

**New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)
Meeting Summary – 11 February 2021**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
Prepared by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	2/12/2021
Reviewed by	Kate Williams, Biodiversity Research Institute	3/19/2021
Reviewed by	Bennett Brooks, CBI	3/30/2021
Reviewed by	Farrah Andersen, Cadmus	4/02/2021
Reviewed by	Kate McClellan Press, NYSERDA	4/06/2021
Revised by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	4/8/2021

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 on environmental topics¹. The tenth meeting of the E-TWG was held via video conference on 11 February, 2021. Twenty-four E-TWG members participated in this meeting (Appendix A).

This meeting summary is intended to capture the key points of discussion and input from the E-TWG, as well as action items identified during the meeting. This summary is loosely organized according to the structure of the meeting agenda (Appendix B). Specific comments are organized by topical relevance, not necessarily the part of the agenda in which the comments were made. 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

The following action items to advance E-TWG objectives were identified during the meeting:

- Support staff will solicit input from E-TWG members via email/online survey on topics of interest for the new NYSERDA "Learning from the Experts" webinar series, as well as existing resources to help build out the webinar library.
- E-TWG members can send Kate McClellan Press (Kate.McClellanPress@nyserda.ny.gov) ideas for topics for state coordination.
- E-TWG members can provide additional input on workplans to support staff (kate.williams@briloon.org) via email.
- NYSERDA will reach out to federal agencies and other relevant stakeholders regarding collaboration on regional and site-specific research and monitoring efforts. These topics will be refined based on this input and discussed at the next E-TWG meeting (April 22, 2021).
- Support staff will revise the [E-TWG charter](#) later this year to expand the geographic scope and suggest any additional updates via red-line edits to the E-TWG for review.

Introductions

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute) provided a brief introduction, noting new members to the E-TWG including representation from National Audubon Society and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. In addition, there is changing representation from New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

¹ For meeting agendas, summaries, and presentations, see: <http://nyetwg.com/>

Updates

A series of updates were presented, including E-TWG updates, regional offshore wind- and fisheries-related topics, and project-specific updates.

State of the Science Workshop – Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute) provided an update on the recent 2020 State of the Science Workshop on Wildlife and Offshore Wind focused on understanding cumulative impacts to wildlife. In November 2020, a series of virtual sessions was held, it was well attended with ~430 attendees from 21 states and 20 countries. A post-workshop survey indicated high satisfaction with the workshop virtual platform and logistics as well as session content. Work group efforts are continuing throughout early 2021 with seven taxon-specific groups that are meeting 2-3 times each. Groups will work to identify short-term research and coordination needs that can be addressed in the next 5 years to help improve our future understanding of cumulative impacts to wildlife from offshore wind development. This effort will finish with a culmination webinar in May 2021 and workshop proceedings released in summer/fall 2021.

NYSERDA updates – Kate McClellan Press (NYSERDA) shared updates including:

- Plans for a new fisheries and environmental research Request for Proposals (RFP) to be released in 2021;
- NYSERDA completed geological and geophysical (G&G) surveys in fall 2020 in the Hudson North and South draft wind energy areas². Reports will be released shortly and shared with the E-TWG when available;
- New York State recently published an initial power grid study³, which included information about integration into the state system, interconnection points, permitting complexities in New York Harbor and Long Island Sound, and flexibility using a meshed configuration. This report will be discussed more in-depth at the next E-TWG meeting;
- New York Bight Indicator Study was completed and published by New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC)⁴.

New Jersey Regional Funding Update – Megan Brunatti (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection) provided an update on state regional funding. As part of New Jersey's second offshore wind solicitation, much like New York, the state required \$10,000 per megawatt for fisheries and wildlife research, which equates to \$12-24 million. The state is working with stakeholders and regional partners including the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) and the Regional Wildlife Science Entity (RWSE) and coordinating with NYSERDA to create a plan for this regional funding. Current efforts involve identifying priorities and drafting the plan for implementation.

E-TWG members reminded the group of the efforts of the seven work groups from the State of the Science Workshop to prioritize research and monitoring and to ensure that states including New York and New Jersey are involved and thinking about how these efforts might be used for state purposes. Representatives from New York and New Jersey have been and will continue to coordinate regarding these and other relevant efforts.

² <http://nyserdageosurvey.ene.com/ProjectOverview.aspx>

³ <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterCaseNo=20-E-0197&submit=Search>

⁴ https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/dmrsomasindicators.pdf

Proposed Expansion of E-TWG Scope – Given recent offshore wind-related activities in the Gulf of Maine, NYSERDA and support staff proposed a formal geographic expansion of E-TWG scope to include all areas of the east coast with active development plans, with a specific focus at this time on expansion to include the Gulf of Maine. This change would trigger a full review of the E-TWG charter⁵. Amanda Cross (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife) provided a brief update of offshore wind activities in the Gulf of Maine, including:

- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)'s tri-state task force
- An economic grant recently received by the state of Maine to develop an offshore wind roadmap
- A Maine state 10-year moratorium on offshore wind energy development in state waters
- The state's plans for a research array of up to 12 turbines located 20-40 miles off the coast, which would begin construction in five years
- Aqua Ventus, a single 10 MW floating wind turbine to be constructed in 2023 off of Monhegan Island.

E-TWG members expressed support for an expanded E-TWG scope to include the Gulf of Maine and NYSERDA assured members that this expansion would not greatly affect the scope of NYSERDA's work.

Regional Wildlife Science Entity – NYSERDA and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) are jointly working with the RWSE⁶ coordinating group and will shortly be releasing a Request for Qualifications (RFQL) based on the organizational vision released last year⁷. The purpose of the RFQL is to secure a fiscal agent to support the RWSE. In addition to financial support from NYSERDA and MassCEC, Maryland and Connecticut have submitted letters of support and the developer caucus has also indicated financial support. Kate McClellan Press will share the RFQL with the E-TWG once released⁸. In addition, the Department of Energy (DOE) recently released a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) that aligns with the mission of the RWSE. The non-federal members of the RWSE Interim Steering Committee plans to submit a concept paper. Once complete, the intent is to share this with the wider stakeholder community including the E-TWG.

Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) updates – Morgan Brunbauer (NYSERDA) provided an update on F-TWG activities including:

- New website (nyftwg.com) which has great resources including the lease mapper and Monitoring and Mitigation Practices (MMP) tool, information on fisheries transit work, fisheries mitigation plans, and meeting summaries;
- The F-TWG held two virtual meetings in 2020 with four scheduled for 2021;

⁵ https://a6481a0e-2fbd-460f-b1df-f8ca1504074a.filesusr.com/ugd/78f0c4_c5ff2007e0ca4c72a92f83a4a9edb8cf.pdf?index=true

⁶ <https://www.nyetwg.com/regional-wildlife-science-entity>

⁷ https://a6481a0e-2fbd-460f-b1df-f8ca1504074a.filesusr.com/ugd/28f011_99d2b8bff23a4fa2b8a3240cbec12897.pdf?index=true

⁸ The RFQL has since been released and can be found here:
https://portal.nyserdera.ny.gov/CORE_Solicitation_Detail_Page?SolicitationId=a0rt000001Ab5I7AAJ

- The development of a recreational fishing industry video, where Tony DiLernia, NYSERDA's Recreational Fisheries Liaison, discusses offshore wind development for New York and issues important to the marine recreational fishing industry⁹;
- Document development efforts including an offshore wind cabling activities document with expected completion in spring 2021, a fisheries compensation document, and a recently released Offshore Wind Opportunities for Experienced Mariners report¹⁰.

E-TWG members expressed interested in seeing the fisheries compensation document when available. Members also pointed out the importance of considering administration of funds for fisheries compensation, as well as looking to coastal communities in relation to offshore wind related job opportunities, such as vessels and crews for surveys.

New York Phase 2 Procurements – The NY procurement was launched in July with a goal of 1,000-2,500 MW of offshore wind. Four applications were received and evaluated based on price, economic benefits, and viability criteria, including environmental mitigation plans. Two projects were selected, Empire Wind 2 and Beacon Wind (both from Equinor). Empire Wind 2 is a 1,260 MW project with gravity-based foundations and expected operations by 2026. Beacon Wind is a 1,230 MW project with a proposed grid connection through Long Island Sound and expected operations in 2028.

Empire Wind 1 Update – Scott Lundin (Equinor) provided an update on the Empire Wind 1 Project selected under the New York Phase 1 Procurement and located within the New York Wind Energy Area. Project development started in 2017, the Construction and Operations Plan (COP) has been submitted, and the goal is for construction to begin on this project in 2023. Recent activities have included G&G and benthic surveys and chemical sampling, as well as digital aerial surveys, and decommissioning of a site assessment buoy. In addition, there is an online portal on the Equinor website whereby the public can access location data from survey vessels in real time. Equinor is working closely with Ørsted to ensure communication between protected species observers (PSOs) from both companies. Given the announcement of the two additional projects with New York, Equinor plans to take a holistic approach to environmental mitigation planning amongst projects.

E-TWG members were interested in learning more about the progress of survey activities in New York Harbor, and Scott indicated that he would get more information and follow up on this topic.

Sunrise Wind Updates – Mike Evans (Ørsted) provided an update on the Sunrise Wind Project, which has a planned 122 turbines and one offshore converter station with 130 miles of export cable to landfall at Fire Island. The COP was submitted to BOEM in September 2020 as well as an Article 7 application submitted to the New York Department of Public Service. Ørsted is making updates to the environmental mitigation plan based on the COP, though there are no major revisions. G&G surveys are being completed, along with benthic surveys and onshore baseline noise assessments and habitat surveys. More information is available on the Article 7 docket¹¹.

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RktYrf9O Ok>

¹⁰ <https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/About/Publications/Offshore-Wind-Plans-for-New-York-State>

¹¹ <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?Mattercaseno=20-T-0617>

E-TWG Priorities Discussion

Since the last E-TWG meeting, NYSERDA and support staff have worked to refine the previously identified E-TWG priority topics. The goal of this discussion was to get input from E-TWG members on proposed work plans.

Topic 1: Improving State Coordination – NYSERDA is actively coordinating with New Jersey and, to a smaller degree, other regional states in relation to regional funding and other shared interests. The E-TWG role in this topic is primarily to provide NYSERDA with input on topics to discuss regarding state coordination.

Topic 2: Review and Synthesis of Data to Inform Stakeholders – To address this need, NYSERDA is in the process of setting up a “Learning from the Experts” webinar series using third-party neutral experts to present offshore wind related topics to a broader audience. Topics currently identified include foundation types, permitting processes, and cabling. In addition, there may be opportunities for webinars directed specifically at TWGs on topics such as NYSERDA-funded digital aerial surveys. In addition, NYSERDA is planning to develop a webinar library hosted on the E-TWG website to help identify existing webinars on relevant topics. The primary E-TWG role will be providing input on topics for both the webinar series and library. Support staff will follow up via email to solicit input.

An E-TWG member suggested that the “synthesis” part of the topic is not well-addressed by webinar plans, and noted in particular the utility of compiling and synthesizing all bird tracking data. Kate McClellan Press indicated that this type of synthesis would not fall under the scope of the E-TWG, though may be the type of topic for consideration in the NYSERDA research solicitation. There was additional interest from E-TWG members in integrating NYSERDA and NYDEC aerial survey data efforts. Suggested webinar topics from E-TWG members included the Wildlife Conservation Society’s recent workshop to synthesize passive acoustic monitoring data.

Topic 3: State of the Science Workshops – NYSERDA has expressed continued support for State of the Science workshops. Based on past discussions with the E-TWG, the focus of workshops will alternate between general state of the science updates and particular topics (e.g. cumulative impacts). The next workshop will likely be in Spring 2022 with a more general focus and an open call for abstracts. The E-TWG role includes input on workshop foci and structure; a workshop planning committee also provides more detailed input on agendas, speakers, logistics, etc. Support staff will reach out to the 2020 planning committee and E-TWG to solicit 2022 planning committee volunteers in the next six months.

Topic 4: Guidance for Regional Research and Monitoring – To best address this topic, a two-pronged approach has been proposed:

- A. Synthesis of regional-scale research topics to inform regional research funding efforts** – This effort aims to build off of existing efforts to prioritize research topics and identify those that are best answered at the multi-site or regional scales and develop interim guidance to support regional funding efforts. The E-TWG role would include a specialist committee to provide input on draft documents, with the effort starting in mid-2021 after State of the Science work group efforts have finished.
- B. Regional monitoring plan for specific question or technology** – There may be particular questions or monitoring technologies that would benefit from a comprehensive regional implementation and coordination plan (e.g. passive acoustics, automated telemetry). It is

proposed that candidate topics should be included in the upcoming 2021 NYSERDA research solicitation. Thus, this effort would be happening concurrently with 4A to a degree but would depend on the timing of the solicitation (likely fall 2021). The E-TWG role would primarily be providing input to NYSERDA on topics for the research solicitation.

An E-TWG member expressed the need to ensure regional coordination of this type of effort in order for it to be useful for other states beyond New York. In addition to state coordination, a member also expressed the need to ensure federal agency engagement to ensure no duplication of effort, as well as coordination with other funding entities such as the National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium. Several members noted that this effort could help to jumpstart the work of the RWSE. Kate Williams made the note that the focus of this effort is on providing guidance for regional funding, not add requirements for site-specific monitoring.

Topic 5: Guidance for Pre- and Post-Construction Monitoring and Research – In addition to regional monitoring, E-TWG members have recognized a need to ensure consistency in research and monitoring at individual project sites. While there is some existing guidance from BOEM for site characterization as well as some guidance in development at the National Marine Fisheries Service, the E-TWG could utilize stakeholder expertise to develop interim guidance for pre- and post-construction monitoring for specific taxa (suggestions: marine mammals, birds). Guidance could focus on sampling design, methodology recommendations, criteria to identify focal species, and approaches to identify key hypotheses. The E-TWG role would include involvement in taxon-specific specialist committees that would also include additional outside expertise.

E-TWG members generally expressed support for this topic and noted (1) the inextricable link with Topic 4, and (2) the need to heavily engage the scientific community in order for the process to be effective. It was suggested that more thought be given to whether to combine topics 4 and 5 into one larger topic and/or how to best coordinate between efforts. The recently released interim guidance from ROSA for fisheries monitoring may serve as a useful model in developing guidance. As with the above topic, coordination with federal agencies and other existing efforts will be important. Taxonomic foci for this effort should be determined in discussion with federal agencies.

Topic 6: Advancing Technology for Monitoring and Mitigation – There are multiple ways in which the topic of technology advancement could be addressed. However, it is proposed that this topic be shelved temporarily in order to see what projects are funded under the recent National Offshore Wind Research & Development (R&D) Consortium RFP. Thus, it was proposed that this topic be revisited at the next E-TWG meeting in April. If the need identified by the E-TWG is not met through the projects funded by the R&D Consortium, there may be some additional opportunities for advancement outside of the E-TWG including the DOE FOA, future R&D Consortium funding opportunities, and the NYSERDA research solicitation.

E-TWG members expressed support for revisiting this topic in April.

Timeline for Implementation of E-TWG Priorities

Efforts to address E-TWG priorities will occur on multiple timelines: the State of the Science workshop efforts and state coordination are ongoing; support staff will solicit input on the webinar series topics and library via email with the goal of making progress on this topic in the short term; and the regional

and site-specific research topics (Topics 4 and 5) will not start until mid-2021, following the wrap-up of State of the Science efforts. The amount of time spent on each of these efforts will depend on the intensity of effort and could range from 6 months to a year.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

E-TWG input will inform NYSERDA's allocation of resources moving forward. Support staff and NYSERDA will continue to refine workplans and will reach out to the necessary stakeholders to get input on Topics 4 and 5, in particular. Topics will be revisited at the next E-TWG meeting as necessary.

Upcoming Timeline:

- The State of the Science Workshop final webinar will be held in May 2021 (date TBD)
- The next E-TWG meeting is April 22, from 1-4pm ET

Appendix A: List of Participants

Point of Contact	Organization	Stakeholder Type	Role
<i>Kate McClellan Press</i>	<i>NYSERDA</i>	<i>State Government</i>	<i>Convener/chair</i>
<i>Greg Lampman</i>	<i>NYSERDA</i>	<i>State Government</i>	<i>Convener/chair</i>
Anthony Bevacqua	NJ Board of Public Utilities	State Government	Observer
Catherine Bowes	National Wildlife Federation	eNGO	Advisor
Rhianna Bozzi	NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation	State Government	Observer
Jenny Briot	Avangrid Renewables	Developer	Advisor
Koen Broker	Shell New Energies	Developer	Advisor
Megan Brunatti	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Amanda Cross	ME Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	State Government	Observer
Jennifer Daniels	EDF Renewables	Developer	Advisor
Michael Evans	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Shilo Felton	National Audubon Society	eNGO	Advisor
Keith Hanson	National Marine Fisheries Service	Federal Government	Observer
Kevin Hassell	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Erin Healy	Mayflower Wind	Developer	Advisor
Scott Johnston	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal Government	Observer
Shannon Kearney	CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Francine Kershaw	Natural Resources Defense Council	eNGO	Advisor
Jillian Liner	Audubon New York	eNGO	Advisor
Carl Lobue	The Nature Conservancy	eNGO	Advisor
Scott Lundin	Equinor	Developer	Advisor
Joe Martens	NY Offshore Wind Alliance	Nonpartisan NGO	Advisor
Laura Mensch	DE Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control	State Government	Observer
Paul Phifer	Atlantic Shores	Developer	Advisor
Matt Robertson	Vineyard Wind	Developer	Advisor
Howard Rosenbaum	Wildlife Conservation Society	eNGO	Advisor

Support Staff present

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

New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)

1-4 pm EST, 11th February 2021

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
12:45-1:00 pm	Coffee break/networking
1:00-1:10 pm	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zoom orientation• Introductions• Meeting agenda & ground rules• Icebreaker
1:10-2:30 pm	Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State/regional updates• Project-specific updates
2:30-2:45 pm	Networking break
2:45-3:55 pm	E-TWG Priorities Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review six priority topics• Discuss proposed approach for each topic
3:55-4:00 pm	Wrap Up & Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next steps for top priorities• Upcoming meetings