

# RWSC

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind



## Development of an Integrated Science Plan for Wildlife, Habitat, and Offshore Wind Energy in U.S. Atlantic Waters

EMILY SHUMCHENIA, PH.D., DIRECTOR  
APRIL 13, 2023



## Cooperatively established (July 2021), led, and funded by federal agencies, states, offshore wind companies, eNGOs

BOEM, NOAA, DOE, USFWS, EPA, Marine Mammal Commission; Atlantic coast states from ME to SC; Atlantic coast offshore wind lease holders and developers; 12 eNGOs (national and local)

**Mission:** To collaboratively and effectively conduct and coordinate relevant, credible, and efficient regional monitoring and research of wildlife and marine ecosystems that supports the advancement of environmentally responsible and cost-efficient offshore wind power development activities in U.S. Atlantic waters



**Formed by the governors of New England and Mid-Atlantic states, respectively**

**The Regional Ocean Partnerships in the RWSC geographic area of focus**

**Major functions together and separately:**

- Coordinating
- Convening and engaging
- Identifying regional priorities and data gaps
- Fundraising
- Managing initiatives, projects, and contracts
- Facilitating data and information exchange



# 2022 & 2023 RWSC Steering Committee

---

## **Federal agencies**

- NOAA
- BOEM
- USFWS

## **States**

- Maryland
- New York
- Massachusetts

## **Offshore wind companies**

- Ørsted
- Equinor
- Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind

## **eNGOs**

- The Nature Conservancy
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- National Audubon Society

**RWSC**

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind

# RWSC Roles – Science Plan & Research Support

---

## ***Integrated Science Plan for Wildlife, Habitat, and Offshore Wind Energy in the U.S. Atlantic***

- Development of Science Plan is focus of 2022-2023 Annual Work Plans
- Supported by annual contributions and in-kind support from more than 20 entities across sectors

## ***Aligning funds to select and manage research projects***

- Building capacity in 2023 and planning to continue growth
- Funds from offshore wind developers, states, federal agencies, others

# RWSC Science Plan

---



## *Integrated Science Plan for Wildlife, Habitat, and Offshore Wind Energy in the U.S. Atlantic*

- Build on existing research priorities
- Understand ongoing and pending data collection and active research
- Identify data gaps and needs
- Standardize new data collection, facilitate data sharing, enhance data management
- Align funding

**RWSC**

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind

[www.rwsc.org](http://www.rwsc.org)

# RWSC Science Plan

---



## *Subcommittees*

- Participation from science experts and all offshore wind developers w/ Atlantic interests
- Materials and meetings are public
- Forums for information sharing and coordination – data collection & research – <https://rwsc.org/database>
- Expert review of study design, data analysis methods, etc.

**RWSC**

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind

[www.rwsc.org](http://www.rwsc.org)

# RWSC Research Fund

---



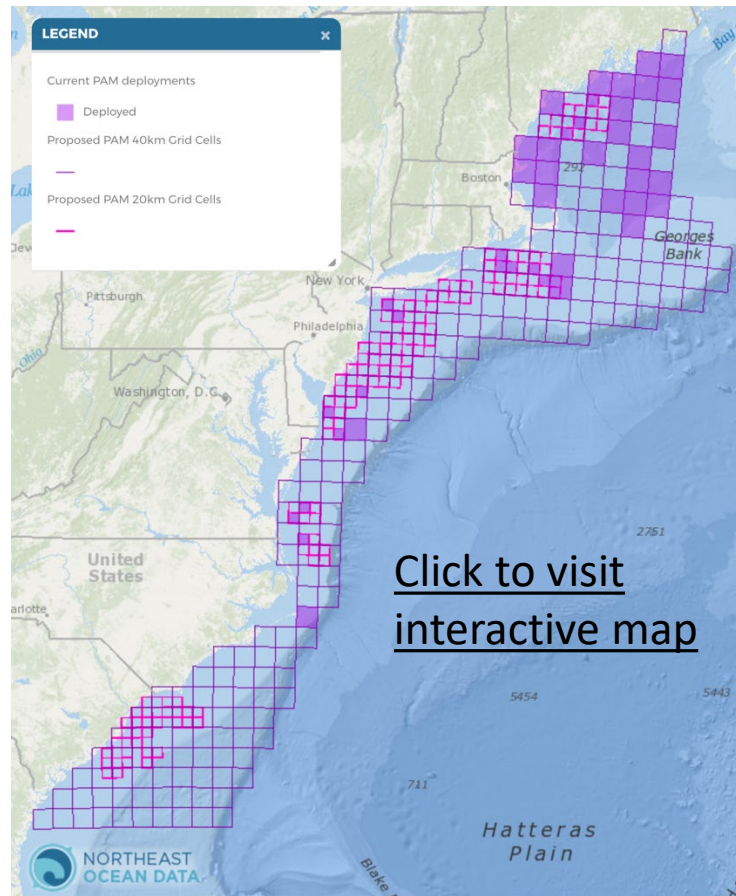
- To be established in 2023
- RFPs will be guided by the Science Plan (which reflects all four Sectors' priorities)
- Projects will be selected the RWSC Steering Committee
- Expect first RFP in fall 2023

**RWSC**

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind



# Recent Accomplishments



- Agreements with **more than 20 entities** across sectors to support RWSC Annual Work Plan
- Collaborative funding plan for **Southern New England Aerial Megafauna Surveys** (January – August 2022 and September 2022 – May 2023)
- Awarded funding from BOEM and Virginia Coastal Program to lead regional and WEA-scale **Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) planning for large whales**, coordinated by Marine Mammal Subcommittee
- Developed multi-sector [PAM Data Management & Storage Best Practices reference document](#)
- Assisting USFWS and partners with **Regional Motus tagging strategy and logistics**
- Selected as one of 15 entities in DOE/BOEM-funded **Project WOW**, led by Duke University

**RWSC**

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind

[www.rwsc.org](http://www.rwsc.org)

# Working with RWSC

---

## Entities requiring direct RWSC coordination or involvement

- BOEM via [South Fork COP Approval Letter](#)
- NYSERDA via large-scale offshore wind solicitation in [2020](#), and in [2022](#); December 2021 RFP for Acoustic and Oceanographic Surveys to Support Offshore Wind Development; March 2023 Environment and Fisheries Program Opportunity Notice
- New Jersey via [Research and Monitoring Initiative](#) May 2022 RFP for Passive Acoustic Monitoring in the NY/NJ Bight

The RWSC Steering Committee **strongly encourages** funders, researchers, and consultants to involve RWSC in the **planning and implementation of data collection and research activities** related to wildlife, environment, and offshore wind in the Atlantic Ocean.

**RWSC**

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind

[www.rwsc.org](http://www.rwsc.org)

# Contact

---



Upcoming meetings, materials, Science Plan documents will be posted at [rwsc.org](http://rwsc.org)

## Contact information

Emily Shumchenia, PhD, RWSC Director  
[emily.shumchenia@gmail.com](mailto:emily.shumchenia@gmail.com)

Avalon Bristow, MARCO Executive Director  
[abristow@midatlanticocean.org](mailto:abristow@midatlanticocean.org)

Nick Napoli, NROC Executive Director,  
MARCO Senior Advisor  
[nicknapoli01@gmail.com](mailto:nicknapoli01@gmail.com)

**RWSC**

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative  
for Offshore Wind

[www.rwsc.org](http://www.rwsc.org)