



Advisory Council Meeting

September 29, 2023 | Meeting Summary

Developed by the Consensus Building Institute

Meeting-in-Brief

On December 29, 2023, the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) Advisory Council met, convening 20 members and 8 alternates (a list of Council attendees can be found in Appendix A). Thirty-five interested others (including ROSA Research Advisors and Board of Directors), two facilitators and three ROSA staff attended the event.

At this meeting, ROSA shared updates and received feedback on the Fish FORWRD webtool, regional monitoring plans, and the ROSA strategic plan process. Each sector participated in breakout group discussions to offer feedback on a discussion guide for offshore wind fisheries monitoring plan development, implementation, and evolution sessions. Meeting materials, including the agenda and presentations can be found on ROSA's website:

www.rosascience.org/our-work/advisory-council-priorities-and-meetings/.

Welcome

ROSA Executive Director René Reilly welcomed attendees and thanked them for participating. Research Director Mike Pol recognized Captain Jimmy Ruhle's passing and shared that the Captain elevated the importance of members of the fishing industry in contributing to science and management, thus setting the groundwork for ROSA's formation.

Facilitator Patrick Field (Consensus Building Institute) oriented participants to ground rules and the agenda. Participants answered an introductory poll¹ and shared their relation to ROSA, the industry they represent, and the region in which they primarily work.

Fish FORWRD Webtool

Research Director Mike Pol shared an update on the [Fish FORWRD webtool](#). The webtool is an evolution of the current spreadsheet format, which can be used to identify research and research gaps on the effects of offshore wind development on fish and fisheries. ROSA developed Fish FORWRD to be used as a tool to identify pertinent studies to prioritize, as the organization moves into its upcoming phase as a

¹ Of the 36 participants who responded to the poll, 17 were ROSA Advisory Council members or alternates, five were ROSA Research Advisors, and 14 were interested others. Three participants represented commercial fishing, five represented consulting firms, four represented federal agencies, two represented non-profit organizations, seven represented offshore wind developers, two represented regional fishery councils or commissions, nine represented state agencies, and four represented universities. Of the 36 participants, 18 work primarily in New England, 13 in the Mid-Atlantic, two in South Atlantic, 1 in the West Coast, and 2 in other locations.

research funding organization. Beyond ROSA, this tool allows other funding organizations, researchers, and other interested parties to do the same. A form is available at ROSA's website to submit new or overlooked projects or priorities. The Fish FORWRD database will be updated every six months, pending funding.

The original webtool is in the form of a spreadsheet, which can be challenging to use effectively. ROSA hired a consultant to develop a user-friendly webtool based on the spreadsheet. In this meeting, a draft user interface was presented for feedback from the Advisory Council.

Discussion

Verbal and written questions and comments are below. First order bullets capture attendee questions and comments, and ROSA responses are italicized below.

- There is a lot of research occurring now. Will the update process every six months be an active process or a solicitation requesting responses from others? It should be a robust process.
 - *Originally, we used a passive, snowball method of outreach, and posted the form. We should be more active in seeking this information in the future, e.g., posting the form on websites scientists use to look for new research opportunities.*
 - ROSA advisory council and research advisors could help spread the word during active information gathering phases.
- What does “dynamic value” mean when used on the graph in the webtool?
 - *The y-axis is labeled dynamic value, which is a placeholder from the consultant. It is likely a count of projects that fit into that category. More meaningful labels will be created in the final webtool.*
- Is Fish FORWRD intended to be a metadata database? Or is ROSA eventually targeting the standardization of data and reporting?
 - *It is intended to be a metadata database that identifies unaddressed research priorities and can help direct funding to projects that meet research gaps. It was intended to be an internal tool, but we realized that by sharing the tool more broadly, not only might others be interested in the information, but could use the tool to reduce redundancy and create coordination across research projects. ROSA is focused on data standardization, as well as standardization across research projects and monitoring plans, and would love to see the tool used to help facilitate that coordination.*
- Is there an opportunity for the advisory council or research advisors to beta test this and give feedback on the user interface and data?
 - *This is a good idea that is consistent with the ROSA philosophy. ROSA can check with the contractor on the feasibility of that request.*
- ROSA requested feedback on the question: How would you use the webtool? Participant responses are below.
 - To identify data gaps and content for Request for Proposal (RFP) development. We might use it to respond to a question at a stakeholder meeting – i.e., to see what research has occurred related to that question.

- As an organization that has our own research priorities, we might use it to see what projects are occurring, and if they align with our research needs. It is helpful that users can see existing projects and research needs so clearly.
- As a person who might propose a research project, I might use this to identify other researchers doing similar work. It could help track similar projects, avoid research duplication, and find synergy. I might use it to direct my own research, i.e., I would look at the gaps and decide if I have the expertise and/or interest to address them.

Regional Monitoring Plan Discussion

Research Director Mike Pol shared a brief version of the presentation that he gave at the American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids in August, and an overview of feedback received.

There is a need to assess the regional impacts from offshore wind on fisheries, and there is not a clear methodology for how to do this. Consistent methodology (e.g., species analyzed, techniques) used across leases would offer a more rigorous understanding of the regional impacts. The status quo of project by project monitoring results in high frequency of extractive sampling (e.g., trawl), fish and animals being killed to collect data, and risks to protected species. This leads to difficulty for NMFS and others in permitting, as there is a need to monitor the regional impacts *and* protect these resources. Additionally, only one year of sampling is required pre-construction, which is not sufficient to establish meaningful baseline data.

A regional monitoring approach could resolve many of the status quo challenges and mitigate surveying itself. Some ideas for a regional monitoring approach include combining lease areas in a certain geography into one regional study area or issuing an RFP or Request for Information (RFI) to receive feedback on monitoring plan design. The proposed regional monitoring approach would need to fulfill developers' permitting requirements.

ROSA received a variety of input from conference attendees. Many agreed that regional monitoring would not likely replace fine-scale lease monitoring but that monitoring should occur in two tiers (at the regional and lease-specific levels). Developers expressed interest in added efficiency, scientists expressed interest in understanding cumulative impacts, and regulators expressed interest in streamlining permitting and review processes.

Discussion

Verbal and written questions and comments are below. First order bullets capture attendee questions and comments, and ROSA responses are italicized below.

- How does this conversation relate to the monitoring guidelines ROSA released a few years ago?
 - *ROSA's regional monitoring guidelines are a living document. Multiple sections still need to be developed. This idea is an evolution from the monitoring guidance.*
- Would a regional monitoring plan replace a project-specific one?
 - *It seems unlikely that even the best regional monitoring plan would be able to replace project-level monitoring, as they are designed to address different scientific questions.*

- Is there motivation to align data and needs identified in stock assessments? Is that an organizing principle of this work?
 - *Fisheries scientists have shared that stock assessments will suffer through survey preclusion in wind lease areas. Surveys are useful to stock assessors when conducted consistently and over a long period of time. To the degree that regional monitoring plans would be conducted over a longer time period, they may be useful to support stock assessments, but that is not the focus of this effort.*
 - NMFS recently published a paper ([Offshore wind project-level monitoring in the Northeast U.S. continental shelf ecosystem: evaluating the potential to mitigate impacts to long-term scientific surveys](#)) that looked at available monitoring plans to see if they could mitigate impacts to NOAA fisheries surveys. NMFS found that in most cases regional monitoring plans could not mitigate impacts. The plans focus on identifying a year of baseline data and understanding immediate impacts from development. An important question emerged from this paper: what are the population effects of wind development on specific species
 - One approach to consider would be identifying priorities in stock assessments and using those as guideposts for regional monitoring plans. Perhaps a future stock assessment component could identify what data is needed and components from other monitoring programs useful to the assessment.
- What definition of “regional” do you use? The scale of these questions matters. The question of cumulative impact can only be answered at a broad scale and time period.
 - *There is a lot to discuss here – this topic could cover an entire afternoon. For this level of discussion, it can be defined as anything larger than a project-specific monitoring plan.*
- ROSA requested feedback on the question: How different are the research questions at the lease and regional levels? Participant responses are below.
 - Lease-level questions could include: Habitat change pre- and post-construction, unique features of an area, changes in hydrodynamics, change over time to special habitat areas, and fishing activities.
 - Regional-level questions could include: Population changes for stocks distributed across a region, large-scale environmental changes, and effects that will not vary much between projects.
- ROSA requested feedback on the question: Is ROSA the right organization to lead this effort? If so, what priority should we give it? Participant responses are below.
 - ROSA’s role in providing monitoring guidance has been important. ROSA should absolutely be involved in or lead this effort.

Offshore Wind Fisheries Monitoring Plan Development, Implementation & Evolution Sessions

ROSA Executive Director René Reilly shared that ROSA is looking to convene focus groups on monitoring plan development, implementation, and evolution sessions. These sessions will help ROSA understand challenges and opportunities for each sector with regards to monitoring plans, and feed into the updated Offshore Wind Project Monitoring Framework and Guidelines. These sessions will be a space for sectoral collaboration, information gathering and documentation of outstanding concerns and questions, and

identification of potential solutions. During this meeting, ROSA is looking for feedback on the questions in the discussion guides that will be used for each sectoral focus group. ROSA is hoping to learn if the right questions are included to get helpful information to update the Offshore Wind Project Monitoring Framework and Guidelines.

In sectoral groups (developers, fisheries, academics, regulatory), participants reviewed the discussion guide and shared feedback. ROSA will update the guides to incorporate this feedback. The feedback was captured by sectoral breakout group discussion in a google document. These discussion guides will be used during the collaboration sessions.

Overview/input on ROSA Strategic Plan

ROSA Executive Director Reneé Reilly provided an update on the ROSA strategic plan. The strategic plan will clearly define the organization's vision and mission, a five-year roadmap with three key goals, organizational risk factors, and key performance indicators.

The three goals are to 1) coordinate offshore wind fisheries research and monitoring, 2) update and maintain ROSA offshore wind project monitoring framework and guidelines, and 3) assess regional and cumulative impacts of offshore wind. This work is happening through Fish FORWRD, coordination sessions, updating of the Offshore Wind Project Monitoring Framework and Guidelines, regional coordination, and monitoring approach development. ROSA is looking for feedback on these draft goals.

Discussion

Verbal and written questions and comments are below. First order bullets capture attendee questions and comments, and ROSA responses are italicized below.

- ROSA requested feedback on the question: Are these three key goals appropriate? Participant responses are below.
 - Be more specific and purposeful with the language.
 - Reflect that ROSA is interested in co-existence with wind development and the fishing community, and adaptation (as well as mitigation) of the fishing community.
 - Fishery communities and interactions need to be included (i.e., social science)
 - More discussion about ROSA's role in social science is needed.
 - Look into recent science center paper on socio-economic trickle-down effects.
 - Consider a potential goal of recruiting a younger generation into the offshore wind space (whether fishing community, scientists, developers, regulatory agencies) to help newcomers obtain the skills and knowledge needed.
 - Consider adding the words "collaborative" or "cooperative" into these goals.
 - Goal 1) Coordinate offshore wind fisheries research and monitoring
 - This is a tactical goal, not an organizational goal. Instead, consider "ensure that the Northeast region has effective, coordinated, integrated, robust OSW fisheries research and monitoring in place". Coordination feels like a task.
 - Goal 2) update and maintain ROSA offshore wind project monitoring framework and guidelines

- Consider the phrase “create alignment” in this goal. Alignment is needed for us to be able to compare data across wind projects. ROSA should be more prescriptive, as developers are looking for guidance in the development of their monitoring plans.
 - Goal 3) Asses regional and cumulative impacts of offshore wind
 - Consider a re-wording to be “support assessment of regional and cumulative impacts,” otherwise it reads as though ROSA will do the assessment.
 - Be more specific than “support”.
 - Add in “offshore wind,” otherwise quite nebulous.
- ROSA requested feedback on the question: As offshore wind development expands geographically, what model makes the most sense for ROSA?
 - ROSA should consider being involved with future projects further offshore, e.g., preparing for those projects and identifying research needs.
 - Including a larger geographic area would help to research effects on species migration.
 - Consider multiple regional ROSA organizations aligned with the membership of the eight regional fishery management councils.
 - Focus on making ROSA super successful in the northeast before diverting staff and resource energy to other locations.
 - Some ROSA efforts could be replicated elsewhere without huge efforts (e.g., Fish FORWRD), and some issues would benefit from ROSA involvement despite not being relevant to the northeast at this moment (e.g., floating). There is desire for other regions to get a ROSA up and running so they do not waste time as they begin development.
 - Developers have projects in multiple geographic areas and would benefit from an expanded ROSA or multiple ROSAs. One national ROSA would be helpful for developers, but not for fisheries, science centers, or researchers. Waiting for ROSA to be perfect before expanding harms other regions.
 - There is a national need that ROSA could potentially fill.
 - This might be a useful conversation to have in tandem with the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind (RWSC).
 - More time is needed to think about this question.

Regional Items of Interest and Relevant Upcoming Meetings

Executive Directory Reneé Reilly shared upcoming regional items of interest:

- Comments on the [RWSC Science Plan](#) are due September 30, 2023.
- The [Responsible Practices for Regional Wildlife Monitoring and Research in Relation to Offshore Wind Development](#) has been published.

Relevant upcoming meetings include:

- [Offshore WINDPOWER](#) is in Boston, MA, October 3-4, 2023.
- [Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting](#) is October 4, 2023.

- Pathways for a Sustainable Co-existence of Offshore Energy, Fisheries and Marine Conservation: From Local Empirical Evidence to Global Perspectives at the Symposium at the [9th World Fisheries Congress](#) will be in Seattle, March 3-9, 2024.

Advisory Council members shared the following updates:

- The Department of Energy announced a [new funding opportunity](#) that provides up to \$10 million for projects that reduce noise associated with fixed-bottom offshore wind and improve reliability of moorings for floating offshore wind.

Discussion

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- RWSC is also putting together an inventory of ongoing science projects. Are ROSA and RWSC in communication? How is the overlap being handled?
 - *Yes, ROSA staff meet regularly with RWSC staff. ROSA focuses on fish-specific and fisheries-related work in our list. There may be projects in both; we do not crosswalk the two. One important difference between ROSA's Fish FORWRD database identifies research gaps, and RWSC is a list of projects only.*
 - The two websites should refer to each other and clarify the difference.

Action Items and Closing

Facilitator Pat Field reviewed the action items and next steps discussed during the meeting, below.

- FishFORWRD:
 - Incorporate suggestions from today's meeting.
 - Talk to the contractor about the feasibility of beta testing webtool.
 - Consider active outreach methods to identify new research projects and priorities.
- Regional Monitoring Plan:
 - Incorporate feedback from today's meeting into discussion guides and share once more for input.
 - Host virtual sectoral focus groups in November and December. Fisheries meeting will likely be in-person before the cooperative research summit.
 - Host symposium on this topic at the State of the Science meeting summer 2024.
- Strategic Plan:
 - Incorporate feedback from today's meeting.
 - Consider hosting a sub-committee on ROSA role as offshore wind development expands to look at technology (e.g., floating), geography, and shelf location.

Appendix A | ROSA Council Member and Alternates Attendance

Katie Almeida	The Town Dock
Crista Bank	Vineyard Wind
Chris Batsavage	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Robert Beal	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Deirdre Boelke	RWE Renewables/Community Offshore Wind
Morgan Brunbauer	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
Colleen Brust	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Patrick Campfield	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Joe Cimino	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Greg DeCelles	Ørsted
Michelle Duval	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Brian Hooker	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Lane Johnston	Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA)
Kirk Larson Jr.	Lindsay L Inc.
Andy Lipsky	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Julia Livermore	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
E.J. Marohn	Equinor
Frederick Mattera	Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island
Catherine McCall	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Trish Murphey	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Cheri Patterson	New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
Ruth Perry	Mayflower Wind Energy
Rick Robins	RWE Renewables/Community Offshore Wind
Sebastian Velez	TotalEnergies
Mike Waine	American Sportfishing Association
Casey Yanos	Maine Department of Marine Resources