



Terrapins Saved for the Season

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has immediately closed the commercial harvest season for the northern diamondback terrapins based on overharvesting concerns. The diamondback terrapin has not been listed as threatened or endangered in New Jersey; its status is listed as 'decreasing'. Due to an increase in demand from out-of-state aquaculture operations and overseas food markets, terrapin harvesting has been on the rise.



The diamondback terrapin is the only species of turtle that lives in the brackish waters of New Jersey's coastal marshes and estuaries. Past COA Board of Trustees member John Wnek and current Board member Jeff Martin have both worked on terrapin issues for years. They have dedicated their time to protecting, rescuing, and releasing the diamondback terrapin, as well as coordinating education programs about the turtle's importance in the ecosystem. This harvesting closure is an important step in protecting the diamondback terrapin, ensuring the population remains healthy and thrives.

The Health of the Ocean

Written by Nicole Dallara

Take a deep breath. Now take another deep breath. The oxygen you inhaled for your second breath came from the ocean. The ocean is a gift to all of us as it provides 70% of the world's oxygen according to National Geographic. Specifically, phytoplankton, tiny organisms found at the water's surface, are responsible for producing much of the air we breathe. As you can see, the health of the ocean directly affects us and, unfortunately, the ocean is under the weather.



Our planet is warming, with 2015 officially the hottest year ever recorded. A warming planet leads to a warming ocean, which leads to many harmful and life threatening affects. These affects include, coral bleaching or 'whitening' of coral, rising ocean temperatures, and ocean acidification. The ocean has already lost around 40% of its coral reefs. Coral reefs are vitally important for the ocean ecosystem, supporting a quarter of all marine life. Loss of coral reefs affects the ocean's food chain and the food supply for many nations who depend on the fishing industry. Visit COA's blog to dive deeper into Ocean Health.

Please note, Nicole Dallara is leaving COA to work with the Center for Women's Global Leadership. Good luck, Nicole!



LABEL

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TRIBUTES



Gifts made in honor or in celebration of family or friends.

In Honor of:

Patrice & Roger Bove
COA Crew
Ray Dodd
Allison Isherwood
Frank Luna, Jr.

In Memory of:

Adelaide Gabel	William Lavin
Ben Hamilton	Linda Lees
George, Ethel, &	Joan McDonald
Ronnie Jensen	Meta McLaughlin
Samuel Karinja	George Rinear

Follow COA on Social Media For Ocean Updates!



Policy

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Bye Bye Microbeads!

On December 28th, President Obama signed Congressman Pallone's Microbead Free Waters Act, banning plastic microbeads in rinse off products, including washes and toothpastes. This is a huge victory for our ocean, since a study published in Environment & Technology reported that more than 8 trillion microbeads were entering the country's aquatic habitats everyday. Although microbeads are now banned, products containing microbeads will remain on the shelf until July 1, 2018. Creams, fillers, and cleaning products are not included in the ban, meaning they can still contain microbeads.

It is up to you to be a conscious shopper. Read the ingredients list carefully - if you see polyethylene or polypropylene on the list, that product contains microbeads. Choose a natural alternative and spread the word!



Win for Water Quality!

New Jersey legislators voted to block controversial rule revisions to the Flood Hazard Control Act, that would have undermined water-quality protections and increased flooding in the state. This is a rare use of the "legislative veto" and a clear win for environmental interests across the state of New Jersey. The DEP has 30 days to respond to the resolution passed by amending or withdrawing the proposed rule changes. If the agency fails to act and tries to go forward with their proposed rule, the Legislature may void the proposal by passing joint Resolutions in both Houses to formally veto the DEP proposal.

Thank you to all environmental groups and elected officials who defended NJ's environment from these reckless rules.

Gear Up: Atlantic Ocean Targeted for Oil & Gas

The mid-Atlantic ocean region, from just south of Cape May, NJ to Florida, has been targeted for offshore oil and gas exploration and development despite widespread public opposition. Within the coming weeks, the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management (BOEM) will be releasing a 5 year lease plan and related Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on offshore drilling. Furthermore, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is close to releasing authorizing permits for the harassment, disruption, and injury of thousands of marine mammals and sea turtles relating to the use of seismic surveys for oil exploration in the mid-Atlantic region.

There will be opportunities for the public to comment on all of these

documents. COA will continue the groundswell against offshore drilling, and urges the Obama Administration to exclude the mid-Atlantic from the leasing plan. We must keep the pressure up and work to ensure drilling in the Atlantic never occurs! Senator Booker has been keeping the drumbeat going through social media. The Senator's graphic is shown above. Get ready and stay tuned for more information.

NJDEP's Shellfish Rules

NJ's water quality is moving in the wrong direction. The NJDEP has proposed to downgrade over 5,200 acres for shellfish harvesting, and outright prohibited it for over 4,300 acres. By contrast, less than 1,000 acres were upgraded. The proposed Rules also make it nearly impossible for groups to establish shellfish restoration, such as oyster gardens, which would help improve water quality, provide habitat, and protect communities by serving as natural breakwaters. The rationale is the need for 24/7 security to prevent poaching. While it is essential that NJDEP ensure the protection of public health and safety from pollution, it is equally important that the State protect the economic potentiality and ecosystem services provided by these resources with reasonable and consistent requirements. COA considers the downgrading of these waterways a renewed call to action for aggressive identification and elimination of pollution sources.



Events

Tory Woods, events@CleanOceanAction.org

2016 Save the Dates

Ocean Wreck Divers 28th Annual Scuba Supermarket

On Sunday, February 14th from 9AM - 2PM, check out the biggest and best scuba flea market in New Jersey! Find new and used gear, other dive related items, sea critter touch tank for kids, and more. Stop by COA's table to find out what we are up to!

Beach Sweeps - Saturday, April 30th and October 22nd

Make a difference for our coast at the Beach Sweeps! Join us this spring as we continue to reduce ocean pollution at one of 70 locations along the shore. Sponsorship opportunities are available!

Earth Month

During the month of April, COA and Aveda will be hosting fun events in the tri-state area, such as a Catwalk for Water and Trashion Show. Support clean water and local businesses at one of the many events throughout Earth Month. A complete list of events and ways to support COA will be posted on our website.

Sandy Paws - Fall of 2016

We believe that the beaches should be clean for everyone to enjoy, including furry friends! Last year's inaugural Sandy Paws beach dog walk was such a success that we've begun planning the second annual! Want to help or organize a walk at your favorite beach? Contact events@CleanOceanAction.org for more details and ways to get involved.

Community Events

Throughout the year, ocean advocates host events, presentations, and fundraisers benefiting Clean Ocean Action. Save the Date of March 23rd for Paint and Wine Night hosted by Uncorked in Asbury Park at Langosta Lounge!

Special thanks to the following foundations for their generous grant support:

Aveda Serve from the Heart, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Guttenplan Family Foundation, Mary Owen Borden Memorial Foundation, Mary Reinhart Stackhouse Foundation, Patagonia Bowery Store, SIMA Environmental Fund

Education

Catie Tobin, education@CleanOceanAction.org

Galloway Township Achieves Blue Star Scores Big and Sets Record for Water Quality

On January 19th, COA awarded Galloway Township, NJ, the Municipal Blue Star Certificate at a ceremony at Town Hall to recognize their efforts to improve water quality. Galloway Township sets a record for achieving the highest score and joins fellow Blue Star Municipalities, Wall Township and Long Beach Township. Since the program was launched in September of 2014, three towns have been awarded the certificate and COA has engaged with over 20 towns to obtain Blue Star Certification.



The Municipal Blue Star program combines the visionary Sustainable Jersey Program with Clean Ocean Action's focus on water quality protection. The Program encourages communities to promote healthy waters, resilient communities, and environmentally sound practices. To achieve Blue Star Award status, a municipality must target "Blue Star" actions for 50% of their total Sustainable Jersey points.

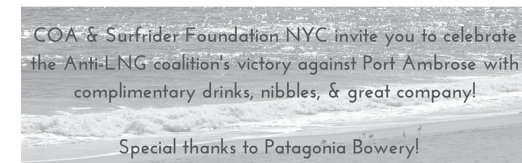
Galloway Township exceeded the necessary 150 points needed to attain certification by completing 234 points. Examples of the actions that they completed include a water conservation education program, i-Tree assessment of municipal trees, and reusable bag education program. In addition to Sustainable Jersey projects, towns are required to choose one of Clean Ocean Action additional actions which are climate adaption for flooding risk, innovative water quality project, model storm water control ordinance for municipalities, plastic bag fee or ban, or storm water utility support resolution. Galloway Township passed a Stormwater Utility Support Resolution on October 13, 2015. Galloway Township has been a pioneer in their region for sustainability work and resiliency planning. Galloway is influencing successes in their neighboring towns, which ultimately is in the best interest of the watershed and estuary.



Wednesday, February 3rd, 2016

6:30 - 8:30 pm

Patagonia Bowery, 313 Bowery, NYC



Join us to toast the victory of the seven year battle against the proposed Port Ambrose LNG Facility off the coast of New Jersey and New York. RSVP by emailing events@CleanOceanAction.org or call 732-872-0111.