

THE OFFSHORE WIND ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

A Regional Collaboration to Conduct Wildlife Research and Develop Conservation Guidance



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The State of New York has formed a regional, science-based collaboration focused on the environmentally responsible development of offshore wind along the US east coast. This effort aims to develop wildlife best management practices, identify research needs, and facilitate regional coordination. The inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders in this effort encourages effective, science-based and economically viable approaches to environmentally responsible development.

This novel approach (Figure 1) includes:

- The Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG), a standing working group of offshore wind developers, environmental nongovernmental organizations (eNGOs), federal agencies, and state agencies from MA to VA (Table 1), that advises the state on environmentally responsible development of offshore wind;
- Specialist Committees with specific technical and scientific expertise, which address issues that the E-TWG designates as priorities; and
- Regular "State of the Science" workshops that engage the broader stakeholder community.

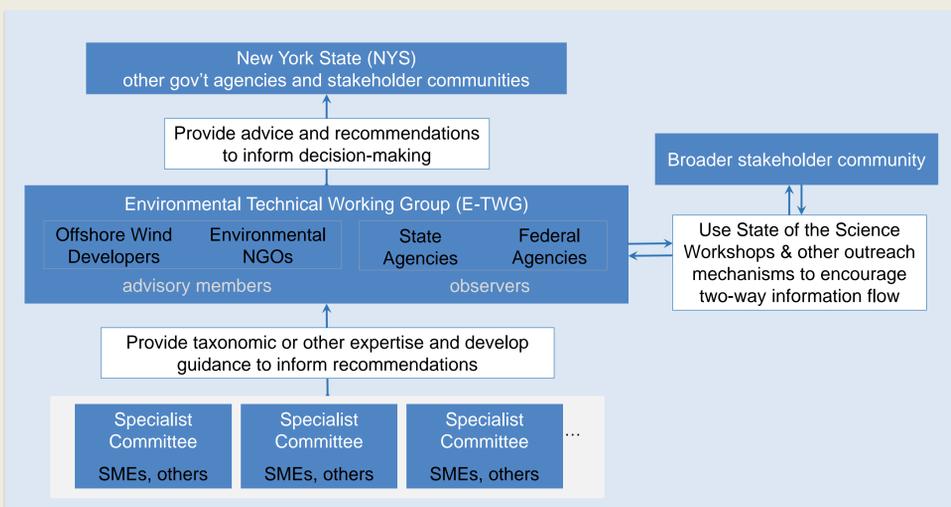


FIGURE 1: Information flow between stakeholder groups, including subject matter experts (SMEs) & others.

Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)

The E-TWG's topical scope is the biological and physical environment; the group's focus overlaps with the complementary Recreational and Commercial Fisheries TWG around topics of fish populations and fish biology.

E-TWG objectives are to:

- Improve our understanding of, and ability to manage for, potential effects of offshore wind energy development on wildlife;
- Develop transparent, collaborative processes for identifying and addressing priority issues relating to wildlife monitoring and mitigation;
- Reduce permitting risk and uncertainty for developers by improving clarity in expectations and processes for wildlife monitoring and mitigation.

TABLE 1: E-TWG members (as of August 2018)

Stakeholder	# of seats	Specifics
Developer	5	Representatives from companies with geographically relevant lease holdings for the State of New York (Deepwater Wind, Equinor, Ørsted, US Wind, Vineyard Wind)
eNGO	5	Representatives from non-profit organizations with a strong scientific grounding and involvement in a range of wildlife and offshore wind issues (Audubon NY, NWF, NRDC, TNC, WCS)
Nonpartisan NGO	1	Representative from a NGO that includes both developers and eNGOs as members (NY Offshore Wind Alliance)
State agency	11	Representatives from New York and other regional states (MA, RI, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA)
Federal agency	3	Representatives from BOEM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

E-TWG members, the State of the Science Workshop advisory committee, and many others are committing substantial time and energy towards this effort. Many thanks to all who are involved!

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Specialist Committees (SCs)

Under the direction of the State of New York and the E-TWG, topically-focused Specialist Committees bring together subject matter experts to develop collaborative guidelines or other specific products.

- Include science-based subject matter experts from a range of backgrounds
- Each committee has a specific charge to complete
- Committee products are reviewed by the E-TWG, which provides feedback to inform collective decision making by the State
- May have joint SCs between the Environmental TWG and the Fisheries TWG
- General topic areas outlined in the New York Offshore Wind Master Plan:
 - Development of Wildlife Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - Coordination regionally for adaptive management
 - Identification of research needs and regional coordination
 - Consideration of a framework for an "Environmental Conservation Fund"

Two-day Workshop: The State of the Science

The first State of the Science Workshop is bringing together stakeholders engaged with wildlife research relevant to offshore wind energy development along the eastern seaboard (MA to NC).

Workshop goals include the promotion of regional coordination and collaboration, by sharing updates on research studies, guidelines development, and other efforts; expert information exchange and discussion; and public engagement and education for interested stakeholders.

Workshop topics will include:

- The Offshore Wind Energy Development Process
- Taxonomically focused sessions on wildlife populations, survey methods, effects of offshore wind energy development, and mitigation approaches:
 - Zooplankton / benthos
 - Fish and fish habitat
 - Sea Turtles
 - Marine Mammals
 - Birds and Bats
- Ecosystem Perspectives
- Key Advances & Cross-cutting Issues
- Evening Poster Session & Public Open House

Dates and location: November 13-14, 2018, The Inn at Fox Hollow, Woodbury, Long Island

Participation: Scientists will present and discuss their research. The workshop is open to members of the public with prior registration.

More info: www.briloon.org/offshorewindny/workshop

Current Activities

There have been two E-TWG meetings in 2018 to date. The group is working on a range of initiatives, including:

- Identifying priority topics for the first Specialist Committees
- Planning the first State of the Science Workshop on Wildlife and Offshore Wind Energy
- Informing New York State on how best to incorporate environmental considerations into offshore wind procurement and development processes
- Recommending priority research topics for inclusion in New York State environmental research solicitations (RFPs)
- Improving communication and coordination of ongoing offshore wind-related research, development, and policy initiatives.

How You Can Get Involved

Contact Kate Williams (E-TWG support staff) at kate.williams@briloon.org for:

- Participation on Specialist Committees: Indicate your area of expertise.
- State of the Science Workshop attendance: Sign up for the workshop mailing list by sending a blank email with subject "Add to SotS workshop email list".
- State of the Science Workshop presentations: Indicate that you are interested in presenting a poster or having a table for your organization at the evening open house.

For more info: www.briloon.org/offshorewindny

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