

“It has always been my desire to see how close to New York City the life of the deep sea is to be found – to see within what narrow limits on the earth one could find such intensive civilization and such an absolutely unexplored field.” -William Beebe



Future of the Hudson Canyon

IMAGE: JULIE LARSEN MAHER © WCS

Just 100 miles off the coast of bustling New York City lies the largest submarine canyon along the U.S. Atlantic coast—the Hudson Canyon. Rivaling the depth and scale of the Grand Canyon, this special place supports a remarkable abundance and diversity of marine wildlife, from leviathan whales, endangered sea turtles, majestic sharks and tunas, to colorful coldwater corals and many species that support local commercial and recreational fisheries. Ships constantly traverse the waters above the canyon to enter one of the busiest ports in the world, and lying on the flanks and bottom is a network of deep sea communication cables that connect us to the world. Yet, this natural wonder remains a mystery to many.

Securing a Conservation Legacy for Hudson Canyon

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is building a diverse coalition of conservationists, recreational interests, tour operators, commercial fishers, maritime industries, academic institutions, community-based organizations, businesses, and members of the public to advocate for Hudson Canyon to be designated as a National Marine Sanctuary (NMS). Designating the Hudson Canyon will provide a wide range of benefits for New York and New Jersey residents and for the diversity of wildlife living off our shores, and conserve a unique ecological treasure for all Americans.

The region's marine waters, also known as the New York Bight, support a world-class metropolitan region, a rich maritime history, and highly productive fisheries, meriting recognition as a national treasure. A National Marine Sanctuary in these waters would preclude oil, gas and mineral extraction in the Canyon, helping to maintain fish and wildlife populations and ensure a future for the fisheries and tourism industries that depend on healthy ocean ecosystems. It will also provide a special place for us to enjoy and use today while securing an ecological legacy for generations to come.

Hudson Canyon at a Glance

- Begins ~100 miles southeast of the Statue of Liberty and stretches for another 350 miles offshore
- Is nearly 7.5 miles wide at its widest point
- Provides habitat for 100's of species, including deep sea corals, marine mammals, fishes, marine turtles, and seabirds, as well as for species important to fisheries, such as tilefish, squid, crabs, flounder, and tunas
- Canyon walls can reach 3,500 feet
- It's nutrient-rich upwelling currents sustain large populations of plankton that serve as the base of the food chain
- Its deepest point is 10,500 feet below sea level – more than 7 Empire State Buildings stacked end-to-end from the seafloor to the surface
- Canyon formed more than 10,000 years ago during the last ice age
- Hudson is the largest canyon off the U.S. Atlantic Coast and one of the largest submarine canyons in the world
- Seasonal visitors, such as seabirds and whales, migrate through the canyon, making it a popular destination for tour boats

About National Marine Sanctuaries

There are currently 18 sanctuaries in the NMS network, from the Olympic Coast to the Florida Keys. Each sanctuary, managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is dedicated to the conservation of unique and valuable marine ecosystems as well as economic, cultural and historical resources. And while all the sanctuaries emphasize resource protection and decision-making based on the best available scientific and socioeconomic data, they are managed with local input from stakeholders to address their own individual issues and needs. Sanctuaries provide diverse opportunities for public use and education, collaborative management, economic growth, commercial and recreational fishing, and scientific exploration. Currently, there are two NMS in the Mid-Atlantic and none off the coast of New York or New Jersey. For the first time in two decades, NOAA has invited local communities across the country to nominate their most treasured places in our marine and Great Lakes waters for consideration as new NMS. Communities seeking to nominate a marine area need to build support from the public, multiple and diverse ocean users, and local decision-makers. As a part of its nomination, WCS recommends that fisheries within the Hudson Canyon continue to be regulated through existing regional and federal entities, not through an NMS designation. Nomination of a marine area is just the beginning of the public process—when NOAA initiates its designation as a NMS there are numerous additional opportunities for public comment and participation.



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Rec fishing photo: Hudson Canyon supports economically important recreational and commercial fisheries. The Sanctuary Nomination calls for continued fishery management under existing authorities. Squid photo: The Hudson Canyon boasts an incredible diversity of marine wildlife including species like this longfin squid, *Loligo pealei*.

