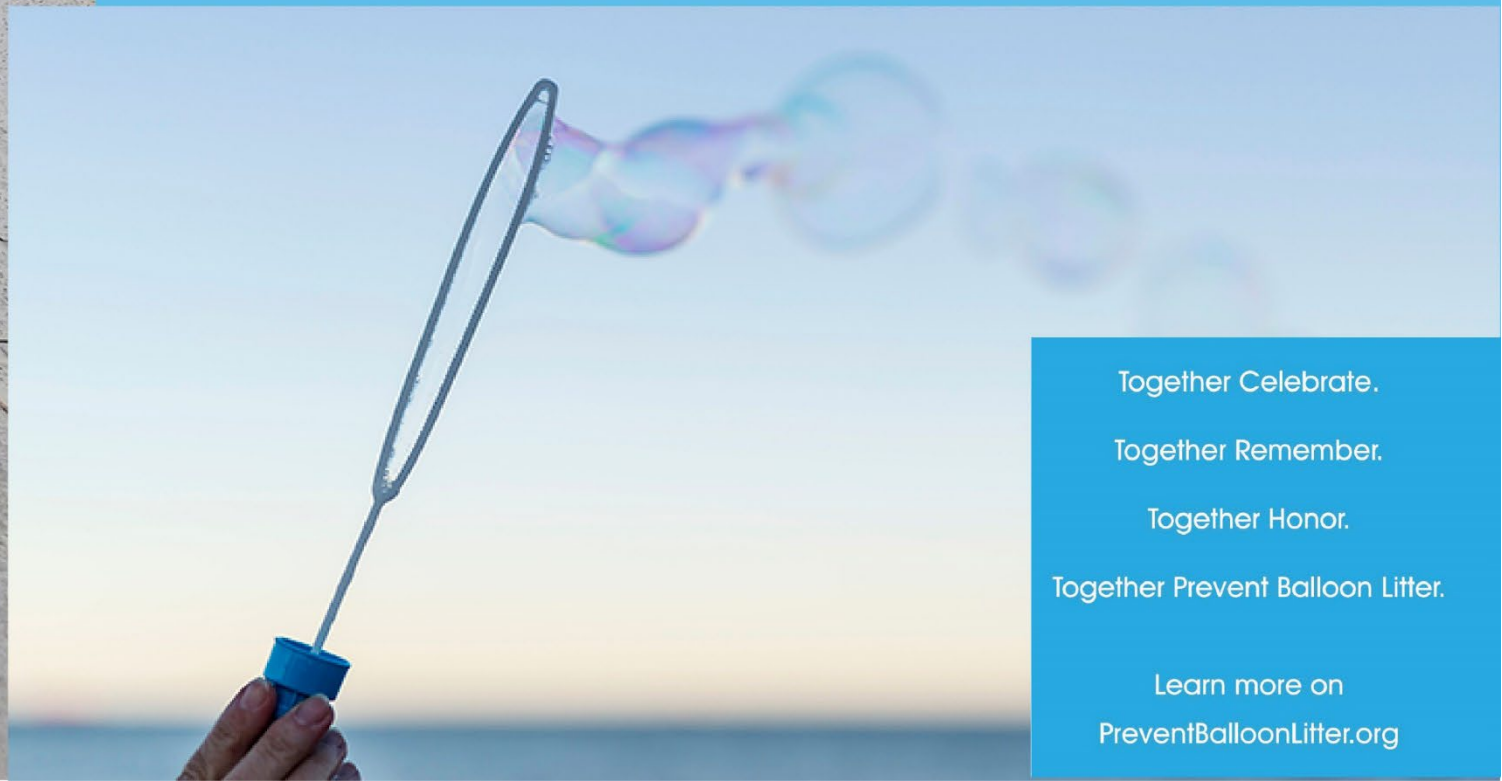




MARCO MID-ATLANTIC
REGIONAL COUNCIL
ON THE OCEAN



Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) Prevent Balloon Litter : Protect our Coast



Together Celebrate.

Together Remember.

Together Honor.

Together Prevent Balloon Litter.

Learn more on
PreventBalloonLitter.org

MARCO

- **Regional Ocean Partnership**
- **Mid-Atlantic Ocean Planning Committee (Mid-A OPC)** - Federal Agency, Tribal and Fisheries Management Council engagement



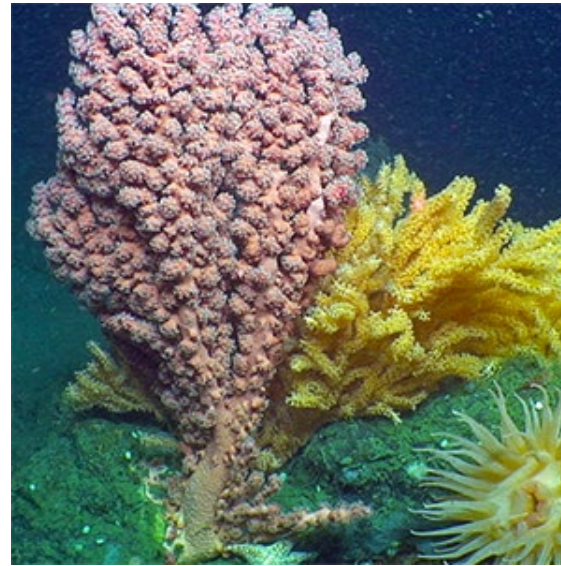
Priorities and Work Groups



**Climate Change
Adaption**



Renewable Energy



Marine Habitats



Water Quality

Priorities and Work Groups

- Ocean Conservation
- Maritime Commerce and Navigation Safety
- Offshore Wind Regional Collaboration
- Non-Consumptive recreation
- Ocean Mapping and Data
- Ocean Acidification
- Marine Debris



Priorities and Work Groups

- Ocean Conservation
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- **Marine Debris**



Priority Area: Water Quality



- Ocean Acidification
 - Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network (MACAN)
- Marine Debris
 - Regional Marine Debris Work Group



Marine Debris Work Group

Members include representatives from all five Mid-Atlantic states, federal agencies, NGOs, aquariums and more

- Marine Debris Action Plan
- Marine Debris Summit
- Balloon Release Reduction and Prevention Campaign
- Tracking Balloon Litter and Marine Debris

MID-ATLANTIC

MARINE DEBRIS SUMMIT

📍 OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND

DECEMBER 6-7, 2023

Discuss with partners on marine debris and efforts in the Mid-Atlantic

- Microplastics
- Coastal Storm Debris/Planning for Natural Disaster Debris
- Marine Debris Large Scale Removal
- Marine Debris Prevention and Capture Technology
- Marine Debris Policy
- Community Engagement Initiatives



Together Celebrate.

Joyful, picture-perfect ideas for weddings and other celebratory events.

Together Remember.

Uplifting ideas for memorials for loved ones.

Together Honor.

Expressive ways to come together as a community to say thank you.

Pledge to never release balloons!

Prevent Balloon Litter

- A regional community-based social marketing campaign
- Balloons and their attachments are among the deadliest forms of marine debris
- Balloon debris very commonly found on beaches in the Mid-Atlantic



Prevent Balloon Litter: Project Background & Need

- Virginia piloted the *Joyful Sendoff* campaign within the state
- Work group sought to expand *Joyful Sendoff* to regional scale
- Funded by NOAA Marine Debris Program in FY18



Prevent Balloon Litter: Approach and Results

- Focus groups and surveys
- Campaign message development
- Beach monitoring

Prevent Balloon Litter: Results of Focus Groups & Surveys

- NJ Results (199 participants)
- 51% have taken part- 57% would take part in the future
- 76% thought about where it would end up



Why are they releasing?

Emotional Language from survey:

"A celebratory joy"

"A feeling of serenity"

"A sense of togetherness"

"Awesome!"

"Beautiful tribute to a life lost"

"Excitement"

"Freedom"

"Fun"

"Grief, had just lost a very important person in my life."

"Guilt because I knew it was wrong but I didn't want to offend the individuals who had just lost their child."

"Happy thoughts of the person who had died filled my mind."

"We felt connected to the woman who has left us."

"It's a sense of peace"

"Joy, happiness, optimistic"

"Love, pain, acceptance, hope"

"Loved it!"

"Release of sadness"

"Relief/Closure"

"Remembrance"

"Sadness"

"Touching!"

"Wonderful!"

Campaign Messaging



Pledge not to release balloons.



Prevent Balloon Litter.org

Inspirational, colorful, litter-free ideas to celebrate, to remember
and to honor the people who impact our lives.



MARCO
MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL
COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN



**PLANT A TREE
INSTEAD OF RELEASING BALLOONS.**



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Inspirational, colorful, litter-free ideas to celebrate, to remember
and to honor the people who impact our lives.



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Prevent Balloon Litter Campaign



Prevent Balloon Litter Resources

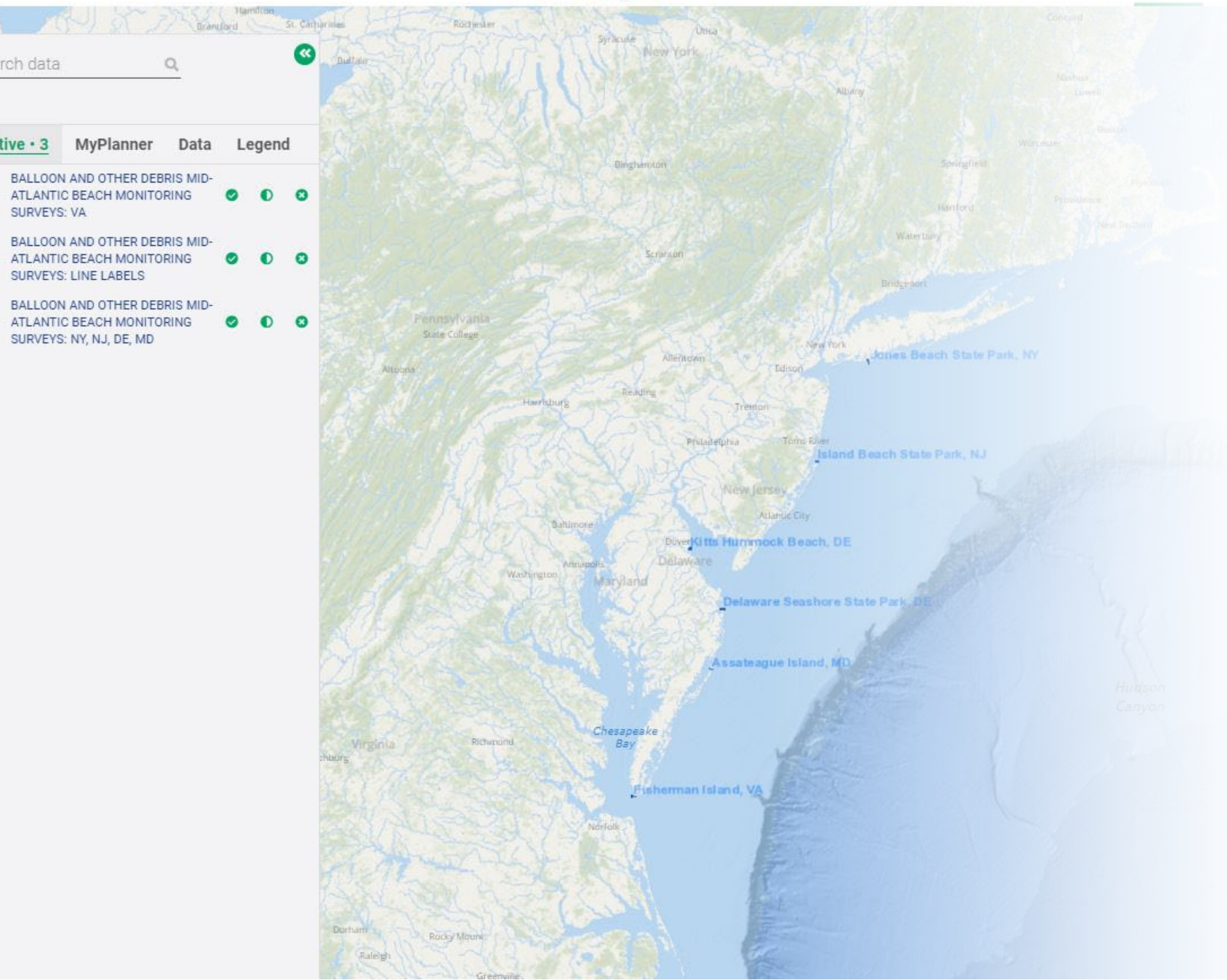


- Fact Sheets
- Alternative Sheets
- Bubble Recipe
- Posters
- Teacher Resources
 - Classroom Conversation Script
 - Lesson Plans
- Pledge Decals



Events/Pledges

- 5 States
- 32 events were attended
- 1,057 pledges



Regional Beach Monitoring

- One (1) mile stretch of beach
- Twice a year cleanups/monitoring
- Trash Collected and Recorded
- Data input across five state



New Jersey Balloon Monitoring

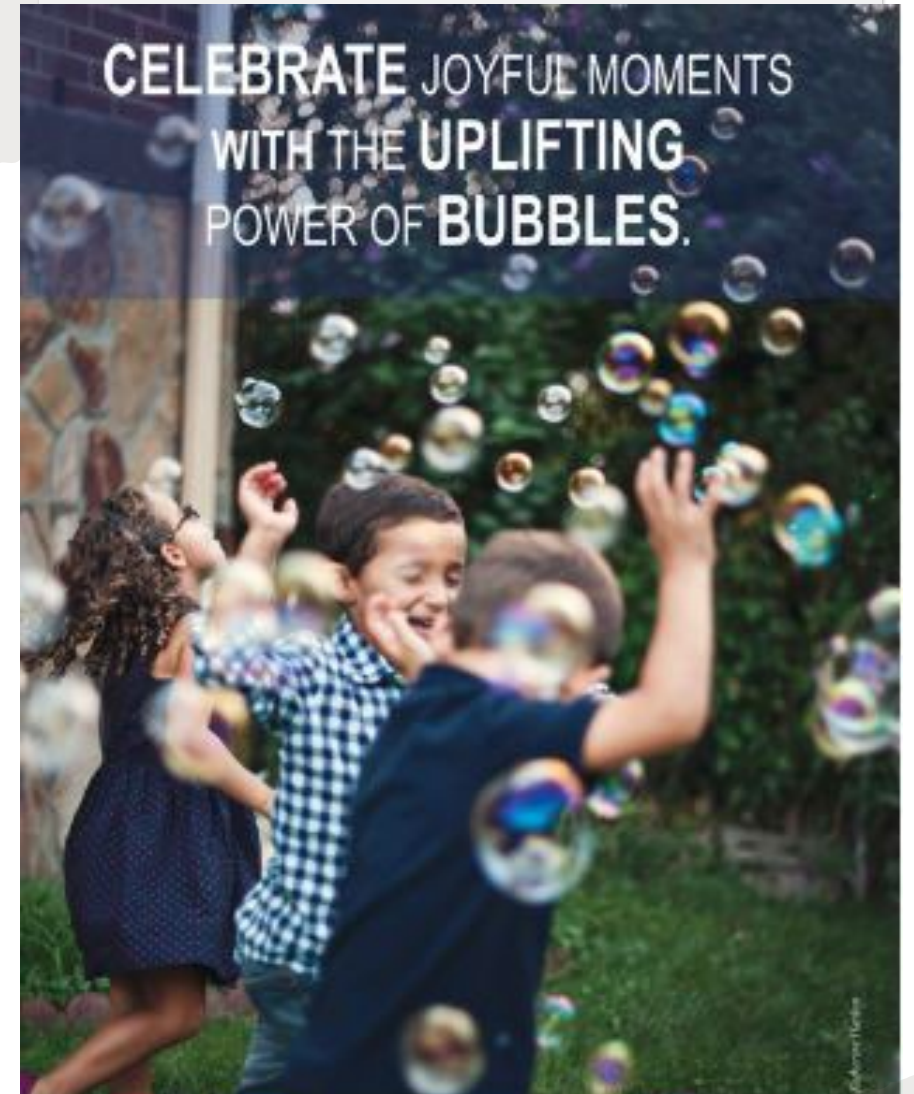
- October 2018- October 2023
- Island Beach State Park
- 5-10 Volunteers

Balloon Monitoring NJ Results

- 2018: 710 Non-Balloon Related, 86 Balloon Related
- 2019: 1,421 Non-Balloon Related, 81 Balloon Related
- 2020: Canceled due to Covid
- 2021 (One cleanup): 349 Non-Balloon Related, 12 Balloon Related
- 2022: 1,443 Non-Balloon Related, 47 Balloon Related
- 2023: 1,550 Non-Balloon Related, 32 Balloon Related
- 62.79% Decrease in balloons found



Ways to Get Involved





Thank you

Questions? NJCZM@DEP.NJ.GOV

Updates on Climate Resilience and

NJ Coastal Management Program Scan QR Code

