

Northeast Coastal and Marine Recreational User Survey FAQs

What is ocean planning?

The ocean and the livelihoods it supports are vital to New England. People in our region greatly value our ocean heritage and are seeking to use resources from the ocean in new and increasingly complex ways. At the same time, environmental changes are affecting the health of ocean life and habitats. Balancing these needs is a challenging process that requires careful thought and decision-making. By collecting existing information to describe human activities and natural resources in the ocean, **ocean planning** is a way to address these challenges. Government agencies and stakeholders are working together to anticipate needs, set priorities, and make decisions from a regional perspective. **The result?** More effective decisions informed by public input to ensure protection and sustainable use of ocean resources. For more information on ocean planning, see neoceanplanning.org.

Who is conducting this study and who is leading the individual user survey?

The [Northeast Regional Planning Body \(RPB\)](#) contracted work for this study to a project team consisting of [Surfrider Foundation](#), [Point 97](#) and [SeaPlan](#). The project team will work under the direction of the RPB to characterize coastal and marine recreation in the Northeast, gathering data about how and where people enjoy the ocean along New England's coast. Surfrider Foundation will lead the individual recreation user portion of this study, which features an online survey that any individual who is 18+ and has participated in non-extractive ocean or coastal activity (i.e. beach going, surfing, kayaking, canoeing, SUP, swimming, wildlife viewing, jogging on the shore, etc.) in New England or the Long Island Sound area of New York at least once in the last 12 months is encouraged to take before midnight on April 30, 2015.

Will my favorite recreation spot or personal information be revealed to anyone else?

No, the data used to produce maps will be aggregated so as to not reveal individual locations. Personal data such as age and ethnicity will also be presented in aggregate form. Emails will not be shared. The integrity of your input identifying your special places will be protected.

Who should take the individual rec user survey?

Every individual beach goer, swimmer, sun bather, beach wildlife viewer, surfer, kayaker, windsurfer and any other ocean user who is 18+ and has visited the New England ocean or coast at least once in the last 12 months for non-consumptive enjoyment should complete the survey. **We will collect data on this opt-in, online survey through midnight on April 30, 2015.** You do not need to be a resident of New England to take the survey.

How do I participate?

Participation is simple: go to <http://www.surfrider.org/northeast-recreation> before midnight on April 30, 2015, and enter your email address. A unique survey link will then be emailed to you with instructions for participation. You can start, save and finish later – or complete the survey in one sitting! You can scan this code with your QR Reader phone app to navigate to the survey registration page:



Why should I participate?

There is a lack of spatial information on recreational uses in the Northeast. Your help is needed to ensure that we document areas important for recreational users by directly engaging the people who depend on them in this study – YOU! Survey results will provide information to help ocean planners better understand where and how people enjoy New England's coast and ocean.

Best practices for taking the survey:

- **When placing points** on the map, continue to the next question by clicking “done” to save data. This is especially important if you want to save your answers and come back to complete the survey at a later date.
- **The Places Database** used for the map is pulled from the United States Geological Survey (USGS). It contains locations (latitude/longitude), names, counties and states for officially recognized places. If you are not able to locate a specific place, search for an alternate nearby location by using a keyword search or the arrows and crosshairs on the map, and then pan the map to pin your desired location.
- **For best search results** use the town name only, and pick your location from the provided options.
- **If you engage in many activities at the same location**, click on all activities that apply to that location after you pin it on the map.
- **Why am I seeing duplicate locations?** The location information you see in the search box is from the USGS. Some searches render what appear to be duplicate returns; however, these returns have slightly different coordinates. We recommend selecting one option and then dragging the map to position the crosshairs over the center of your intended location.
- **Can I edit markers?** Yes! You can use the “My Activities” tab to return to a location and edit activities or remove the marker from the map.

How will this information be used?

The data collected during this survey will not be used for regulatory purposes. Rather, data from the study will be used by the RPB to develop a draft Northeast Ocean Plan and will be integrated into the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#), a decision support and information system for managers, planners, scientists, and project proponents. The information will be combined with data being collected from other recreational industries to help ensure that recreational uses are considered in future ocean planning.