New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG) Meeting Summary – 1 November 2022

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
Prepared by	Amanda Gherezghiher, Cadmus	11/24/2022
Reviewed by	Bennett Brooks, CBI	12/14/2022
Reviewed by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	12/15/2022
Reviewed by	Kate Williams, Biodiversity Research Institute	12/20/2022
Reviewed by	Kate McClellan Press, NYSERDA	2/14/2023
Revised by	Amanda Gherezghiher, Cadmus	2/22/2023

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 state¹. The 18th E-TWG meeting was held in person at the Energy Exchange Building at 31 Chambers St, New York City, NY and via video conference on November 1st, 2022.

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

- Please email Kate Williams (<u>kate.williams@briwildlife.org</u>) if you are interested in participating in the 2024 State of the Science Workshop planning committee.
- Please provide feedback to Kate Press (<u>Kate.McClellanPress@nyserda.ny.gov</u>) on the draft NYSERDA Research Program Opportunity Notice by November 10, 2022.
- Please reach out to Sherryll Huber (<u>Sherryll.Huber@nyserda.ny.gov</u>) or Kate Press
 (<u>Kate.McClellanPress@nyserda.ny.gov</u>) if you have feedback on the Offshore Wind Master Plan
 2.0: Deep Water information presented, or if you are interested in being further involved in the
 planning process.
- NYSERDA will follow up with the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind (RWSC) about a potential role in helping facilitate coordination among New York Bight leaseholders.
- Support staff will reach out to the E-TWG for feedback on Specialist Committee draft products prior to soliciting public feedback. Please anticipate multiple draft documents for review in late 2022 and early to mid-2023.
- We anticipate 2-3 E-TWG meetings per year (in person) with additional virtual meetings as needed. The next in-person meeting will likely be in spring 2023.

Welcome and Introductions

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute) and Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute, or BRI) provided a brief introduction and invited E-TWG members to provide introductions about their respective organizations and value of participation in the E-TWG.

The focus of the meeting was to discuss E-TWG activities including the State of the Science Workshop, provide updates and receive feedback on Specialist Committee efforts, potential coordination among New York Bight lease holders, and NYSERDA activities. Kate McClellan Press noted that the 2022 Offshore Wind Renewable Energy Certificate (OREC) Request for Proposals (RFP) was open at the time of the meeting and, as a result, NYSERDA could not comment on the solicitation. Any questions

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

regarding the OREC RFP should be submitted to offshorewind@nyserda.ny.gov with the subject line "OREC RFP". Proposals are due January 26, 2023.

E-TWG Activities: State of the Science Workshops

Kate Williams provided an overview of the results from the 2022 State of the Science Workshop, including:

- There were 450 attendees during 12 workshop sessions and symposia, with 51 oral presentations and 29 posters.
- This was the first year with a call for abstracts. It generated high quality and quantity of submissions, leading to parallel sessions. We will likely conduct a call for abstracts for future workshops.
- This was the first year that sessions were recorded for virtual participants, and we anticipate continuing to hold hybrid workshops in the future. Videos of all workshop sessions are available on the E-TWG website².
- Workshop discussions focused on understanding wildlife populations and distributions, offshore wind development effects and species and ecosystem responses, minimization and mitigation approaches, cumulative impacts, and collaborative processes to improve conservation outcomes.
- The post-workshop survey highlighted the value of unstructured time and included positive feedback on the addition of themed symposia. The sessions were seen as diverse in scope and well organized. Some respondents suggested adding a workshop element or including breakout group discussions as part of the program.

Feedback from past workshops has also noted the benefit of a virtual component as it allows for broader participation and makes it possible for participants to continue meeting after the workshop ends.

Topical suggestions for future workshops included policy and law applications of science, regional-scale assessments, floating offshore wind, coordination and data management, additional focus on "Net Positive Impacts", site-level findings as wind farms are built, intersection of technology and research/monitoring, and the interface between science and marine stakeholders, especially commercial fisheries.

Morgan Brunbauer (NYSERDA) gave a brief overview on the potential addition of a fisheries track and opportunities for co-sponsorship of the workshop. Previously (2021 and 2022), there has been an Offshore Wind and Fisheries Symposium as part of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) annual meeting, but the organizing group for those symposia is interested in incorporating this into the State of the Science Workshop. The value in potentially adding a fisheries track to the State of the Science Workshop includes:

• Good forum to connect across wildlife and fisheries topics. Previous fisheries symposia included numerous academic speakers touching on similar themes and issues such as data transparency, lessons learned, and stakeholder engagement.

² 2022 State of the Science Workshop Recordings available at: https://www.nyetwg.com/2022-workshop

- **Increased accessibility.** Attendance at the State of the Science Workshop is more financially accessible in comparison to AFS which is about \$1,000 for just admission.
- Leveraging additional resources. There is an opportunity to leverage federal funds to support
 the State of the Science Workshop to create a hybrid approach for those wanting or needing to
 attend online.

Discussion

Following this overview, E-TWG members split into breakout groups to discuss goals of future Workshops, long-term financial stability and accessibility, sponsorships, and potential addition of a fisheries track. Below is a summary of feedback.

- Should the State of the Science be general or alternate general and more topic-specific workshops? E-TWG members were split on this question. Some agreed that keeping it general with room for specific topical workshops will have a greater benefit than limiting it to a singular theme. They suggested adding fisheries science and other TWGs (e.g., Fisheries and Marine resources) to enable discussion of topics like fishery management, vessel impacts, and other applied science research topics. Some E-TWG members suggested a workshop structured around broader topics might be preferable as it will likely appeal to a wider set of participants (whereas a topic-focused workshop may attract only a subset of potential participants given their interests). Members also suggested adding an extra day to the workshop so more topics can be covered.
- Should a fisheries track be added? E-TWG members recommended adding a fisheries track as having the fishing industry present (in addition to fishery biologists) would benefit both communities. If there is a fisheries track, they noted the need to consider the time and place in relation to fishing activities as this will affect the ability of fishermen to attend; they generally do not get paid to attend a conference and could lose time at sea.
- Should external sponsorships be pursued? Yes, this idea was supported by E-TWG members.

E-TWG Activities Updates: Specialist Committees and Other Activities

Kate Williams provided an overview of recent work by the E-TWG's two active Specialist Committees (SCs). These committees are set up to discuss priority topics that include specific end products and deliverables. Specialist Committees are made up of both E-TWG and non-E-TWG members with subject matter expertise. NYSERDA develops a work plan for each SC, with E-TWG members providing input on the work and potential committee membership. The SC meets separately from the E-TWG and receives technical and facilitation support as needed. The two active SCs are meeting monthly.

Regional Synthesis Workgroup

The Regional Synthesis Workgroup³ has been meeting monthly since December 2021. It is a collaborative effort that includes support from the Synthesis of Environmental Effects Research (SEER) team in addition to support staff from BRI. The Workgroup has been coordinating closely with the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) and RWSC. The goals of this effort are to 1) inform

³ More information on the Regional Synthesis Workgroup is available at: https://www.nyetwg.com/regional-synthesis-workgroup

immediate decision-making by states, developers, and others about research activities to fund, and 2) help feed into RWSC efforts. Primary products include:

- Database of research needs and data gaps for offshore wind and wildlife in US Atlantic compiled and synthesized from existing sources.
- Interim guidance for regional-scale research to complement the database document in progress.

Two public meetings were held in 2022. One, in collaboration with ROSA, to discuss the criteria around prioritization of regional-scale research, and a second to invite stakeholder feedback on the beta version of the database of research needs and data gaps (available on the E-TWG website⁴). The database will be shared with the E-TWG prior to finalized by the end of the year and will be made publicly available on the Tethys website⁵, along with an analogous database that the SEER team developed for the Pacific⁶. In the meantime, the database is already being used by RWSC taxa-based subcommittees, several potential research funders, and by other end users. The guidance document is in progress, with plans to get stakeholder input on the draft document in early 2023.

Avian Displacement Guidance Committee

The Avian Displacement Guidance Specialist Committee⁷, co-chaired by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), has been meeting monthly since May 2022. The goal is to inform pre- and post-construction monitoring and research approaches for detecting and characterizing displacement, attraction, and macro- to meso-avoidance of marine birds at offshore wind facilities in the U.S. The existing federal BOEM avian survey guidelines are primarily focused on site characterization surveys rather than research to detect changes in distributions. Thus, both federal agencies are interested in getting recommendations from this group of subject matter experts to help inform future guidance they may choose to issue. Both agencies were heavily involved in the development of a work plan for the committee, as well as selection of committee members, and continue to be involved in planning committee meetings.

The primary product for this group is a guidance document that includes identification of displacement- and attraction-related research questions and the appropriate methodologies to address those questions, with a focus on informing study designs for boat-based and aerial surveys. The group also identified an urgent need to develop a second document with interim recommendations to BOEM for the use of existing avian data for site characterization which will be submitted to BOEM by the end of 2022. A draft literature review of existing displacement and attraction studies to inform guidance is already completed. The guidance document is partially drafted with plans to get stakeholder input on the draft guidance in early/mid-2023.

Discussion

⁴ Recording of stakeholder meeting available at: https://www.nyetwg.com/regional-synthesis-workgroup

⁵ The final version of the research recommendations database is now available at: https://tethys.pnnl.gov/atlantic-offshore-wind-environmental-research-recommendations

⁶ The Pacific database of environmental research recommendations is publicly available at: https://tethys.pnnl.gov/pacific-offshore-wind-environmental-research-recommendations

⁷ More information on the Avian Displacement Guidance Specialist Committee available at: https://www.nyetwg.com/avian-displacement-guidance

- **Can members review draft products?** Support staff indicated that E-TWG members will have an opportunity to review draft products prior to finalization.
- From a developer's perspective, how will this be used in recommendations to BOEM and USFWS? Support staff indicated that the guidance document will serve as a point of reference for federal agencies and the importance for continuity and consistency between developers.
- Language used in relation to "guidance". An E-TWG member indicated the important distinction between a guidance document for research and a guidance document for regulation. There is sensitivity to the language used. For example, calling it research/recommendation/suggestion vs guideline/guidance could make a difference. One suggestion for terminology included "suggested practices" as opposed to "guidance".

Additional E-TWG Activity Updates

Kate Williams provided a brief overview of additional E-TWG-related activities including:

- E-TWG members should have received the **2022 E-TWG Annual Bulletin**⁸ which summarizes E-TWG activities and engagement over the past year.
- Updates to the Webinar Library⁹ are currently in progress with a goal of completion by the end of 2022.
- NYSERDA staff and support staff for both TWGs have developed an E-TWG and F-TWG focused
 manuscript that discusses the structure of the TWGs, accomplishments, what has worked and
 hasn't, with the idea of presenting lessons learned to inform future stakeholder collaboration
 efforts. The manuscript is currently in revision, will be open access, and will be shared with the
 E-TWG when published.

Coordination Among New York Bight Leaseholders

Kate McClellan Press kicked off the discussion by reminding participants of past E-TWG conversations that identified the need for greater coordination among New York Bight leaseholders. These included:

- Research coordination including pre- and post-construction monitoring, equipment deployment, building on regional efforts
- **Mitigation coordination,** including cable corridors, communication, vessel activities and equipment use, time of year restrictions, measuring take
- **Data standardization and transparency**, including study design protocols, public access to data, collection of covariates, visualization of spatial metadata

She also noted the **challenges with cross-lease coordination** include project timelines, resources needed for large-scale efforts, openness to new approaches, and lack of flexibility in processes.

While recognizing the value of coordination, Kate explained that the E-TWG is not the right forum for such coordination given various constraints and accordingly sought feedback on the right forum for these discussions and potential next steps.

⁸ E-TWG Annual Bulletins and other products are available at: https://www.nyetwg.com/e-twg-products

⁹ The Webinar Library includes free, publicly available webinars related to offshore wind energy development and wildlife to serve as a resource for stakeholders and is available at: https://www.nyetwg.com/webinar-library

Discussion

- *Importance.* Given stakeholder fatigue, members stressed the significance of finding a solution sooner rather than later to foster coordination among leaseholders.
- **Potential alternative forums.** Members named ROSA and RWSC, a trade group association, and federal agencies as possible alternative venues for these discussions.
- **Role of the E-TWG and NYSERDA**. Members also suggested that the E-TWG and NYSERDA could serve a catalytic role to help foster these discussions in another forum. Cross-coordination will be necessary as other entities like are also thinking about this.

NYSERDA Updates and Opportunities for Input

NYSERDA Draft Research Solicitation

Kate McClellan Press provided a brief overview of the draft research solicitation, an excerpt of which was shared with the E-TWG. There is \$2,500,000 available to be divided between fisheries and environmental issues. The two research areas of focus are:

- 1) Enhancement of sustainable fisheries and efforts to promote a path towards coexistence with offshore wind, and
- 2) Changes in the biological characteristics of environments and opportunities for ecological advancement.

Kate sought feedback from E-TWG members via email (<u>Kate.McClellanPress@nyserda.ny.gov</u>) on the draft NYSERDA Research Program Opportunity Notice by November 10, 2022.

Master Plan 2.0: Deepwater

Sherryl Huber (NYSERDA) provided a presentation on New York State's next phase of offshore wind planning, Master Plan 2.0: Deep Water. The updated master plan will characterize the risks and opportunities for offshore wind development to help achieve New York's 9-gigawatt offshore wind goal. In particular, the plan will identify additional areas >60 meters in water depth to recommend for future leasing and provide a clear process to address transmission-related concerns. Sherryll provided an overview of the timeline for the planning process, the geographic scope, and potential topical areas including stakeholder engagement and environmental concerns. She also discussed the initial list of studies for consideration and sought feedback on all aspects via email (Sherryll.Huber@nyserda.ny.gov).

Discussion

- Is there potential for fixed foundations beyond the 30-meter isobath? Sherryll indicated that they are intentionally referring to this as "Deep Water" rather than assuming floating platforms they don't want to rule out any type of technology. The next phase of outreach will answer some of these questions about feasibility of fixed foundations at greater depths.
- **Geographic focus.** *E-TWG members indicated that Zone 2 is a transition zone with significant biodiversity and will be valuable to study. Zone 3 may be a better target area for development, though building that far out will require long transmission cables back to shore.*

Great Lakes Wind Feasibility Study

Sherryll Huber also provided a brief update on the Great Lakes Wind feasibility study which began in early 2022 and will consist of 11 studies, one main synthesis report, and a policy white paper written by NYSERDA. The study is being finalized and will be shared via email (interested E-TWG members can sign up for notifications at greatlakeswind@nyserda.ny.gov). The information will be posted online, available to the public, and filed with the Public Service Commission. Sherryl is the point of contact.

NYSERDA Offshore Wind Cable Corridor Constraints Assessment

Kate McClellan Press gave a brief update on the cable constraints assessment in progress. NYSERDA is currently reviewing public comments with the State agency Cable Working Group and a final Assessment is anticipated by the end of 2022.

Other Updates

Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) Updates

- Ongoing research projects include New York Bight Offshore Wind Farms: Collaborative
 Development of Strategies and Tools to Address Commercial Fishing Access (National
 Renewable Energy Laboratory), Fisheries Knowledge Trust (Responsible Offshore Development
 Alliance), Lunch and Learn, and Enhancement of Sustainable Fisheries topics.
- **Equinor Fisheries Mitigation Plan Meetings** occurred concurrently with Environmental Mitigation Plan Meetings in fall 2022.
- The F-TWG reviewed the draft Fisheries Mitigation Framework document released by BOEM in June. While BOEM can direct compensation as part of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process, they can't direct how funds are administered or spent. The F-TWG will soon release a public document including feedback on how to fix the gap between the collection of funds and disbursement.

NYSERDA-funded 2019 Research Projects

- Trophic Modeling Project This project examines the relationships between environmental processes, primary productivity, and distribution of species at higher trophic levels. Four species were selected (Red-throated Loon, Northern Gannet, Fin Whale, and loggerhead sea turtle) to develop agent-based models to look at how movement can be predicted based on oceanographic characteristics. The project is in its final stage (finalization of final report draft and preparation of peer reviewed paper).
- Motus Guidance Project This two-year project, focused on developing guidance and tools for using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System to monitor birds and bats offshore, was recently completed and the final report and other products will be posted online shortly. The project includes:
 - A guidance document with specifications and workflows for offshore Motus stations
 - An online study design tool that allows users to map detection coverage from stations and develop offshore study designs
 - A simulation study to model animal movement data through offshore arrays
 - A Motus Data Framework including a centralized portal for data management, coordination, and summary reports

- A monitoring framework to help guide tagging efforts and study design for offshore Motus projects.
- Ecosystem Dynamics Project This project examines the relationships between marine predators and forage fish on the northeast continental shelf. Information on the environmental conditions influencing seabird movements and predicted areas of high foraging activities are being combined with forage fish availability and community composition models to examine predator-prey interactions and long-term population trends between forage fish and marine predators. The project began in early 2020 and is expected to conclude springtime 2023.

2022 Ventus Award Finalist

The New York State Technical Working Groups are a Ventus Award finalist¹⁰ in the offshore wind leadership category. This award is given to an individual, company, or public entity that exhibits outstanding leadership benefiting industry growth development and market maturation. The winner's actions exhibit the highest standards of integrity, responsibility, transparency, inclusiveness, cooperation, and coordination among industry peers and external stakeholders to advance the offshore wind industry.

Wildlife and Offshore Wind

The \$7.5 million Wildlife and Offshore Wind¹¹ project is funded by the Department of Energy and BOEM to evaluate the effects of offshore wind development of wildlife in the U.S. Atlantic waters. This is a five-year project and field work is expected to begin June 2023. The project's three areas of research focus are:

- Research to assess or mitigate impacts of construction noise on marine species
- Changes in habitat and changes in marine species' use of habitat in offshore wind lease areas and surrounding areas
- Research to assess collision risk for birds and/or bats

Sunrise Wind Update

Ørsted presented an overview of Sunrise Wind, a joint venture with Eversource contracted to NYSERDA for 924 MW with additional capacity to total 1,034 MW. Federal and state permit applications have been submitted and are underway. Ørsted has developed a Post-construction Avian and Bat Monitoring Framework (available on the BOEM website¹²), which outlines objectives, monitoring questions, and reporting and includes acoustic monitoring for bats, and automated radio telemetry and radar for birds. A detailed Monitoring Plan will be approved by BOEM prior to construction. In addition, fisheries, acoustic telemetry, and marine mammal and sea turtle surveys are currently underway. Benthic surveys for soft and hard bottom habitats are planned. Annual reports are scheduled to submitted at the end of the year and status updates will be available in 2023. Follow up questions can be directed to info@sunrisewindny.com.

Discussion

¹⁰ Winners were announced November 17, 2022. The TWGs were not selected as winners for the award. Information on the winners of the award are available at: <u>2022 Offshore Wind Leadership Winner</u>

¹¹ More information on the Wildlife and Offshore Wind Project is available at: https://offshorewind.env.duke.edu

¹² Information on the Post-construction Avian and Bat Monitoring Framework is available at: <u>Appendix P2 Post Construction Avian and Bat Monitoring Framework (boem.gov)</u>

• Transparency of project information. An E-TWG member asked whether interim documents and project descriptions can be shared along with contact information. Ørsted indicated that the RWSC is working on a centralized database for planned and ongoing research. Data from projects will be made publicly available but the mechanism and location is still being determined.

Appendix A: List of Participants

Point of Contact	Organization	Stakeholder Type	Role
Kate McClellan Press	NYSERDA	State Government	Convener/chair
Carmen Bernett	Invenergy	Developer	Advisor
Lisa Bonacci-Sullivan	NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation	State Government	Observer
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
Lisa Engler	MA Office of Coastal Zone Management	State Government	Observer
Michael Evans	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Sharon Farris	Bluepoint Wind	Developer	Advisor
Michelle Fogarty	Equinor Wind U.S.	Developer	Advisor
Josh Gomez	Atlantic Shores Wind	Developer	Advisor
Terra Haight	NY Dept. of State	State Government	Observer
Chris Haney	National Audubon Society	eNGO	Advisor
Scott Johnston	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services	Developer	Advisor
Shannon Kearney	CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Francine Kershaw	Natural Resources Defense Council	eNGO	Advisor
Atma Khalsa	Avangrid Renewables	Developer	Advisor
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
Katherine Miller	RWE Renewables Americas, LLC	Developer	Advisor
Cynthia Pyc	Vineyard Wind	Developer	Advisor
Emily Rochon	Vineyard Offshore	Developer	Advisor
Howard Rosenbaum	Wildlife Conservation Society	eNGO	Advisor
Nick Sisson	NOAA Fisheries	Federal Government	Observer
Stephanie Vail-Muse	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal Government	Observer
Alison Verkade	National Marine Fisheries Service	Federal Government	Observer
Fred Zalcman	New York Offshore Wind Alliance	Non-partisan NGO	Advisor

Support Staff

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute) Edward Jenkins (Biodiversity Research Institute) Julia Gulka (Biodiversity Research Institute) Amanda Gherezghiher (The Cadmus Group) Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute)

NYSERDA Staff

Morgan Brunbauer Laila El-Ashmawy Sherryll Huber Jeremy Magliaro Bethany Meys

Meeting Agenda Criteria for New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)

1 November 2022 (10:00 am - 4:30 pm EDT)

Location: Building Energy Exchange, 31 Chambers St, New York, New York, and online via Zoom

Meeting Objectives included to 1) share and discuss updates on E-TWG related activities, 2) obtain input NYSERDA research efforts and coordination in the New York Bight, and 3) share E-TWG member updates.

<u>Time</u>	Agenda Item	
10:00-10:40 am	Welcome	
	• Introductions	
	Meeting agenda and ground rules	
10:40-11:35 am	E-TWG Activities: State of the Science Workshops	
	 Review of Stakeholder feedback 	
	Discussion: Scope of future workshops	
11:35-12:00 pm	E-TWG Activity Updates: Specialist Committee Efforts and Other Activities	
	 Updates 	
	Questions/comments	
12:00-1:10 pm	Lunch	
1:10-1:30 pm	Coordination among New York Bight Leaseholders	
	What is the best forum for these discussions?	
1:30-2:35 pm	NYSERDA Opportunities for Input	
	 NYSERDA Environmental Research Solicitation: 	
	Opportunity for Input	
	Blueprint for Master Plan 2.0 Deep Water: Overview	
	and Discussion	
	Transmission and Cabling Constraints Report: Update	
	Great Lakes Feasibility Study: Update	
2:35-3:05 pm	Coffee Break	
3:05-4:20 pm	Other Updates	
	• F-TWG	
	New Jersey RMI	
	NYSERDA-funded research projects (previous	
	research RFP)	
4-20 4-20	Other E-TWG member updates	
4:20-4:30 pm	Wrap Up & Next Steps	