between these marine regions blur and shift as the changing climate warms the ocean. The Mid-Atlantic Seascape team works closely with TNC colleagues from the South Atlantic and the Northeast to ensure our conservation efforts are synergistic and concerted.

Ocean management along the Atlantic Coast is in a critical period of change and faces a growing list of challenges: Important fish species are reacting to climate change, renewable energy development is rapidly expanding and more people than ever are using the ocean for recreation.

TNC is at the forefront of important conversations about adjusting ocean management to meet these new circumstances. We bring a strong, conservation-minded



voice to discussions about restoring and protecting critical fish habitat, deploying offshore wind sustainably, improving data and monitoring systems for new and existing fisheries, and preparing for uncertainty in the face of climate change. We are dedicated

to ensuring necessary adaptation while maintaining the important legacy of Virginia's fisheries.

Virginia has over 10,000 miles of coastline, from the ocean to tidal bays and rivers. Over 60% of Virginians live in the coastal zone, and 100% are connected to the ocean in some way. The Mid-Atlantic Seascape team capitalizes on the conservation work of our colleagues in mountains, forests and coastal estuaries to ensure that TNC in Virginia fights for every ecosystem in our commonwealth.

Healthy oceans are an important step to striking the conservation balance we all hope the future holds.



## OUR CONSERVATION ACTIONS

### Strategize for Climate-Ready Fisheries Management

Conservation-minded voices need seats at the table when decisions are made about fisheries management. The Nature Conservancy helps federal agencies—including NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)—develop a playbook for the consequences of climate change to our marine resources, including those yet to be discovered.

### Advocate for Wind Developers to Prioritize Positive Impacts

Offshore wind installations have the potential to create habitat for important fish species, such as black sea bass and flounder. TNC engages with wind developers to determine how to best calculate these effects. Our goal is to see ecosystem benefits become requirements for new offshore wind farms.

### Support Responsible Siting of New Offshore Wind Leases

There are many important and special places in the ocean. As the United States continues offshore wind development, location conflicts with other ocean users and marine life occur regularly. TNC helps ameliorate these conflicts by supporting responsible siting decisions, which minimize disruptions to industries such as commercial fishing that depend on a healthy ocean.

### Promote Science-Based Ecosystem Management

Outside stakeholder reviews of the latest research—such as those provided by TNC’s expert scientists—help inspire confidence in and ease the transition to new and improved scientific foundations.

### Mobilize Conservation-Minded Recreational Fishing Captains

Recreational fishermen and related businesses are natural partners. TNC provides fishing captains with scientific information and platforms for their voices to be heard in support of conservation-minded management.

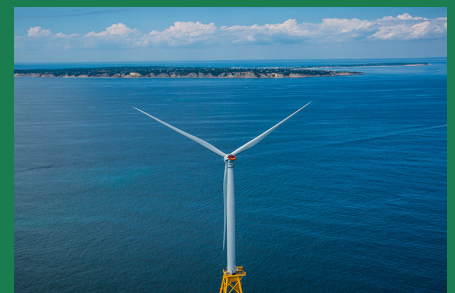
### Identify and Protect Vulnerable Habitats

TNC helps to identify and map important and vulnerable fish habitats—the first step toward ultimately protecting them from threats.

## OUR SUCCESSES

Through partnerships with government agencies, industry and other NGOs, our successes to date prove that change is possible:

- **Created the Ocean Data Portal**, an interactive tool that allows ocean planners to make smarter decisions and help solve challenges, such as adjusting shipping lanes to reduce collisions with whales and placing potential wind turbines to keep seabirds and marine mammals out of harm’s way
- **Protected over 50 species** of forage fish—including the iconic Atlantic menhaden—from new or expanding fisheries, until scientists can set safe harvest levels that leave fish in the water to serve as food for predators
- **Protected 40,000 square miles** of deep-sea coral habitat from harmful fishing gear



## YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

With your support, we are charting a course toward sustainable fisheries and a healthy Mid-Atlantic Seascape that will meet our needs and enrich our lives for generations to come.

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