New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)
Meeting Summary – 15 February 2022

	Name	Date
Prepared by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	02/22/2022
Reviewed by	Kate Williams, Biodiversity Research Institute	03/03/2022
Reviewed by	Bennett Brooks, CBI	03/09/2022
Reviewed by	Farrah Andersen, Cadmus	03/14/2022
Reviewed by	Kate McClellan Press	03/15/2022

Disclaimer: While all efforts were made to accurately represent E-TWG discussions, the views expressed in this summary may not represent the views of all E-TWG members.

Background

As part of New York State's efforts to responsibly develop offshore wind energy, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) convened the Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG) in 2018 to provide input to the state[1]. The fifteenth E-TWG meeting was held via video conference on 15 February, 2022. Twenty-three representatives from 22 member organizations participated (Appendix A).

This summary is intended to capture the key points of discussion and action items identified during the meeting and is loosely organized according to the structure of the meeting agenda (Appendix B). Opinions are not attributed to specific E-TWG members unless there is a clear reason to do so. For topics where there were differences of opinion among E-TWG members, this summary identifies areas of agreement as well as the different perspectives offered during meeting discussions.

Action Items

- Support staff will compile topics from breakout group discussions on coordination across lease areas (see summary below) for additional input from E-TWG members. NYSERDA will consider potential avenues and mechanisms for implementing such coordination.
- NYSERDA and support staff will continue moving forward on Specialist Committee efforts, including planning the 2022 State of the Science Workshop, which will be held July 26-28. There is an open call for abstracts and symposium proposals due March 14.

Introduction

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute) and Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute) provided a brief introduction. New representatives to the E-TWG include Zack Cockrum (National Wildlife Federation). It was also noted that Jillian Liner (Audubon New York) has left the E-TWG with no immediate replacement. The focus of this meeting was to discuss potential topics for coordination among leaseholders in the New York Bight as well as provide a brief update on the regional synthesis Specialist Committee and other E-TWG activities.

Coordination Among Leaseholders in the New York Bight

Kate McClellan Press (NYSERDA) provided a brief introduction, noting that E-TWG members had identified the importance of this topic in late 2021. E-TWG members were split into breakout groups to brainstorm environmental topics for which coordination among leaseholders in the New York Bight will be important in relation to: 1) general/regional research, 2) project-specific monitoring, 3) mitigation (including avoidance, minimization etc.), and 4) data standardization and management. The discussions centered on brainstorming ideas only; prioritization among coordination needs will be discussed at a subsequent E-TWG meeting. During discussions, E-TWG members noted that accelerated timelines for New York Bight development will be occurring as compared to previous leases, so coordination may be particularly useful given this accelerated context (and not only for environmental considerations). The following themes emerged from breakout group discussions:

[1] For meeting agendas, summaries, and presentations, see: http://nyetwg.com/e-twg-meeting-archive

Coordination of Research

E-TWG members suggested the following around coordination of research activities across lease areas:

- **Data collection efforts** should be coordinated, and large-scale data collection would be particularly beneficial for highly mobile species. Specific data collection activities that were noted for potential coordination (though not an exhaustive list) included passive acoustic gliders, fish acoustic telemetry, and avian surveys. Such coordination could include:
    - **Baseline monitoring to support submission of Construction and Operations Plans.** This may be easier to coordinate than post-construction monitoring given federal permitting processes (e.g., as timelines for projects may diverge over time).
    - **Pre- and post-construction monitoring to detect effects**. This could include approaches such as sharing control sites, consistent data collection across sites, or identification of particular locations for research that may be representative across lease areas.
    - **Consistency in sensors deployed on turbines** to ensure compatibility across projects.
- **Hosting outside research on turbines and in project areas** should be coordinated to address accessibility and safety considerations.
- **Coordination among leaseholders could help to maximize efficiency in data collection across resources**, including targeting and adjusting study methodologies to help answer questions across taxa (e.g., consider if fish research methodology could be changed slightly in order to also collect samples to aid in seabird diet research).
- **Coordination could utilize and build upon existing regional efforts**, including forums and monitoring efforts and networks (e.g., NOAA passive acoustic monitoring, NERACOOS, MERACOOS, DOE, and RWSE) as well as existing materials.

Coordination of Mitigation Efforts

Important mitigation-related topics for coordination among leaseholders were suggested to include:

- **Measuring take** (e.g., avian collisions) using standard approaches.
- **Time of year restrictions** for certain activities in relation to high priority species, utilizing and coordinating based on existing avoidance/mitigation plans that include these types of restrictions.
- **Common cable corridors** to reduce disruption onshore and offshore.
- **Commitments to net-positive impacts** including using common frameworks and the kinds of offsets or level of compensation.
- **Vessel activities and equipment use** (especially in adjacent leases) to minimize potential effects.
- **Constructability,** including understanding the interactions between structure types, installation techniques, site characteristics, and project timelines with mitigation needs.
- **Real-time communication** (particularly for North Atlantic right whales), including technology and protocol development.

Data Standardization and Transparency

E-TWG members suggested that leaseholders could coordinate on:

- **Standardized study design protocols, guidelines, and metrics** for monitoring and research for all taxa (including acoustics, benthic and pelagic habitat, artificial reef effects, highly mobile species, hydrodynamics, etc.). It would be helpful to identify appropriate monitoring approaches

for each taxon. Standard data collection, even on different timelines, can be jointly analyzed to help answer regional research questions. It was also suggested that it would be important to consider interplay between guidelines and permitting requirements to ensure that data collection is fulfilling both research objectives and legal requirements.

- **Public access to data**, including the use of existing databases or development of a larger data warehouse (as needed). Standardization of metadata and high usability can help to ensure data is publicly available in a way that fits all needs.
- **Collection of climate and environmental covariate data** alongside wildlife information to help incorporate climate change into our understanding of potential impacts.
- **Visualization of spatial metadata for ongoing research**, including the spatial and temporal extent of ongoing research projects (including research conducted by offshore wind developers).

It was also noted that coordination would be required across developers, state and federal agencies, academics and others, including contractors conducting research, to avoid duplication of efforts and aid in data integration. **Standardized language in requests for proposals and contracts** could help to ensure consistency in data collection and reporting.

Challenges with Cross-lease Coordination

E-TWG members recognized several challenges that will need to be addressed in order for successful coordination to occur among leaseholders. These include:

- **Differences in project timelines.** Flexibility in coordination approaches is needed given that data collection will be happening on different schedules between lease areas.
- **Importance of developing effective mechanisms for implementation of coordination**, as from previous experience coordination across leaseholders has been challenging. Themes related to implementation included the need for greater funding, openness to new ways of conducting work and flexibility in monitoring processes to account for varied priorities between sites.
- **Necessity of considering new approaches for data collection and analysis**, including automated methods, to answer research questions and ensure worker safety.
- **Resources needed for regional data management and analysis.** Project-level data can feed into larger efforts if properly coordinated, but it is important to determine who conducts and pays for the management and regional analysis of data.
- **The difference between regional and site-specific monitoring** may need further clarification, given that site-specific monitoring should be conducted and coordinated in ways that contribute to regional efforts.

Final Considerations

E-TWG members noted that it will be important to:

- **Make connections to broader regional efforts**, including the Regional Wildlife Science Entity and Project WOW.
- **Build from existing materials and data**, including previous workshops around coordinated data collection (e.g., Passive Acoustic Monitoring Workshop, Rutgers Workshop).
- **Take a long-term holistic view** across projects and taxonomic groups, as well as consider activities outside of project footprints.
- **Pursue stakeholder engagement** via an iterative and transparent process.

Update on Regional Synthesis Workgroup Effort

Kate McClellan Press provided a brief update on the regional synthesis workgroup effort, which had its first meeting in December 2020. Workgroup participants include members of the E-TWG, the Regional Wildlife Science Entity, Project WOW (which is being led by Duke University and funded by DOE and BOEM), and other scientists and potential end users. The end products for the workgroup will include 1) a database of research needs and data gaps identified from existing sources, and 2) interim guidance for conducting regional-scale research. Given limited resources, Emily Shumchenia will continue to participate in the workgroup but will step back from co-chairing it. The workgroup will proceed under the auspices of the E-TWG to meet shorter-term needs and provide products that can be used by the RWSE subcommittees and others. NYSERDA and support staff continue to work closely with the RWSE to ensure that the products from this effort provide added value for regional efforts moving forward. E-TWG members voiced no specific questions or concerns regarding the approach.

Appendix A: List of Participants

Point of Contact	Organization	Stakeholder Type	Role
Kate McClellan Press	*NYSERDA*	*State Government*	*Convener/chair*
Lisa Bonacci-Sullivan	NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation	State Government	Observer
Koen Broker	Shell Renewables and Energy Solutions	Developer	Advisor
Colleen Brust	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Zack Cockrum	National Wildlife Federation	eNGO	Advisor
David Cox	NC Wildlife Resources Commission	State Government	Observer
Jennifer Daniels	Atlantic Shores Wind	Developer	Advisor
Jennifer Dupont	Equinor	Developer	Advisor
Michael Evans	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Shilo Felton	National Audubon Society	eNGO	Advisor
Elizabeth Gowell	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Terra Haight	NY Dept. of State	State Government	Observer
Megan Hayes	Atlantic Shores Wind	Developer	Advisor
Francine Kershaw	Natural Resources Defense Council	eNGO	Advisor
Atma Khalsa	Avangrid Renewables	Developer	Advisor
Kira Lawrence	NJ Board of Public Utilities	State Government	Observer
Kristi Lieske	DE Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control	State Government	Observer
Carl LoBue	The Nature Conservancy	eNGO	Advisor
Anne Marie McShea	Ocean Wind	Developer	Advisor
Anita Murray	Wildlife Conservation Society	eNGO	Advisor
Cynthia Pyc	Vineyard Wind	Developer	Advisor
Renee Reilly	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection	State	Observer
Matt Robertson	Vineyard Wind	Developer	Advisor
Alison Verkade	National Marine Fisheries Service	Federal Government	Observer
Fred Zalcman	New York Offshore Wind Alliance	Non-partisan NGO	Advisor

Support Staff

Farrah Andersen (Cadmus Group)
Morgan Brunbauer (NYSERDA)
Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute)
Julia Gulka (Biodiversity Research Institute)
Sherryll Huber (NYSERDA)
Edward Jenkins (Biodiversity Research Institute)
Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute)

Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG) –Meeting Agenda

15 February 15 2022
11-12:30 pm EST

Time	Agenda Item
11:00-11:05 am	Welcome and Icebreaker
11:05 am – 12:10pm	Coordination Among New Leaseholders in the New York Bight • Background/introduction • Whole group discussion • Breakout group brainstorm • Next steps
12:10-12:25 pm	Update on Regional Synthesis Committee
2:55-3:00 pm	Wrap Up & Next Steps