

New York State Environmental Technical Working Group Annual Bulletin

July 2020

E-TWG meetings

The E-TWG met three times in 2019 and twice in early 2020. Discussions focused on oversight of specialist committees, informing New York offshore wind procurements and other state processes, and regional coordination and knowledge-sharing efforts. For more information, visit the [Meeting Archive](#).

Membership

The E-TWG's original group of eleven advisory members has expanded to include representatives from Shell New Energies, EDF Renewables, and Avangrid. In addition, representatives from several member organizations have changed; many thanks to those who have moved on for your time on the E-TWG.

E-TWG website

In October 2019, the E-TWG launched its [new website](#), where you can learn more about the goals of the group, find offshore wind-related resources, and stay up-to-date on [E-TWG activities](#). Since the launch, the website has had over 1500 visitors and over 80 new subscribers to the E-TWG mailing list.



We are pleased to share key highlights from the New York State Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG) from 2019-2020. In the past year, 123 people were directly involved with E-TWG activities (see below)—and we look forward to even broader engagement via the 2020 State of the Science Workshop this fall. Many thanks to all those who are contributing their time and expertise!

About the E-TWG

The E-TWG is an independent advisory body to the State of New York with a regional focus on offshore wind and wildlife issues in the eastern U.S. This team of stakeholders includes 13 advisory members, comprised of offshore wind developers and science-based non-governmental organizations, as well as 13 observer members from state and federal agencies. The group provides advice on how to advance offshore wind development in environmentally responsible ways, and promotes regional coordination and collaboration.

State of the Science Workshops on Wildlife and Offshore Wind Energy

The highly successful inaugural State of the Science Workshop on Wildlife and Offshore Wind Energy was held in November 2018. The 186 attendees, 32 speakers, and 45 posters included a broad range of stakeholders from the U.S. and Europe. Workshop Proceedings are available [here](#).

The 2020 State of the Science Workshop is going virtual. The second [workshop](#), beginning in November 2020, will focus on 1) assessing the state of the knowledge regarding offshore wind development's cumulative effects on populations and ecosystems, and 2) working to identify key studies that could be conducted in the next 3-5 years to improve our understanding of cumulative biological impacts as the offshore wind industry develops in the U.S. Plenary presentations and discussions will occur virtually throughout the week of November 16-20, with smaller taxon-specific working meetings occurring in late 2020 and early 2021, and a final webinar in the Spring of 2021.

Scientific Research Framework to Understand Impacts of Offshore Wind Energy Development on Birds and Bats

NYSERDA convened a working meeting on March 4-6, 2020 to initiate development of a [scientific research framework](#) to guide the long-term study of potential impacts to birds and bats from offshore wind energy development in the eastern U.S. The meeting included 44 invited experts from a range of sectors, including scientists, environmental nonprofits, regulators, and offshore wind energy developers. The workshop summary is in review by workshop participants and is anticipated to be available in August 2020. A small group of subject matter experts is continuing to develop the research framework.



Regional Wildlife Science Entity

Starting at the inaugural State of the Science Workshop in 2018, E-TWG members and other stakeholders expressed the importance of developing a regional science entity to support research and monitoring of wildlife and offshore wind energy. The E-TWG initiated a Specialist Committee to further this topic in early 2019, with coordination support from Cadmus Group and the Consensus Building Institute. Building from these early efforts, a strong stakeholder engagement process was initiated to develop the current [vision](#) for a Regional Wildlife Science Entity ([RWSE](#)) for Atlantic Offshore Wind. The process was led by a Coordinating Group, a representative group of stakeholders along the Atlantic Coast, including NYSERDA, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), BOEM, NOAA, Shell, Equinor, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF).

Best Management Practices for Wildlife Mitigation and Monitoring

Two Specialist Committees were formed under the auspices of the E-TWG in 2019 to develop [recommendations](#) to understand and mitigate impacts to wildlife from offshore wind energy development in the eastern U.S. These Committees, which are focused on developing recommendations for best management practices (BMPs) for 1) marine mammals and sea turtles, and 2) birds and bats, include resource managers, regulators, scientists, and environmental permitting specialists for offshore wind energy developers from 15 organizations. In April 2020, the E-TWG submitted public comments to the New York Public Service Commission and NYSERDA in support of Committee recommendations and their inclusion in future New York offshore wind procurements.

Environmental Mitigation Plans for Projects Selected Under New York's Phase I Procurement

As part of New York State's Phase 1 offshore wind procurement, Empire Wind (Equinor Wind US LLC) and Sunrise Wind LLC (a joint venture of Ørsted A/S and Eversource Energy) submitted [environmental mitigation plans](#) to the state and committed to refining these plans through consultation with the E-TWG. The first consultation meetings, with 14 E-TWG members in attendance, occurred in November 2019.

New York Offshore Wind Updates

Mitigation and Monitoring Practices Tool

NYSERDA has developed a [Mitigation and Monitoring Practices \(MMP\) Tool](#) to serve as a reference for wildlife and fisheries mitigation and monitoring practices for offshore wind development. The Tool is a searchable database of MMPs extracted from various sources, included agency reports, environmental assessments, and the scientific literature. It is publicly available for use by environmental and fisheries stakeholders.

New York Offshore Wind Procurements

In July 2019, New York selected [two projects](#), Empire Wind and Sunrise Wind, for the state's Phase 1 offshore wind procurement. The two projects total 1,700 MW.

Following an [Order](#) issued by the New York Public Service Commission, NYSERDA released its second solicitation for offshore wind procurement in July 2020. The [solicitation](#) seeks at least 1,000 and up to 2,500 MW of renewable energy from offshore wind projects.

NYSERDA funds \$2 million in wildlife and fisheries research

In August 2019, NYSERDA announced funding for five multi-year scientific research [projects](#), totaling more than \$2 million, to support the responsible development of offshore wind.

Regional Fisheries Updates

Given the close intersection of environmental and fisheries issues as they pertain to offshore wind, this section provides brief updates and links to further information on fisheries-related offshore wind initiatives.

- **The Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA)** was initiated in 2019 by the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA), Atlantic Shore Offshore Wind, Equinor, Mayflower Wind Energy, Ørsted, and Vineyard Wind. This nonprofit organization seeks to advance regional research and monitoring of fisheries and offshore wind interactions through collaboration and cooperation in the eastern U.S.
- **The New York State Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG)** has a [new website](#).
- **The Final New York Bight Transit Lanes Report** is now [available](#).
- **NYSERDA is sponsoring a cabling assessment document** at the request of fisheries stakeholders to evaluate the concerns of cabling activities in relation to fishing activities. Look for updates on the [F-TWG website](#).
- **With support from NYSERDA, the Renewable Consulting Group** will engage with commercial and recreational fishermen and offshore wind developers to synthesize and project potential jobs offered by the industry that could utilize the talents and experience of mariners. Look for updates on the [F-TWG website](#).
- **A virtual state of the science workshop on fisheries and offshore wind energy** will be held the week of October 12, 2020. This workshop is being convened by RODA, NMFS, and BOEM and will be open to the public. Information will be posted [here](#).
- **The U.S. Coast Guard** announced completion of The Areas Offshore of Massachusetts and Rhode Island Port Access Route [Study](#).
- **Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and BOEM** recently [awarded](#) \$1.1 million for Regional Fisheries Studies to Guide Offshore Wind Development.



Regional Offshore Wind Updates

- **BOEM** completed a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement ([SEIS](#)) for the proposed Vineyard Wind 1 Offshore Energy Project.
- **Connecticut** [announced](#) procurement of 804 MW of offshore wind in December 2019. The state has also formed the Connecticut [Commission](#) on Environmental Standards for Offshore Wind Facilities.
- **Massachusetts** [announced](#) the procurement of 804 MW of offshore wind in October 2019. The Habitat [Working Group](#) on Offshore Wind Energy provides a forum for key offshore wind stakeholders engagement.
- **New Jersey** [awarded](#) a 1,100 MW offshore wind solicitation in June 2019. The Environmental Resources Offshore Wind [Working Group](#) was formed in November 2019.
- **The Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) Project** completed construction of the first offshore wind turbines in federal waters in June 2020.