



Advisory Council Meeting

June 18, 2026 | Meeting Summary

Meeting-in-Brief

The June quarterly ROSA Advisory Council meeting focused on leadership transitions, updates to FishFORWRD and the Research Gaps Analysis, progress on the Data Governance Program, and a partner update on boulder relocation work. Research highlights included studies on fish connectivity within offshore wind farms and modeling of offshore wind impacts on the Atlantic sea scallop fishery.

Welcome

Facilitator Melanie Garate (Consensus Building Institute) welcomed participants, noting her transition into the facilitator role previously held by Pat Field. Attendees introduced themselves through a Zoom poll reflecting strong representation from Advisory Council members, research advisors, and board members across the commercial fishing, offshore wind development, research and management sectors. ROSA also thanked its latest 2026 members, including Shell, Equinor, and South Coast Wind.

ROSA Updates

Leadership and Board Transitions

Executive Director René Reilly announced that Dr. Mike Pol will transition from full-time Research Director to Senior Research Consultant, thanking him for five years of service and noting his continued collaboration with ROSA in this new capacity. She also welcomed new board members Audrey Bard (Equinor) and Nora DeDontney (Vineyard Offshore), and announced that Deepthi Kavitha (UMass Dartmouth) will join ROSA as an intern this summer, supporting data visualizations and tools development for the FishFORWRD.

FishFORWRD and the Research Gaps Analysis

Research Program Manager Tricia Perez provided an update on FishFORWRD, ROSA's database of offshore wind and fisheries research, reporting 36 new projects added in 2026 and the completion of the peer-reviewed Research Gaps Analysis, which identifies 70 research needs across 11 research categories that characterize the offshore wind fisheries research space.

Data Governance Program

Research Director, Dr. Mike Pol shared updates on the Data Governance Program, including the formal recommendation of the Fishing Gear Data Working Group for the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) as the preferred repository for fishing gear data structured in Darwin



Core format. He also noted ongoing work on image data repository standards and cumulative impact assessment approaches.

FINsights: Fishing Industry Insights

René presented four major themes emerging from initial (Q1 2026) FINsights submissions: catch impacts, scallop recruitment and survival, aquaculture co-use, and gaps in pre-construction baseline information. Next steps include developing summaries and resources for each theme (e.g., one-pagers, web content, and word clouds), soliciting input from research advisors on how best to process and respond to submissions, and partnering with the Fisheries and Energy Partnership on a webinar addressing electromagnetic field (EMF) questions. This webinar will be the first in the series where ROSA will be diving deeper with research partners into the study results of the projects catalogued in FishFORWRD.

Research Highlights

Fish Connectivity in Offshore Wind Farms

Chris Rillahan (School for Marine Science and Technology, University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth) presented preliminary findings from a study examining fish distribution, connectivity and movement at the Block Island Wind Farm, combining baited remote underwater video systems (BRUVs) with acoustic telemetry. The project tagged 63 black sea bass, 35 summer flounder, and 50 striped bass. Results indicated a strong reef effect, particularly for species such as black sea bass and scup, as well as season patterns in fish presence and residency. Connectivity among monitored locations varied by species: black sea bass and striped bass moved across a broader network of receiver stations, while summer flounder generally used fewer locations and demonstrated particularly high site fidelity. The findings suggest that turbine spacing and foundation type may affect reef-associated species differently.

Offshore Wind Impacts on the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery

Dr. Sarah Borsetti (Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory, Rutgers University) presented modeling work examining potential impacts of offshore wind development on the Atlantic sea scallop fishery using the SEFIS model. Results indicated minor impacts overall, with changes of under 5% in metrics such as days fished and landings per unit effort across development scenarios, consistent with prior findings (Chaji et al. 2024) estimating that roughly 6% of fishing trips could be affected. The analysis, developed in collaboration with industry and management advisors, also found that small shifts in fishing areas could produce disproportionate revenue effects, with wind restrictions displacing fishing pressure and reducing scallop biomass outside lease areas, and larger effects observed in southern portions of the study region. The model is intended to support future spatial planning aimed at minimizing fishery impacts.



Partner Updates

Boulder Relocation Research

Jennifer McCann (University of Rhode Island; Northeast Sea Grant Consortium; Fisheries and Energy Partnership) presented a collaborative multi-partner initiative addressing safety and economic concerns associated with the relocation of boulders during offshore wind construction. This includes research led by Dave Bethany testing gear compatibility with relocated boulders. The initiative brings together fishermen, state agencies, researchers, and developers to improve engagement, assess potential safety and access impacts, and incorporate fishing-industry knowledge into offshore wind planning and monitoring. Completed research examining more than 2,700 boulders relocated during the South Fork and Revolution Wind projects found that only five (~ 0.18%) posed potential hazards in historically towable areas, suggesting that risks are limited and manageable when properly assessed. The partnership's scope has expanded to include electromagnetic field (EMF) questions, with findings documented in a shared resource for participating organizations. During discussion, Advisory Council members raised questions about the definition of boulders and how smaller rocks are relocated, prompting discussion of USGS size classifications and the use of plows such as the PLP240. As a next step, ROSA will work to collate vessel and plow-track information to help map the distribution and impacts of boulder relocation and plowing activity, in collaboration with developers as needed.

Action Items and Next Steps

Meeting materials, including previous agendas, presentations, and summaries, can be found on ROSA's website: www.rosascience.org/our-work/advisory-council-priorities-and-meetings/