Advisory Council Meeting
March 19, 2026 | Meeting Summary

Meeting-in-Brief

On March 19, 2026, the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) Advisory Council (AC) convened for a virtual meeting. The meeting opened with a Zoom poll for participants to introduce themselves and share their sector and region.

ROSA staff provided updates on the Regional Research & Monitoring Program, the Atlantic Offshore Research Funder Coordination Working Group, the newly available Data Management & Sharing Plan (DMSP) Template, and the release of the Fish, Fisheries, and Offshore Wind Research Gaps Analysis Final Report.

Research highlights were presented by University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) on fisheries monitoring during the Vineyard Wind 1 project's construction, and by Ørsted on one year of operations at the South Fork Wind project.

The meeting also featured the formal introduction of FINsights (Fishing Industry Insights), ROSA's new platform to capture rolling observations, concerns, and research questions from fishing industry members.

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

Facilitator Pat Field (Consensus Building Institute) welcomed participants and oriented everyone to the agenda. An introductory Zoom poll invited participants to share their affiliation and the sector and region they primarily represent.

ROSA Updates

Regional Research & Monitoring Program

Tricia Perez, ROSA Research Program Manager, provided an overview of the awarded projects from RFP 01: Advancing Regional Solutions for Fisheries and Offshore Wind. Ten projects were selected across three topic areas: Supporting Fisheries Access (three projects in the Gulf of Maine and Southern New England), Larval Impacts (one project in Southern New England), and Fisheries Monitoring (seven projects across Southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic). Three recently-initiated projects were spotlighted:

- Co-Locating a Fixed Gear Fishery with a Demonstration Scale Floating Offshore Wind Turbine (University of Maine): Conducted by Damian Brady, Everett Rzeszowski, Anthony Viselli, Spencer Hallowell, and fishing industry partner Chris Bates (F/V Azure Bailey), this project aims to develop Standard Operating Procedures for fixed gear fishing operations near UMaine's VolturnUS+ floating turbine platform. The team is conducting gear drift experiments, ROV surveys, and mooring line monitoring to characterize how safe operational distances change under varying metocean conditions including spring tides and extreme weather events.

- Increasing the Utility of Acoustic Telemetry Data to Inform Decision-Making and Assessments at the Project and Regional Scale (Smithsonian Environmental Research Center): Led by Beth Bowers, Mike O'Brien, Matt Ogburn, and Dave Secor, this project

seeks to determine the most efficient acoustic receiver placement for regional-scale monitoring while maximizing coverage and minimizing equipment costs. The team will use simulated fish tracks and detection data to conduct a cost-benefit analysis and develop a plan for FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) data workflows.

- Interactive Mapping of Developer OSW Fisheries Monitoring Studies (Inspire Environmental): This project will develop a publicly accessible, interactive mapping tool that visualizes the geographic scope and attributes of offshore wind project-level fisheries monitoring efforts. The tool will align with the RWSC Planning Map and Northeast Ocean Data Portal and support FAIR data principles. Initial mapping will focus on projects Inspire Environmental participated in, including Empire, South Fork, and Block Island Wind.

Atlantic Offshore Research Funder Coordination

ROSA staff presented an update on the Atlantic Offshore Research Funder Coordination Working Group, displaying a tracker of funding entities and the status of their solicitations.

- Funders with recently selected and announced projects include MassCEC, NOAA Research Set Aside Program (RSA) 2025, ROSA, Maine OSW Research Consortium (Rounds 1 and 2), NFWF Vessel Strike Risk Reduction, NOWRDC, Marine Mammal Commission, and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Fisheries Innovation Fund.
- Funders with selection or announcement processes currently underway include the Northeast Sea Grant Consortium, NJ RMI, RWSC, and NYSERDA. Open solicitations include NOAA RSA 2026 and MassCEC. Upcoming solicitations include ME OSW RC Round 3, the Sunrise Regional Research Funds (a ROSA and RWSC collaboration), and NFWF.

ROSA also noted that MassCEC's current solicitation includes multiple topic areas relevant to the ROSA community, including fisheries, wildlife and habitat, Gulf of Maine regional planning, and communicating existing science and research.

On February 23rd, ROSA hosted Part II of its New Projects Webinar, along with the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative (RWSC), which drew more than 100 registrants and featured curated thematic sessions on eDNA, Whales & Oceanography, and Fisheries Engagement. A recording is available on ROSA's website.

Data Management & Sharing Plan (DMSP) Template

Tricia Perez, ROSA provided an overview of the Data Management & Sharing Plan (DMSP) Template developed jointly by ROSA and RWSC and now available at dmptool.org. The template is designed to support offshore wind and fisheries researchers in demonstrating commitment to FAIR data management practices. It covers 16 types of research outputs, with particular relevance to fishing gear and biological sampling data, fisheries socioeconomic and human dimensions data, eDNA, acoustic telemetry, biological oceanography, and data products. The template also addresses roles and responsibilities, research inputs, data standards, access restrictions, sharing timelines, and long-term stewardship.

Fish, Fisheries, and Offshore Wind Research Gaps Analysis Final Report

Tricia Perez, ROSA announced the availability of the Research Gaps Analysis Final Report. The Gaps Analysis, which underwent peer review in summer 2025, provides a common understanding of explored research areas and remaining gaps across the regional offshore wind and fisheries science portfolio. The report identifies several research gaps including cumulative

impact assessment frameworks, policy alignment across ocean sectors, risk and mitigation guidance for Councils and Commissions, effectiveness of mitigation strategies, decommissioning effects, changes to light conditions, development of interim provisional survey indices, and new fishery observer protocols.

However, Tricia emphasized important interpretive caveats: an identified gap does not mean no knowledge exists, nor does it indicate priority; it means the research need is underexplored given existing projects tracked in FishFORWRD. Similarly, topics that appear under exploration should not be considered solved, as coverage may be limited by species, region, or method.

A webinar, *Progress and Gaps in Offshore Wind Fisheries Research*, is scheduled for April 8 at 10 AM, with registration available on the ROSA website.

Tricia also announced a new webinar series, *The State of Offshore Wind Fisheries Science on the U.S. Atlantic Coast*, launching later in 2026. The series will synthesize and share findings from completed and mature projects mapped to key research needs, with the goal of informing funder coordination and future research proposals. A poll was conducted asking participants which research category should be addressed first in the series.

Research Highlights

Vineyard Wind 1 Monitoring of Demersal Fish Communities During Construction

Chris Rillahan, Keith Hankowsky, and Pingguo He (University of Massachusetts Dartmouth – SMAST) presented findings from the demersal trawl survey component of the Vineyard Wind 1 Fisheries Monitoring Plan.

Vineyard Wind 1, located approximately 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard, consists of 62 GE Haliade-X 13 MW turbines covering 265 square kilometers, with offshore construction beginning in spring 2023 and first power generated on January 2, 2024.

The monitoring program employs a Beyond-BACI design (3 years pre-construction, 1 year during construction, 3 years post-construction) with four seasonal surveys annually. Surveys use 20 tows each in the VW1 Study Area and a designated Control Area, following NEAMAP trawl and survey protocols conducted from a commercial fishing vessel.

Pre-construction surveys totaled 11 seasonal surveys and 440 tows from June 2019 through August 2022. The first demersal trawl surveys during active construction were completed between May 2023 and February 2024, comprising four seasonal surveys and 160 tows.

Results showed moderate increases in dissimilarity between the VW1 and Control areas during construction compared to pre-construction baselines across multiple seasons, with strong inter-annual and seasonal variability characterizing this highly dynamic offshore area. Species-specific analyses identified area, project, and interaction effects for various finfish, elasmobranch, and invertebrate species across seasons.

The presenters identified several key takeaways:

- These offshore areas exhibit strong seasonal and inter-annual variability, making it difficult to detect construction-related signals above background noise.
- The small footprint of individual turbine foundations (scour protection of approximately 2,100 m² per turbine; total project footprint approximately 1/8 km²) and inconsistency of construction stressors in space and time may contribute to resilience.
- Fish behavioral, physiological, and sensory diversity means responses to construction stressors likely differ across species and functional groups.

- No large-scale, homogenous avoidance or attraction responses were observed, though limited observations included more butterfish and less silver hake in the VW1 area, and localized avoidance of scup, butterfish, and silver hake in portions of the VW1 area in fall.

Moving forward, the team plans to examine data from other wind farms to identify patterns across projects, look at regional data to corroborate project-phase effects, and transition to operational monitoring. The full report is available at https://www.vineyardwind.com/fisheries-science.

One Year of South Fork Wind

Ørsted provided an overview of South Fork Wind. The 132 MW project, located in the New York Bight with interconnection in East Hampton, was completed in March 2024 and reached full commissioning in July 2024.

Ørsted also presented results from the South Fork Wind Benthic Monitoring Program, which was designed to monitor the project's interaction with the surrounding marine environment. Program materials are available via this story map.

Fishing Industry Insights (FINsights)

ROSA staff introduced FINsights (Fishing Industry Insights), a new rolling submission platform designed to systematically capture observations, insights, and knowledge about offshore development and its interactions with fisheries from the fishing industry.

Staff highlighted that the Research Gaps Analysis confirmed fisheries engagement and local ecological knowledge are among the least-explored research areas in the offshore wind and fisheries science portfolio. FINsights was developed as a direct response to this gap. The platform allows fishing industry participants to submit observations on changes in fish behavior, new interactions with infrastructure, emerging gear conflicts, and other topics, along with supporting documents or photos.

FINsights is a new platform; the underlying infrastructure is still maturing. It is not a one-time survey or a formal comment mechanism.

ROSA's process for using submissions includes collecting ongoing submissions, reaching out to Research Advisors approximately one month before each AC meeting to ask whether they can connect submitters with resources, and presenting the latest observations and advisor responses at each quarterly AC meeting with corresponding website updates. Mockups of the distribution of results interface were shared with participants.

AC members and participants were encouraged to share FINsights with their networks.

Action Items, Next Steps, and Other Business

The following action items and announcements were shared at the close of the meeting:

- MARACOOS (Mid-Atlantic Regional Association Coastal Ocean Observing System) is requesting letters of support to sustain more than 20 years of satellite data products, including sea surface temperature, ocean color, SST anomalies, Atlantic Sturgeon risk encounter, and water mass mapping tools. Those willing to provide a letter may use the template available from MARACOOS by contacting jana@maracoos.org.

- Abstract submissions for the Blue Economy, Fish, & Fisheries symposium being co-hosted by ROSA at the Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society are due April 22nd.
- Register for the Research Gaps Analysis Final Report webinar*, Progress and Gaps in Offshore Wind Fisheries Research*, scheduled for April 8 at 10 AM.
- Share FINsights (www.rosascience.org/finsights) with your networks to encourage fishing industry observations and participation.

The next ROSA Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2026 at 1:00 PM ET. Meeting materials, including previous agendas and presentations, can be found on ROSA's website: www.rosascience.org/our-work/advisory-council-priorities-and-meetings/.